



# Taking Notes

1. Taking notes will slow down reading speed but will force one to read more carefully.
2. Write and mark meaningfully in books.
  - Underline all key statements, perhaps using color as an indication of significant material.
  - Make marginal comments or summary statements.
  - Make cross-references to other material at bottom of page.
  - Note reactions to material as well as your questions and evaluation.
  - Some people, on re-reading a book at a later time, find that underlining restricts a fresh impression of the material, while no marks on the page prompt ideas of “something new.”
  - Index the book as you read (on blank pages in the book) noting page number and a word or two to identify the thought or fact obtained. This is helpful for later reference.
3. Look at the books and workbooks of “good” students you know. How do they approach taking notes?
4. Try organizing in an orderly sequence so that several months later it still makes sense.
5. Taking notes on 3x5 cards has the advantage of arranging and classifying them by subjects and topics.
6. Take notes with a specific purpose in mind; organize and summarize your notes for review in this way.
7. If you need to use quotations for an exam or discussion support, set aside a portion of the outline for this. Generally, notes in your own words are more meaningful.
8. Listen carefully to what is being said; concentrate; learn to decide easily what is important and what may be excluded.
9. Sometimes people can learn or remember things better just by the motor or physical behavior of writing them down.

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10. Look at notes before and after class to review, clarify and summarize points.
11. Studying before a lecture helps refresh the last meeting and provides a framework for ideas.
12. Be ready to take notes as soon as the instructor is ready to begin speaking.
13. Listen for cues of emphasis, bias, logical order, examples, etc.
14. Skip unnecessary words and develop your own understandable abbreviations or symbols for important terms often used.
15. Develop your own marking system noting questions, new words, topic sentences, concepts, series of facts, etc. Underlining, asterisks, brackets, and other editorial marks may be used as well as mathematical and Latin abbreviations.
16. Leave some empty space on the page for later comments or additions.
17. Use an adequate notebook – not too small, about 8 and 1/2 x 11; use a loose-leaf notebook to add new pages as desired; organize subjects and topics.
18. Use a separate notebook for each class. If you lose one you won't lose them all.
19. In marking books, note the difference between getting the most from it (learning) and for it (resale). It's not so important that you necessarily accept or reject an author or instructor's point of view, but that you understand his frame of reference.