NOTETAKING TIPS

Importance of taking good lecture notes:
1. Important points from readings that the professor wants to emphasize are presented in lectures.
2. Lectures contain material the professor has gathered from sources other than classroom materials.
3. Within 24 hours, you will forget at least half of what was said in the lecture; forgotten material can be relearned if it is written down.

Preparing to take notes:
1. Read the assigned readings prior to class.
2. Review your notes from the previous class. Note any questions you have that can be answered by the professor.
3. Sit as close to the front as possible to establish contact with the professor and to avoid distractions.
4. Use a separate notebook, section, or folder for each course.
5. Place the proper materials (text, paper, pen) on the desk; place everything else on the floor.
6. Label your notes with the date, the professor's name, and the course name and number.
7. Sit up straight.
8. Be ready to write as soon as the professor starts talking.
9. DO NOT plan to recopy your notes.

Effective listening strategies:
1. Relate the material to something you care about.
2. Withhold judgment of the lecturer.
3. Listen for opinions.
4. Set aside your own concerns and listen to what is being said.
5. Do not hesitate to ask the professor to repeat or clarify difficult points.

How to take notes:
1. Structure your notes in a modified outline form with main ideas close to the margin and numbered, underlined, or both. Main supporting ideas should be indented and prefaced with dots or slashes.
2. Listen for and recognize main headings. If this is difficult, at least skip a line when the topic changes and fill in the heading later.
3. The following indicate main headings:
   a. Readings
   b. Direct announcement (the lecturer tells you outright)
   c. Change in voice (change in volume or rate)
   d. Lists or numbered main points presented by the lecturer
   e. Chalkboard writings
   f. Nonverbal cues
   g. Repetition

Hints for taking good notes:

1. Always attend lectures.
2. Utilize the professor's syllabus with main headings for lectures.
3. Write a lot (3-8 pages for a 50-minute lecture).
4. Write legibly; print if you get messy!
5. Write details, examples, explanations, diagrams.
6. Write complete thoughts, not isolated words.
7. Take notes on class discussions as well as formal lecture material.
8. Learn to abbreviate. Make up your own abbreviations according to the subject matter. For example, "Const" for "Constitution" or "C.W." for "Civil War."
9. Develop your own set of symbols. For example:
   * \ = important
   ** \ \ = extra important
   --- = leads to, becomes
   # = number
   w = with
   w/o = without
   ? = big trouble; clear up
10. Write lists down the page, not across. They will be easier to read and to study.
11. Isolate specialized vocabulary. Circle the word, put a "v" (for "vocabulary") over the word, or put a "v" in the margin.

Common errors in notetaking:

1. Notes so skimpy and incomplete that there is insufficient information to study.
2. Disorganized notes that are impossible to read.

How to take notes in math and science classes:

1. Write down what is on the board; identify the problem number and the page number.
2. Write down the explanation that goes with what is on the board.
3. Write a reason for each step of the problem. If there is not time to write an explanation, leave blank spaces and fill them in within 24 hours.
4. Do not jam numbers together; give yourself plenty of space. (Example: 1/2, 1/4)
5. Identify main topics.
6. Draw pictures.

**Problem lectures and how to deal with them:**

**Whispering or whisper-then-shout lecturer:**
1. Sit in the front of the classroom.
2. Discuss the speech pattern with him/her in private.

**Fast talker:**
1. Ask lecturer to slow down or repeat.
2. Go over your notes with other students within 24 hours.
3. Use tape recorder (with instructor's permission) to supplement your notes.

**Rambler:**
1. Leave space in your notes for additional information in case the lecturer returns to a previous point.
2. Spend extra time reorganizing notes after class.
3. Go over notes with other students.
4. Talk with professor.

**After you have written your notes:**

1. Read and revise (not recopy) within 24 hours. Fill in complete words, add explanations, underline main points, summarize, refine, and elaborate so your notes make sense.
2. Using a different color ink, write labels, main headings, brief notes, and/or possible exam questions in the margin.
3. Using your margin notes, recite the contents of your notes and make flash cards or study sheets.
4. Write a brief (2-3 lines) summary of your notes after each class.
5. Before the next class, skim your margin notes and summaries.

**To study from your notes:**

1. Do not read your notes over and over.
2. Recite your notes.
3. Check yourself to make sure you have learned the material.