

Improving Essential College Skills

LECTURE

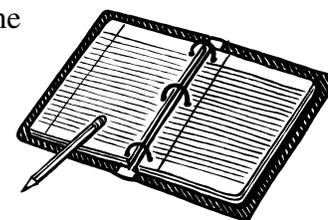


NOTE-TAKING

Dr. Howard Masuda
Revised August 2004

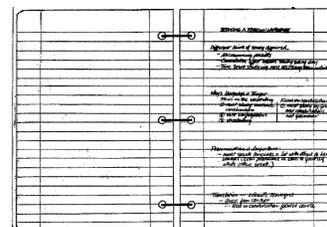
In college, your two primary sources of information will be your textbooks and your class lectures. One advantage of a textbook is that you can refer back to the textbook for information you may have missed, misunderstood, or forgotten. This does not apply to class lectures because forgetting what is heard can occur so quickly and thoroughly. Taking notes helps you to pay attention and creates a permanent record much like your textbooks that you can later refer back to for studying.

01. **USE A 3-RING BINDER** with 8-1/2" X 11" lined paper to keep the lecture notes and handouts for all your classes, protected, together, and neatly organized by course with dividers so you can study for any of your classes. Adding new paper and re-using the binder next quarter can save you money.



HAVE TWO WRITING INSTRUMENTS (i.e., pencils and/or pens) in case your pencil lead breaks or your pen runs out of ink. A small pencil sharpener would be useful. These items can be stored along with other supplies (e.g., ruler, highlighters, etc.) in your 3-ring binder in a pencil pouch.

02. Plan to **LEAVE THE LEFT-HAND SIDE OF THE PAGE (i.e., the backside) BLANK** so that you can add or change notes as needed, reorganize notes, outline or graphically organize notes, insert textbook notes, or write questions about the notes.



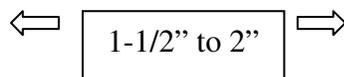
03. Plan to **USE A TAPE RECORDER WITH CAUTION** as an aid in clarifying and adding missing information in your notes. Get prior permission from the instructor, use a tape recorder with a number counter, sit close to record good sound quality, and **TAKE NOTES WHILE RECORDING** (Note: If you do not take notes during the lecture, beware that taking notes from a taped recording tends to be both difficult and time consuming or that just listening to an entire lecture repeated times tends to also be time consuming, not very interesting, and not be very effective.). For the parts of the lecture that are either too fast where you miss information or not clear, write the number from the tape recorder's number counter in your notes to more easily find the location on the tape recording later.



University Tutorial Center
John F. Kennedy Library, Palmer Wing, Room 1039—(323) 343-3971

04. **SET UP YOUR NOTEBOOK PAPER IN THE CORNELL FORMAT** so that you have a large notes column area and a smaller recall column where you will create and write down key words and/or questions based upon your notes. You will use these key words and/or questions to help you study the information in your notes.

RECALL Column (Write down key words or questions)	NOTES Column (Write down your lecture notes)	Course: UNIV 101 Week: 2 Date: 10/12/06 Page: 1 of 5
		<i>Time Management</i>
		<i>Weekly schedules</i>
<i>What are 3 reasons to use weekly schedule?</i>	<i>-- to help (1) plan, (2) monitor, (3) make decisions re: what need to do & how time used</i>	

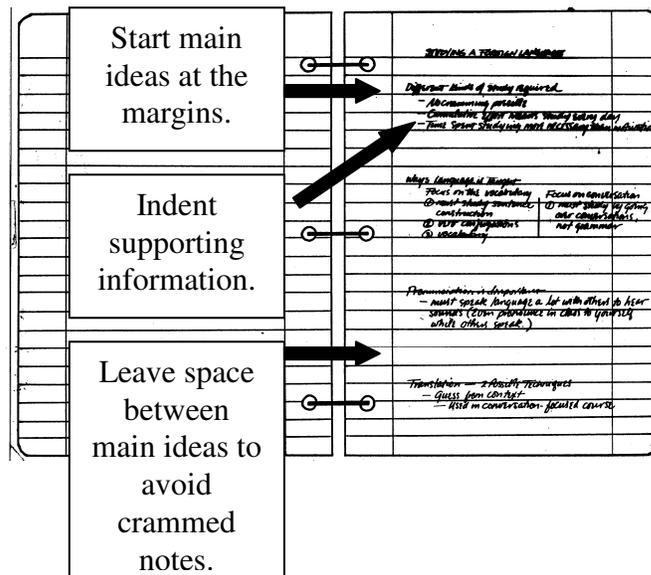


05. **LABEL YOUR NOTES** with the course name, week of the quarter, date, and page number so that you can keep your notes in order and readily find, separate, and replace the notes for any particular lecture you need

06. **USE A “JOT” OUTLINE LIST FORMAT** where you write in phrases rather than a paragraph format where you write in sentences.

Suggestion: Use numbering or highlighting in different colors to show relationships between main and supporting ideas and use special markings (e.g., ★) to show the relative importance of ideas.

Suggestion: Not everyone can readily paraphrase and write down what they hear, so use the instructor's words if necessary. You can paraphrase later when you are not pressured by the speed of the lecture.



Suggestion: If you are not sure if information is important, write it down. You can decide later whether or not to cross it out (not permanently erase or “white” out). Write down information even if you think you’ll remember it later so that the information will be in your notes to study; things that appear easy to understand may not necessarily be remembered without being reviewed in your notes.

Suggestion: If the information is presented too quickly or not clear, write down whatever you can and leave space so that you can add it later by asking other students or the instructor or consulting the textbook.

07. Plan ahead to **USE A SIMPLE, CONSISTENT SYSTEM OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS** so that you can more quickly record lecture information in your notes.

(a) Write in phrases rather in complete sentences.

e.g., “phrases, not sentences”

(b) Write only the first few letters of a monosyllabic (one syllable) or the first syllable of a multisyllabic (more than one syllable) word (AND the first letter of the second syllable OR first few letters of the second syllable either with or without the vowels to make the word more recognizable) rather than writing out entire words.

e.g., “write phr, not sent”

(c) Create abbreviations (using syllables or just the first-letter initials) for terms and proper names which may be repeated throughout the lecture. Write down the terms or proper names the first time you hear them along with their abbreviation in parentheses. Use these abbreviations for the rest of your notes.

e.g., “California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA)”

(d) Make use of some commonly-used symbols and abbreviations

up	↑	approximate	~	therefore	∴
down	↓	equal to	=	and	& (+)
results in	→	not equal to	≠	with	w/
greater than	>	over	∩	without	w/o
not greater than	>	under	∪	also known as	a.k.a.
less than	<	because	∴	for example	e.g.
not less than	<	at	@	that is	i.e.

08. **READ AND MARK TEXTBOOK ASSIGNMENTS BEFORE CLASS** to start you thinking about the material, provide you with background information, and help you to anticipate and organize what may be presented in the lecture. The textbook headings may alert you to what topics might be presented along with how these topics might be organized. Words in italicized or boldfaced print can alert you to key terminology or ideas. Read the lecture notes from the previous class.

09. Plan to find **NOTE-TAKING BUDDIES WITH WHOM TO SHARE NOTES** so that you have extra sets of notes to which to refer later. You can all plan to meet after class to compare notes or else use carbon paper or carbonless paper as a simple, inexpensive way to make extra sets of notes to exchange. To do this, to buy carbon paper and insert one sheet each of carbon paper between three sheets of 8-1/2" X 11" lined notebook paper (i.e., lined paper, carbon paper, lined paper, carbon paper, lined paper) and paperclip or staple the sheets together into a packet. Make enough packets for your note-taking buddies. You and your note-taking buddies can now each create and share multiple sets of lecture notes after the lecture ends. Photocopying notes can be expensive and time-consuming.
10. Plan to go to class and **LISTEN WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE** about what you can learn, accepting responsibility for your own learning. Using "poor" teaching or how the instructors dresses, looks, speaks, or acts as an excuse for not learning will not get you a higher grade. Sit up straight and consciously make an effort to "catch" yourself when your mind starts to wander so that you develop control over your daydreaming and do not miss more parts of the lecture than necessary.
11. **GO TO EVERY CLASS SESSION AND ARRIVE EARLY TO FIND A SEAT NEAR THE FRONT WHERE YOU CAN CLEARLY SEE the instructor and the chalkboard AND HEAR** the instructor. This way, you will not miss any announcements about quizzes or exams or lecture information or the beginning of the lecture and have to rely on possibly incomplete or incorrect information from another student. Being able to see the instructor's face will help you to pay attention and you will be less distracted by windows and bulletin boards and what other students sitting around you are doing. You will also be better able to hear and see possible "cues" to important information. The speaker may directly state that something is important (e.g., "This will be on the test!"); write something on the chalkboard; emphasize something by moving forward (body movements), slowing down (rate changes), speaking louder (voice changes), or pounding a fist (gestures); ask a question and then proceed to answer it; or repeat something. Time spent on a topic might also be a "cue."
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12. **LISTEN FOR HOW INFORMATION IS ORGANIZED** to help you anticipate, structure, understand, and remember the information

Part-to-Whole Relationships

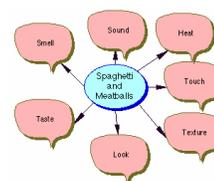
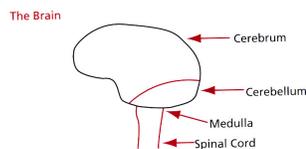
- *Definitions—meanings of words, phrases, or terms
- *Simple lists—a category followed by lists of specific items or types in that category or a statement followed by lists of facts, ideas, or examples to support or clarify the statement
- *Comparison—similarities and differences between two or more living things, objects, events, or ideas
- *Generalization—a statement explained, clarified, justified, or supported by facts, reasons, or examples
- *Classification—grouping and subgrouping of living things, objects, events, or ideas

Change (Temporal, Causal, or Sequential) Relationships

- *Sequences—time order of events, steps in a procedure, stages of a process
- * Cause(s) & effect(s)—a description of the events or conditions (effects) following the reasons that explain it (causes); or a description of the results (effects) of the occurrence of events or conditions (causes)

Suggestion: Draw a graphic or pictorial representation of the information (e.g., flow charts, time lines, diagrams, concept maps, etc.) to visually represent the information. Organizing and showing relationships of ideas visually will aid in understanding and remembering the ideas.

	Depth at Which Fish Swim					
	200 ft		400 ft		600 ft	
Fish:	Lup	Hat	Arch	Bone	Scale	Tin
Social group:	Small	Solitary	Solitary	School	School	
Color:	Black	Brown	Blue	Orange	Yellow	Tan
Size:	150 cm		300 cm		500 cm	
Diet:	Algae		Minnows		Flounder	



13. **EDIT YOUR LECTURE NOTES** as soon as possible after class while you can remember more of the lecture. Check your notes for readability (i.e., Can you read the notes? Do you need to rewrite scribbled words or write out abbreviations?), completeness (i.e., Do you have all the information or will you have to check the textbook or ask classmates or the instructor?), organization (i.e., Is the information written to show the relationship between ideas?), and clarity (i.e., Do the notes make sense? Can I make complete sentences out of my notes and say them aloud?).
14. Prepare your notes for studying by selecting key words from the notes or to simulate how you will be tested on the information, **CREATE QUESTIONS**—"who," "what," "where," "when", "why", and "how" questions—based upon your notes and write them either in the recall column or on the blank left-hand page. Cover your notes and use the questions to try to **RECALL ALOUD** the information in the notes.



THE CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM

Howard Masuda, Ph.D.

Adapted from Walter Pauk (2001), *How to Study in College*, 7th ed., Houghton Mifflin.

<p>← 2-1/2" →</p> <p>Recall Column</p>	<p>← 6" →</p> <p>Notes Column</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Record: During the lecture, use the Notes Column to record main ideas and supporting details. 2. Question: As soon after the class ends as possible while information is still fresh in your memory, create and write questions in the Recall Column based upon the information in the Notes Column. Highlight or mark this information in your notes as the answer to the question you ask. Begin your questions using the appropriate “who,” “what,” “where,” “when,” “why,” and “how” question word. If applicable (e.g., essay tests), begin your questions using the appropriate essay test question word (e.g., analyze, apply, compare, contrast, criticize or evaluate, define, describe, diagram, differentiate or distinguish, enumerate or list, explain or discuss, identify, illustrate, interpret, justify or defend or support, outline, propose, prove, relate, state, summarize, and trace). 3. Recite: Cover the notes in the Notes Column with a sheet of paper or your hand. Then, looking at the questions in the Recall Column, say aloud the questions and say aloud the answers from memory to the questions. Check your answer in the Notes Column. If you recite the answer correctly, draw a check (✓) next to the question. Repeat the question-and-answer process. If you have difficulty remembering answers completely and accurately, check your question, and then check to see if the information in your notes is both meaningful and organized. 4. Reflect: Think about the information in your notes and ask yourself, for example: “What is the significance of this information?” “How can I relate this information to my personal life and what I already know and have experienced?” “How can I apply this information?” “What is my personal reaction to this information?” “How can I better organize this information?” “What are the key principles or concepts I need to know and understand?” “What information might come next or in what direction the instructor appear to be heading in future lectures?” 5. Summarize: After class, briefly restate the main ideas of the notes on the page. 6. Review: Study your notes nightly or several times during the week. Schedule frequent, short reviews. Be active as you review so recite your questions and recite the answers from memory; don’t just read your notes or read the questions and answers.
<p>↑ 3" ↓</p>	<p>Summary</p> <p>After class, use this space to summarize the notes on the page.</p>

Revised January 2008