Taking notes is an important skill when it comes to learning college material. However, effective note-taking requires practice. So why take them in the first place? Note-taking allows you to interact with your learning. It also increases your learning potential by reinforcing the information you are reading or listening to.

Choosing the Right “Notebook”

Keeping your notes for your classes in one place will help you keep organized. Choose one that works for you:
- Notebook for each class or one with dividers
- Loose leaf & 3-ring binder
- Power Point Presentations
- Handouts

Keep Your Notes Organized and Consistent

Your notes should consist should follow a similar format for each class meeting. However, not all of your classes will be able to follow the same method. However, all classes can utilize the following:
- Date and title with topic
- Don’t write down everything you hear
  - Short sentences with key words
  - Abbreviations and symbols
  - Omit full descriptions
- Leave space for later additions.

“Rule of 5”

Following a system like the “rule of 5” will help you in reviewing and retaining the information you are hearing and reading.
- Read assigned chapters before class
- Actively listen
- Take effective notes
- Review those notes within 24 hours
- Talk about the lecture outside of the class (teach another student, discuss with classmate, etc.)
### Listen for Those Key Words or Phrases

Being alert and listening for those key words/phrases can help you keep track of what you should be writing down. Use your own words, but don’t change the meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>Specifically, To illustrate, For example, For instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause – and – Effect</td>
<td>Consequently, Therefore, As a result, If...then, Hence, So, Accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumeration</td>
<td>Four steps are..., First, second, third..., Next, Finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>On the other hand, In Contrast, Conversely, Although, Finally, Despite, Whereas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>For these reasons, On the whole, In Conclusion, In a nutshell, To summarize, In short, Finally...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test</td>
<td>This is important...Remember this...You’ll see this again... You need to know this... This will be on the test ... Here’s a tip... Watch out for this pitfall...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rework ... Not Recopy

After you have taken your notes, go back and rework them by adding extra points, adding to unclear concepts, etc. It is important to budget your time for this just as you would for the class itself.