

Do not try to record every word the instructor says. Listen actively to class lectures, evaluate the importance of the information presented, make connections between ideas, and write down the key information in your own words.

Record Main Ideas

1. *Listen for repeated points*
 - a. Repeated points typically signal important ideas or concepts.
 - b. Look for signals such as “You will recall...” or “As we saw last week...”
 - c. Write down the ideas or concepts.
2. *Listen for changes in voice and rate of speech*
 - a. The instructor’s voice may get louder or softer or higher or lower as he or she presents important ideas.
 - b. The instructor may slow down or pause between key points to give you time to write them down.
3. *Listen for lists and numbered points*
4. *Record your instructor’s written notes*
 - a. Some instructors write or project key words or outlines while they speak
 - b. Although instructors may not write all important ideas, any words or phrases that are written should be considered important.
5. *Note visuals*
 - a. Make note of any diagrams, charts, or pictures that instructors show in class.
 - b. PowerPoint slides, videos, and photographs all can emphasize or describe important concepts.
6. *Listen for direct announcements*
 - a. Phrases such as “It is particularly important that you remember...” and “One important fact that you must keep in mind is...” or hints such as “This would make a good exam question...” all can signal that important information is to follow.
 - b. Mark hints in your notes with an asterisk or write “EXAM” In the margin.
7. *Be alert for nonverbal clues*
 - a. Pacing, hand gestures, and other movements can be used for emphasis.

Record Details and Examples

1. *Record only details that support the main ideas*
2. *Write a brief phrase to summarize each main idea*
3. *Pay attention to examples*
 - a. If an instructor provides several examples of a particular situation or problem, include at least one example.
 - b. Record more than one example only if you have time. Record a key word to jog your memory later if you are running out of time.

Take Organized Notes

1. *Use phrases and abbreviations*
 - a. Use as few words as possible while still clearly stating the main ideas.
 - b. You do not need to write in complete sentences.
 - c. Abbreviate words whenever you can.

2. *Leave blank spaces*
 - a. Leave enough space so that you can read the notes easily and add more information later if necessary.
 - b. Leaving the margins blank is always a good idea.
3. *Mark assignments and ideas that are unclear*
 - a. If your instructor gives information about a test or an upcoming assignment, write it down, and write “assignment” or “test” in the margin next to the information.
 - b. If your instructor presents information that is unclear, put a question mark in the margin so that you remember to look up the answer or ask the professor a question later.
4. *Consider recording lectures*
 - a. You should always get permission before recording a lecture.
 - b. Recording lectures can be beneficial particularly if you are an auditory learner.
 - c. If English is not your native language, recording lectures can be beneficial because keeping up with lectures may be challenging if you are not familiar with all of the words being used by the instructor.
5. *Develop creative note-taking systems*
 - a. Standard outlining methods are some of the most commonly-used note-taking methods, but find what works for you. Create a system of underlining, asterisks, brackets, etc. that will make reviewing your notes the most effective for your learning style.
 - b. One suggestion is to develop a system of color-coding with pens or highlighters during or after lectures to distinguish particular kinds of information.
6. *Edit and review your notes*
 - a. As soon as possible after each class, reread your notes and edit them to clarify, explain, and rearrange ideas.
 - b. Make note of any area in your notes where you need more information, and fill in those gaps through asking a classmate, reading your textbook, or consulting with your instructor.
 - c. Writing notes with pen and paper can help you remember information better, but typing notes makes it easier to record more information in a short amount of time.