

## **Note-Taking**

### *Before Class:*

- Briefly read the material that will be covered in the upcoming class.
- Read over your notes from the previous class.
- Look at the course outline to see where you've been, where you're going, and how it all fits together.
- Meet with your teacher to clarify concepts from the last class.
- Get the notes from any class session you've missed.

### *During Class:*

- Date and title each set of notes and keep notes from different classes separate.
- Sit where you can hear and see clearly without distractions.
- Don't crowd your notes! Leave blanks to fill in missed items and to expand your notes later on.
- Ask your teacher or classmate to help you fill in the gaps if you think you missed important points.
- Stay involved in the class and ask questions. Volunteer for demonstrations. Join in class discussions.
- Take too many notes, rather than not enough. You can always omit unnecessary information later.
- Think to yourself, "Why is this important?"
- Focus on what point the teacher is on, rather than scrambling to write down the whole overhead without listening to what the teacher is saying.
- Write down notes in your own words when possible and think about what the teacher is saying. However, definitions of technical terms should be recorded exactly as given.
- Use abbreviations and symbols to save time. Make sure you understand your abbreviations!
- Take notes in different colours to highlight important points.
- Use underlining or symbols, such as an asterisk or star, to identify points your instructor emphasizes.

### *After Class:*

- Review notes within 24 hours of class, or else you are relearning.
- Should you recopy your notes? Some people benefit from rewriting or recopying their notes. However, be sure to leave time to think about your notes. Experiment and find out what works best for you.
- Use margin space to fill in abbreviations, add omitted points, correct errors, and write key words. Read notes to be sure you can clarify confusing or illegible material.
- Elaborate your notes. Compare the information to what you already know. Write additional information from the text into notes.
- Connect concepts to see their meaning in the larger picture - think of a summary in your head or write it at the end of your notes (Cornell Method).

- Practice reciting the information using only key words.
- Talk with other students about the class.

## **TAKING NOTES IN CLASS / LECTURES**

The Cornell system for taking notes is designed to save time but yet be highly efficient. There is no rewriting or retyping of your notes. It is a "DO IT RIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE" system.

### 1. First Step - PREPARATION

Use a large notebook or exam pad. Use only one side of the paper (you then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture). Draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches from the left side of your paper. This is the recall column. Notes will be taken to the right of this margin. Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column.

### 2. Second Step - DURING THE CLASS

Record notes in paragraph form. Capture general ideas, not illustrative ideas. Skip lines to show end of ideas or thoughts. Using abbreviations will save time. Write legibly.

### 3. Third Step - AFTER THE CLASS

Read through your notes and make it more legible if necessary. Now use the column. Jot down ideas or key words which give you the idea of the lecture. (REDUCE) You will have to reread the teacher's ideas and reflect in your own words. Cover up the right-hand portion of your notes and recite the general ideas and concepts of the class. Overlap your notes showing only recall columns and you have your review.

### Five R's of Not-taking

#### **1. RECORD:**

- During class, write all meaningful information legibly.
- Ask questions for everything you don't understand.
- Make sure your notes are complete

#### **2. REDUCE:**

After the class, write a summary of the ideas and facts using key words as cue words. Summarizing as you study helps to:

- Clarify meanings and relationships of ideas.
- Reinforce continuity.
- Strengthen memory retention.
- Prepare for exams in advance.

### **3. RECITE:**

To study properly, you must recite all the information in your own words without looking at your notes or the text.

### **4. REFLECT:**

Think about your own opinions and ideas as you read over your notes. Raise questions, then try to answer them creatively. Record original ideas in your notebook and review them regularly. Use your creative ideas when answering exam questions, in classroom discussions, and when writing papers.

### **5. REVIEW:**

Before reading or studying new material, take ten minutes to quickly review your older notes. Skim over the main ideas and details. Review enhances more effective retention of old material when adding new material to your memory system.

Call the BHP Billiton Career Centre on 011 639-8400 for more information on this and other topics.

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