

NOTE-TAKING IN THE CLASSROOM

I. The three parts of effective note-taking:

1. Observation: During note taking, observe the instructor's body language, kinds of visuals used and how they relate to the subject.
2. Recording: This is the note-taking part of the process. Knowledge of outlining, legible handwriting, supplies such as pen and paper, and even a tape recorder will be helpful and make taking notes easier.
3. Review: It is important to review what you have written to make certain that you have included all of your observations. Make a list of questions to ask the instructor if you need something clarified.

II. Tips for effective observation:

1. Do your homework: Complete all assignments that have been given prior to the lecture. The instructor will assume that you have become familiar with the subject before the lecture begins.
2. Be prepared: It helps to bring all necessary material. Be sure you have enough paper, a sharp pencil, a pen with ink, and if the instructor refers often to the text, bring this to class also. A highlighter may also be helpful.
3. Become an active observer: Where you sit is important. There are good reasons for sitting near the front. It is easier to see visuals, hear the instructor, and to take part in discussion. The instructor may also see it as a sign that you are committed to learning.

III. Tips to deal with a wandering mind:

1. Daydreaming is common. When it happens, stop and refocus.
2. Pay close attention to the instructor. Make eye contact when possible. Watch body language. Animation and facial expressions may indicate something important. Also, watch the instructor's eyes. Looking at notes usually signifies something important that they want to make sure they have covered.
3. Environment plays an important role in one's ability to concentrate. A room that is too cool or too hot may make it difficult to concentrate. Be sure to dress for comfort. Be aware of sounds that may be distracting and if the tone of voice used by the instructor is monotone, be prepared to make a special effort not to lose your focus.
4. When you disagree with something, make a mental or written note of it and talk to the instructor after class.
5. Lecture style can be distracting if you let them. Don't let your attitude get in the way of learning. Forget the way the instructor walks, dresses, talks, etc. and take notes on the important thing.
6. PARTICIPATE!! Ask questions, volunteer, and take part in class discussion. This keeps you on task.

IV. Clues to key information:

1. Repetition of information usually means that it is important to the instructor.
2. Use of visual aids such as charts, diagrams, and statistics
3. Use of phrases that signal relationships, cause and effect, and giving of examples.
4. Information that the instructor says is important should be written and highlighted.