

SHARPENING YOUR CLASSROOM SKILLS

Prepare for class:

- Attend regularly
- Use your syllabus and course website
- Bring textbook and other supplies to class everyday
- Do the assignments
- Anticipate the next day's lesson
- Exercise

Become an Active listener:

Hear What People Are Really Saying

The way to improve your listening skills is to practice "active listening." This is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the complete message being communicated. In order to do this you must pay attention to the other person very carefully. You cannot allow yourself to become distracted by whatever else may be going on around you, or by forming counter arguments while the other person is still speaking. Nor can you allow yourself to get bored, and lose focus on what the other person is saying.

Tip:

If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating his or her words mentally as he says them – this will reinforce his message and help you to stay focused. There are five key active listening techniques you can use to help you become a more effective listener:

1. Pay Attention

Give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts.
- Avoid being distracted by environmental factors. For example, side conversations.
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language.

2. Show That You're Listening

Use your own body language and gestures to show that you are engaged.

- Smile and use other facial expressions.
- Make sure that your posture is open and interested.
- Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and "uh huh."

3. Provide Feedback

Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect on what is being said and to ask questions.

4. Defer Judgment

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.

- Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
- Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

5. Respond Appropriately

Active listening is designed to encourage respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting her down.

- Be candid, open and honest in your response.
- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person in a way that you think she would want to be treated.

It takes a lot of concentration and determination to be an active listener. Old habits are hard to break, and if you're listening skills are as bad as many peoples are, then you'll need to do a lot of work to break these bad habits.

Develop a personal note-Taking system

Note taking is an essential skill for university students, but taking notes and integrating information from many sources, including textbooks, labs, online discussions, lectures, and/or seminars, can be challenging. If your in-class notes are messy, unorganized, and unclear at first glance, you're not going to get much use out of them. This has nothing to do with how neat your handwriting is — it's all about how your notes are structured.

One of the most effective ways to remember (and understand) what you are learning in class is to take effective notes in the classroom. Better notes will help you remember concepts, develop meaningful learning skills, and gain a better understanding of a topic. Effective notes will even lead to less stress when test time comes around!

Learning how to take better study notes in class helps improve recall and understanding of what you are learning because it:

- Ensures you are actively listening to what the teacher is saying
- Requires you to think about what you are writing
- Helps you make connections between topics
- Serves as quality review material for after class

Using different note taking strategies is important, especially as you progress through high school and transition to college or university. There are several note taking techniques you can use to start taking better notes in class.

5 METHODS TO FIND THE BEST NOTE TAKING METHOD FOR YOU!

- The Cornell method
- The Mapping method
- The outlining method
- The charting method
- The sentence method

Guideline for Note-Taking:

- Concentrate on the lecture or on the reading material
- Write only important information
- No complete sentences
- Take notes selectively. Don't try to write down every word.
- Look over your notes from the previous lecture to provide continuity with the lecture you are about to hear.
- Record your notes clearly and as completely as possible. ...
- Re-read your notes after every lecture.

It is important to develop these skills. Good note-taking will help you in all your classes.

The informal outline/keyword system:

Instead of including all of the numerals, and letters, informal outlines mean placing notes on the page to indicate links between main points, supporting ideas, and specific examples. Place main points at the left margin of the page and indent supporting points below them. Outline notes require active listening and thoughtful decision to determine and record important points, yet it allows you to record as much supporting detail as you need. Such notes are easiest when a class presentation is well organized and especially helpful when the instructor provides a preview such as a brief outline, a handout, or PowerPoint slides.

The Cornell method:

In this method, you divide your paper into three sections: notes, cues, and summary. Your notes section is for the notes you take during class. You can structure them however you like, but most people like to use the outline method. Write your cues section either during or directly after class. This section can be filled out with main points, people, or potential test questions. Use this section to give yourself cues to help you remember larger ideas.

You can write your summary section directly after class, or later when you're reviewing your notes. Use this section to summarize the entire lecture. Keep your cue and summary sections as simple as possible.

Matching Note-Taking style and Learning style:

Students often have different tactics when it comes to writing notes. Some will copy everything they hear and see in class. Others will write only the facts and look up the rest of the details on their own. There is no one perfect way to conduct note-taking. Rather, different note-taking techniques suit different learning styles

If you are looking for the best way to do notes, first you need to ask yourself: What is your learning preference?

There are 4 types of learning styles can be found in students:

- Visual
- Tactile or kinesthetic learners
- Auditory learners
- Learners who are good at reading and writing.

Check out the tips and see which note-taking technique best fits your style.

Visual Learner

What is a Visual Learner?

A visual learner can analyze the information when they see data before their eyes. The information could come from a picture, colour, diagram or maps. Visual learners also have great memory recall and organize information to get the right facts.

What note-taking technique fits this type of learner?

A great way to take notes if you are a visual learner is by using pictures, colours or diagrams to support the notes. These learners can use colour-coded notes to organize their notes better and memorize them easily. Another great strategy to use for these learners is with the help of a mind map.

Auditory Learners

What is an auditory learner?

This type of learner learns faster when they get the information verbally. They can follow instructions even if it is given verbally and explain them. They can also solve problems by communicating directly with others.

What note-taking technique fits this type?

A great note-taking strategy for this type of learner will help them listen and recall the information given. If it is possible, ask your teacher if you can record the class with your phone or recorder. This will help you listen during the lectures and when you study, you can use the recorded audio to listen to it again. Auditory learners will also benefit by speaking the facts out loud then recording it. Using this method will help you record your thoughts as you explain each point vocally. Afterwards, listen to your recording wherever you go.

If you cannot record yourself or your lectures, you can listen to the information and write it. This will help you gather information faster, analyze it and write down the key points that have to be remembered.

Kinesthetic Learners

What is a Kinesthetic Learner?

This type of learner learns and understands concepts while doing or moving. They can analyze new information by applying them. They are also great in analyzing gestures and another person's body language.

What note-taking technique fits this type of learner?

Having an opportunity to engage or move is a great way for tactile learners to take notes. They can also write their notes on note cards and flashcards. You can also type your notes on your computer or any other gadget. When you type, your hands are busy and you move a lot more. You will then be able to focus on what you are typing and still keep busy.

Read/Write Learners

What are Read/write learners?

This type of learner learns well when they read. They also love to jot down notes and read what is written to get the information and analyze them. They are learners capable of listing down information and remember it as they write it down. They also transfer information through their notes.

What note-taking techniques fits this type of learner?

Since these learners love to take notes for information and organize each fact in headers, the best note-taking technique they can do is use sentences for their notes.

To do the sentence method, here are the things to do:

- Write the key information in a full sentence.
- Organize your information in headings
- Write only the key information so you can keep up with your lecture.

To create the best study notes, you need to know what learning style works best for you. When you know this, you will be able to develop new ways to improve the way you do your notes and get an improvement in your grades.

Learn how to make effective presentation:

A presentation is a means of communication which can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team. To be effective, step-by-step preparation and the method and the means of presenting the information should be carefully considered.

There are some tips to learn how to make presentation and to improve your presentation skills:

- Practice
- Show your passion and connect with your audience
- Focus on your audience needs
- Keep it simple: concentrate on your core message
- Start strongly
- Use your voice effectively