

Great note-taking takes practice. You have to find a method that works for you, and that may change depending on the class that you're in (for example, a science class versus a humanities class). Here are 5 methods that are proven to be successful. Read over each one and decide if there's one that might work for you.

These styles are described in the format you would use to take notes in class. You might find that a comfortable method is a combination of 2 or more of the ones listed here, and that's fine. Figure out what works for you and stick with it!

THE CORNELL METHOD

Page #

Today's Date

Layout of the page and where to write

You physically draw a line vertically down your paper, leaving 2.5 inches on the left and 6 inches on the right.

This allows you to take notes on the right-hand side of the page leaving space on the left to summarize the main point with a cue word or phrase.

Organization of concepts

When the instructor moves to a new topic, skip a line.

It is also a great idea to use some organizational structure to your whole page.

- Use bullets!
- ✓ Use an indented system – kind of like outlining
- You can underline important words.

Filling in blanks.

If you aren't able to completely write down an idea before the instructor moves on to a new topic, *fill it in after class.*

Reviewing and Studying

After class, test your knowledge of course material by covering up the right side of the page, reading the cue words, and trying to remember as much information as possible. Then check to see if you remembered correctly. *Also write page and day summaries.*

Advantages

This is a simple and efficient way of recording and reviewing notes – it's easy for pulling out major concepts and ideas. It's simple and efficient. It saves time and effort because you "do-it-right-in-the-first-place."

THE OUTLINING METHOD

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Class Topic: How To Outline Notes

- I. The first level is reserved for each new topic/idea and is very general.
 - a. This concept must always apply to the level above it (I)
 - i. This concept must always apply to the level above it (a)
 - ii. This is a second supporting piece of information for the level above it (a) but is equal to the previous information (i)
 - iii. This information is a sister to (i) and (ii)
 - b. This concept applies to the level above it (I) and is a “sister” to (a)
- II. You don't have to use Roman Numerals, Letters, and Numbers – try only indents, dashes, and bullets!
- III. Outlining requires listening and writing in points in an organizational pattern based on space indentation
 - a. Advantages to outlining
 - i. It is well-organized
 - ii. It records relationships and content
 - iii. It reduces editing and is easy to review by turning the main points into questions
 - b. Disadvantages to outlining
 - i. It requires more thought during class for accurate organization.
 - ii. It does not always show relationships by sequence.
 - iii. It doesn't work well if the lecture is moving at a quick pace.

THE CHARTING METHOD

Page #

Today's Date

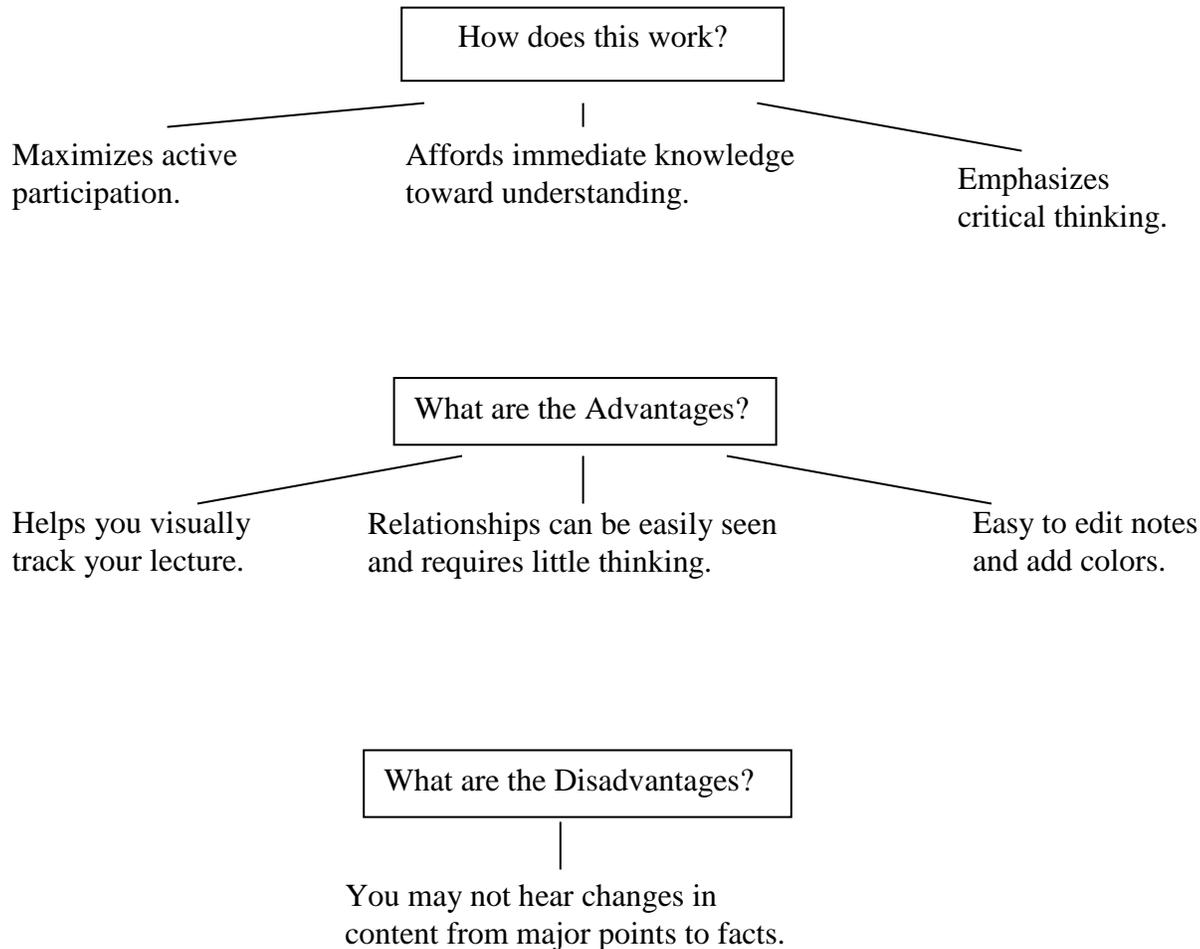
How?	Advantages	Disadvantages	When to Use it?
Set up your paper in columns and label appropriate headings.	Helps pull out the most relevant information.	Can be a hard system to learn to use.	If you'll be tested on facts and relationships.
The headings could be categories covered in the lecture.	Also reduces the amount of writing necessary.	You need to know the content that will be covered during the lecture before it begins.	If content is heavy and presented quickly – such as a history course with dates, people, events, etc.
Insert information (words, phrases, main ideas, etc) into the appropriate category.	Provides easy review for memorizing facts and studying comparisons and relationships.		If you want to get an overview of the whole course on one big paper.

THE MAPPING METHOD

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A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF A CONCEPT



THE SENTENCE METHOD

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1. Write every new thought, fact, or topic on a separate line as you progress, numbering each sentence.
2. Advantages: it's more organized than writing paragraphs and still records most of the information.
3. Disadvantages: it's hard to determine major/minor points and it's hard to edit and review with clean-up.
4. It's a good method when there's lots of information and you don't know how the ideas fit together.
5. You can make some connections as you go (for more information, refer to #2).

Developed from <http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetaking.systems.html>