

# A Plan for Effective Listening and Note-Taking

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## Did you know you can think about four times faster than a lecturer can speak?

That means that in order to learn effectively from lectures, you have to **listen** and **take notes effectively**. This is an active process; it doesn't happen automatically. Try the strategies below and see how they work for you.

### BEFORE CLASS

- Develop a mind-set geared toward listening.
- Test yourself over the previous lecture while waiting for the next one to begin.
- Skim relevant reading assignments to acquaint yourself with main ideas, new technical terms, etc.
- Enhance your physical and mental alertness: eat a snack before class, sit in the front and/or center of the room, and focus your attention on the speaker.

### DURING CLASS

- Listen for the structure and information in the lecture.
- Resist distractions, emotional reactions, or boredom.
- Pay attention to verbal, postural, and visual clues as to what's important.
- When possible, translate the lecture into your own words.
- Be consistent in your use of form, abbreviation, etc.
- Ask questions.
- Instead of closing your notebook early and getting ready to leave, listen carefully to information given toward the end of class; summary statements may be of particular value in highlight main points; there may be possible quiz questions, etc.

### AFTER CLASS

- Clear up any questions raised by the lecture by asking either the teacher or classmates.
- Fill in missing points or misunderstood terms from text or other sources.
- Edit your notes, labeling main points, adding recall clues and questions to be answered. Key points in the notes can be highlighted with various colors.

### PERIODICALLY

- Review your notes: glance at your recall clues and see how much you can remember before rereading.
- Look for the emergence of themes, main concepts, methods of presentation over the course of several lectures.
- Make up and answer possible test questions.