



## BLACK HAWK COLLEGE

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# Taking Notes

### The Importance of Good Lecture Notes

1. When you take good lecture notes you will be able to review material for exams directly from your notes.
2. The process of taking notes provides you repetition of the information that you are learning by both listening and writing the information. This repetition helps you to learn the information.
3. Taking notes helps you to keep your attention focused in class.

### How to Take Good Lecture Notes

The Cornell Notetaking method is easy to use and it will help you organize your notes and prepare them for later review. The following information explains the Cornell Notetaking method. An example of this method is provided on the other side of this handout. This method of notetaking is also useful when reading your textbooks.

- **Write the following information** in the top right hand corner of the page: Class, Date, Page Number (fill in the date and page number for every sheet of a day's lecture).
- **Take your notes on the larger right-hand section** of the page, and leave the left-hand margin blank. Draw a 2½ inch line down the left side of the page and a 2 inch line across the bottom of the page (these sections will be used later).
- **Skip spaces** to show changes of topic and to leave room for later insertions or edits, and indent to show subtopics and details.
- **Leave blanks** for words, phrases, or ideas you think you may have missed. Directly after class, ask the instructor or another student to help you fill in the blanks, and thus complete and clarify your thoughts.
- **Write legibly**, so that you do not need to copy your notes again later. Rewrite unclear sentences and fill in incomplete thoughts when you edit your notes, rather than taking the extra time to recopy your set of notes.

- **Abbreviate common words** (such as “because” and “and”) and other frequently used words (words that are related to the course topic), and eliminate articles (such as “the” and “a”) to save time and to get down more information.
- **Edit your notes** after class *that day* by writing the major topics, key terms, and questions (“cue questions or words”) in the small left-hand column. This process must be done within the first 24 hours after a lecture.
- **Write a summary** at the bottom of your page of notes. You will be able to use this as a preview by reading it right before the next class. It will also serve as a study review tool or when later trying to locate specific information.
- **Review these notes** by covering the right-hand section of the page and quizzing yourself from the cue questions or words you wrote in the left-hand column. Information you can no longer recall should be highlighted and studied further.