

**NOTETAKING:**  
How to become a more successful student by active engagement

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**DIAGNOSTIC EXERCISE**

- o I will lecture to you for a few minutes and have you take notes on what you have heard and seen.
- o Then, we will discuss the outcome.



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**DID YOU COME PREPARED?**

- o Did you have your pen and paper ready to take notes as soon as I started talking?
- o Did you write everything I said or just the important things?
- o Did you write down the things that I wrote on the board?



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THINGS TO DO BEFORE CLASS TO PREPARE:

- o Briefly review your notes from the last class
- o Write comments in the margins to expand upon the original notes
- o Write clarification questions that you would like to ask the instructor in the margins
- o Highlight anything that seems to mirror important ideas from your reading assignment
- o Highlight or underline anything that the instructor repeats



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HOW TO TAKE NOTES IN CLASS

- o Listen carefully to the instructor and the discussion presented by your classmates
- o Rid yourself of distractions – turn off your phone, if you know that you cannot have a laptop without looking at facebook, don't bring it to class.
- o If you are a person that has a lot of different things going in in his/her head and that distracts you, get a small notebook to jot down "to-do" items whenever they crop up. That will let you stop obsessing about that thing you need to do and listen to the lesson.
- o If the instructor is speaking too rapidly, ask her/him to slow down!
- o If someone makes a point that you do not understand, ask for clarification.



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PRAGMATICS

- o Start a new page for each new class/each time you are taking notes
- o Date and number the page
- o Leave blank spaces for comments and questions



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WHAT, EXACTLY, TO WRITE DOWN?

- o Pay attention to content
- o Write down details, facts, or explanations of main points
- o Write down examples
- o Write down definitions, word for word
- o Write down ANYTHING written on a whiteboard or transparency
- o Write down anything repeated or spelled out



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WHAT STYLE SHOULD I CHOOSE?

- o The Cornell Method
- o The Outline Method
- o The Mapping Method
- o The Charting Method
- o The Sentence Method



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THE CORNELL METHOD

- o Divide your page into two portions, one about six inches wide, the other about three. In the larger part, take notes. Leave spaces when you are inputting new information. In the small part, put "cue" words to keep you on track as you study your notes. When you do review, cover up the larger portion and just look at the cue words as a "test" of the material.



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### THE OUTLINING METHOD

- o This method is very good for math or science
- o Place major points on the left-hand side of your page.
- o Indent new points in relation to the topic itself, with the most important points closest to the main topic

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### THE MAPPING METHOD

- o Create a picture of the lecture
- o Works best when the lecture is well-organized and a great deal of information is being discussed
- o Is also helpful when you have no idea what the lecture will be about!
- o Put the main idea in the middle and then branch off of it, either using bubbles or arrows.

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### THE CHARTING METHOD

- o You create columns for different types of information, and then you fill in the columns
- o This is helpful for a class where you know that the instructor will hit on certain types of topics in each lecture
- o Acts as a way to highlight information quickly

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THE SENTENCE METHOD

- o This is the way that most people take notes
- o You try to write down every new bit of information in sentence format
- o The problem is that you often miss the most important part of the lecture when you try to write down each and every word!



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HOW TO TAKE NOTES AT HOME

- o Create a study environment that works for your needs: well-lit, well-ventilated, quiet, not too comfy!
- o Figure out when you study best, as some people are more alert in the morning rather than at night and vice versa



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BE MENTALLY PREPARED

- o Have a notebook with you as well as working pens, pencils and highlighters
- o Make a study calendar for yourself – chart all due dates at the beginning of the semester
- o Set study goals for yourself – how much you want to cover – and don't try to take on too much or you will get overwhelmed
- o Design some sort of reward for yourself when you reach that goal (get up and take a walk, get a soda, check facebook for two minutes)
- o Break up your studying by varying your topics
- o Make sure you give yourself rest periods



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**BECOME BFF WITH YOUR TEXTS**

- o Look through your texts before you start studying and see how the whole thing is set up. Look for the table of contents, the index and a glossary. Some texts will have appendices as well.
- o Look at each individual chapter set-up. Keep in mind that the bolded sections are often most important, many texts will include a summary of the chapter at the end with all of the most important points and if there are any questions included in the chapter, take a stab at answering them. Many times you will see versions of these questions on tests.
- o Study smarter, not harder!

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**THE FOUR R'S...**

- o Review regularly
- o Revise when necessary
- o Recite the material to yourself
- o Reflect on what you have learned

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**MOST IMPORTANTLY...**

- o Remember that your instructor is your most important resource
- o See the instructor during her/his office hours if you are unclear about a concept in class
- o Don't be afraid to email your instructor if office hour times do not work for you
- o If the instructor cannot meet with you, be sure to utilize the other avenues for help you have on campus
- o Take responsibility for your own learning – if you are unsure of your notes, ask a classmate if you can compare your notes to his/hers; if the teacher speaks too rapidly, ask if you can record the lecture; if you feel that you will gain more from hearing the lecture again, ask if the lecture will be repeated in a different class and if it is ok for you to attend that one; and always ask questions when you need clarification!

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