

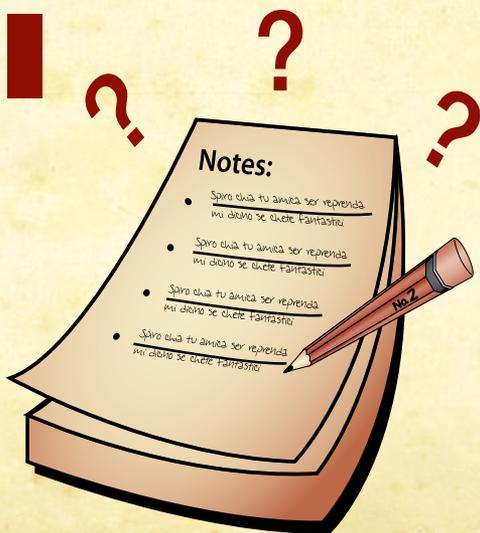
The WRITING CENTER

Elftmann Student Success Center

A Guide On How To:

Take Notes

- What is note taking?
- Why should I take notes?
- What are basic steps?



Note Taking

What is note taking?

A note-taking system is a fixed set of steps a student uses to keep notes organized, make information easy to find, and prepare for your exam.



Why should I take notes?

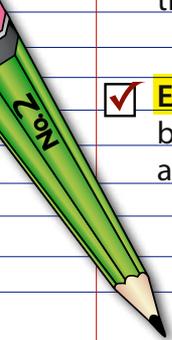
The most important reason for taking notes is that it provides a quick, easy way to look for overlaps, which are often indicators of test material. Only 20-30% of learners learn best by hearing, so the other **70-80% of learners need to see and/or write down information** in order to process it best (Carbo et al. 1986).

What are the basic steps to taking notes?

Just P.R.E.S.S!

1. PREPARE – Proper preparation for taking notes will help you prepare for the lecture, and be able to take in the new material.

- ✓ **Review** past notes while you wait for class to start.
- ✓ **Anticipate** the topics to be discussed in class by looking at the syllabus or the bolded words in the textbook.
- ✓ **Prepare** to actively listen by having your materials ready at the beginning of the lecture.
- ✓ **Eating healthy** and getting **enough sleep** will allow your body to concentrate on more complex tasks, like learning and listening.

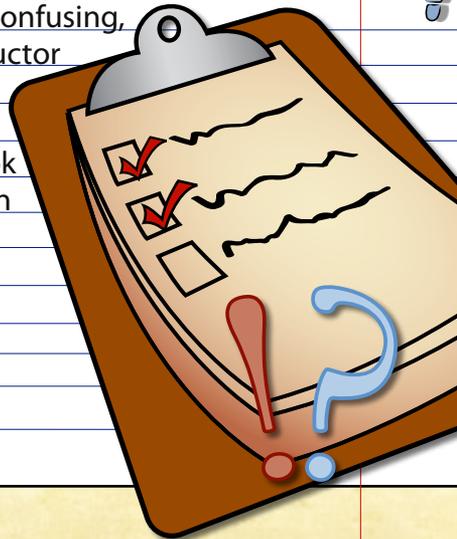




2. RECORD – Always write the **date** and **title** of the lecture at the top of your page to keep your notes organized. Instead of trying to scribble everything down word-for-word, create your own **coding system** that will allow you to note main ideas and details quickly.

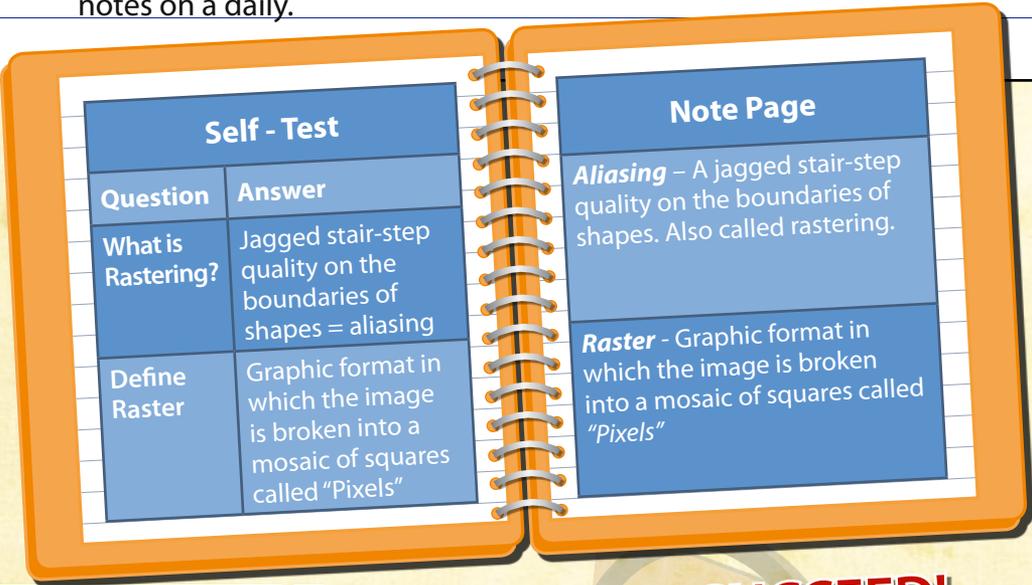
Code	Example
Use a capital letter for a key word:	E = electrical
Use math symbols for word:	+, -, ±, ∞, ≠, ÷,
Use all capital letters for key ideas:	JPEG
Use circles, squares, clouds to highlight key information	

3. EDIT – Read and edit your notes within two hours after the class has ended. **Editing** your **notes** is an excellent way to **check** your own **comprehension**, and correct any mistakes you may have made. If something is confusing, make a note to clarify it with the instructor before the next class session. In the margin of your notebook page, make a reference that connects your textbook reading to class lecture notes. Topics in lecture notes, and in the textbook are usually included on the test.





4. STUDY – The energy you spend taking notes will be wasted if you don't **use** them to **prepare** for your **exam**. Simulate the test by using the opposing page of your note page to **create a self-test**. By folding the paper along the column line, you will be able to ask yourself a test question and immediately check if your answer is correct. A good habit to develop is to review your notes on a daily.



References

- Carbo, Marie, Rita Dunn, and Kenneth Dunn. Teaching Students to Read Through Their Individual Learning Styles. Prentice-Hall, 1986.
- McWhorter, Kathleen. College Reading and Study Skills. 11th ed. Pearson. 2010.
- Zorn, Donald. "Increasing Achievement Scores With the Use of the Cornell Note Taking Style." Heritage College. Spring 2007. Available online: http://www.heritage.edu/library/mastersprojects/Zorn_Donald_2007.pdf.

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5. SUCCEED!