



St. Edmund's Academy

An Independent School

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IMPROVING NOTE TAKING SKILLS

The most important thing to understand about note taking is that you need to do more than simply listen and write. You need to *listen, think, react, question, summarize, organize, label and write.*

Be Prepared...

- Complete your assigned reading before you come to class. That way you can follow what is being discussed.
- Have a separate notebook for each class and an extra pen or pencil.
- Label and date your notes at the beginning of each class period.

Be Attentive...

- Listen for any special instructions, rules, or guidelines your teacher may have regarding notebooks and note taking.
- Write your notes as neatly as time will allow; leave space in the margin for working with your notes later.
- Begin taking notes immediately.
- Relate the material to something in your life by writing a brief personal observation or reminder.

Be Concise...

- Summarize the main ideas, listing only the necessary details. *Remember*, taking good notes does *not* mean writing down everything.
- Condense information. Write your notes in phrases and lists rather than complete sentences.
- Use abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols (US, ave., in., ea., lb., @, #, \$, %, &, +, =, w/o).
- Draw simple illustrations, charts or diagrams in your notes whenever they will make a point clearer.

Be Organized...

- Write a title or heading for each new topic covered in your notes.
- Leave wide margins or skip a line or two between main ideas. When you're reviewing later, you'll have room to add study notes.
- Listen for transitions or signal words to help you organize your notes. Number all ideas and information presented in sequence or time order.
- Use a special system of marking your notes to emphasize important information (underline, highlight, star, check, and indent).
- Label or mark information that is related by cause and effect, by comparison or contrast, or by any other special way.

Be Wise...

- Always copy down what the teacher writes on the board.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something.
- Circle those words or ideas that you will need to look up later.
- Don't let your notes sit until it is time to review for a test. Read over the notes you have taken within 24 hours and recopy, add details, highlight or summarize, as necessary.
- Write down key words in the left-hand column. Cover your notes and try to restate what was said about each key word.
- Share your note taking techniques, abbreviations, or special markings with others; then learn from what they share with you.

Tips for Remembering Your Notes

- Relate the materials to your life.
- Recite ideas and facts out loud.
- Draw diagrams, illustrations, and clusters.
- Study the material with someone or teach it to someone.
- Visualize it.
- Study your most difficult material first.
- Use acronyms, rhymes, rap, and flash cards.

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