

Taking Good Notes

Do you know when to take notes in your math class? Do you know what to write down in your notes? Do you have a system for note taking? Do you use your notes regularly to help you with your studying, homework, and test preparation?

Note taking is a very important part of any math class. Knowing how and when to take notes can make the difference between your being a frustrated student and your being an organized and productive student. You can increase your level of success by becoming a good note taker.

When to take notes

1. When the instructor writes on the board or overhead
2. When the instructor pauses
3. When the instructor repeats information
4. When the instructor makes comments such as, "this can be difficult" or "this is where a lot of students make a mistake"
5. When the instructor mentions that this material may be on the test
6. When the instructor summarizes

"At first my notes were scattered and unorganized. But I soon caught on to another method of note taking."

MARC Student

How to take Notes

One way is to use the Cornell Method for note taking. Divide your page into two parts. The right hand side is for your normal notes and the left hand side is for rewriting the key points or writing notes or questions to yourself.

		Heading
		Name
		Date
		Section of text
Comment Section	Note Section	
<i>This is where you put main ideas, terms being defined, questions you have, reminders for important points, etc.</i>	<i>This is where you will take notes during class.</i>	
	<i>Include definitions, procedures, and example problems</i>	
	<i>Make sure you leave extra space in your notes. It helps keep them readable and allows you to add information later.</i>	
<i>You can do this either during class or after class.</i>		
Summary Row		
<i>This row is for summarizing the page's content when you review your notes.</i>		

What to do with your notes

A lot of memory loss occurs right after learning new material, so it is important to revise your notes as soon as possible after your class. When you revise your notes you may want to check your notes against another student's notes to ensure accuracy. No matter what your learning style you can benefit from revising your notes. *Auditory* learners may want to use a recording device to help them add to and revise notes. *Visual* learners will want to add color and other visual symbols to their notes. *Kinesthetic* learners may benefit by entirely re-writing notes while making additions and corrections to them.

1. Fill in any gaps or missing steps.
2. Add additional key words, definitions and formulas.
3. Add additional examples of problems from the text (the main section or the homework).

Once you have taken notes, you need to let them work for you. Use your notes for reference when you are doing your homework. Read through and/or rewrite your notes while you are studying for your exams. Read back through your previous notes from the chapter each night to keep the material fresh in your mind.

