

LECTURE NOTE TAKING

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BEFORE THE LECTURE

Believe it or not, there are things you can do before the lecture even starts to increase and improve note taking. Remember to do these four Bes — BE there, BE on time, BE up front, and BE on the edge — BEfore lectures.

BEFORE THE LECTURE

- 1** BE There!
 - If you don't attend lectures you'll have nothing to review.
- 2** BE on Time!
 - If you're late, you're missing valuable lecture information.
- 3** BE Up Front!
 - Sit up front where there are fewer distractions and where it's easier to concentrate.
- 4** BE on the Edge!
 - Be prepared emotionally to record all key lecture ideas. Be prepared physically by having the necessary materials on hand and being in good physical shape come lecture time.
 - Be prepared mentally by reading related text chapters and reviewing previous notes before lectures.

DURING THE LECTURE

During the lecture, you want to record complete notes. To be sure you do, don't forget the "Four GETS" — GET it all, GET it fast, GET it now, and GET it again.

DURING THE LECTURE

- 1** GET It All!
 - Record all main ideas, details, and examples. Follow the lecturer's cues as to what's particularly important. Cues can be nonverbal, spoken, or written.
 - Nonverbal cues might include pointing; clapping; finger snapping; hand waiving; a piercing glance; an extended pause; or variations in voice pitch, volume, cadence, or speed.
 - Spoken cues might include when an instructor says "noteworthy," "critical," "important," or "imperative." Obviously, "This will be on your test" is always

something to note. Also, listen for when an instructor repeats a term or phrase.

- Written cues can appear in many places: chalkboard, overheard, PowerPoint, handout, etc. With outlines, questions, objectives, etc., remember that these written aids are provided to signal important ideas and to guide note taking.

- 2** GET It Fast!

- Jot down phrases rather than complete sentences and use abbreviations and notations to speed note taking.
- Compensate for rapid lecture rates by using abbreviations and notations while recording lecture notes. Some examples are below.
 - BP Behavioral Psychology
 - VR Variable Ratio

- 3** GET It Now!

- Slow down fast-talking lectures by raising questions, offering comments, or simply asking the lecturer to slow down or provide more note-taking time.
 - Students attending lectures rarely ask instructors to repeat information they do not hear clearly — information that is critically important to understanding lecture.
 - If there's information you don't understand, ask the instructor to clarify it by rephrasing or explaining it. For example, "You mentioned that this related to reinforcement of the theory. Could you please explain how?"

- Remember that successful lecture learning depends on recording complete notes. If you don't exercise some responsibility in how the lecture is delivered, you are going to pay the consequences of missing valuable information.

- 4** GET It Again!

- Tape-record or videotape lectures. Add to your existing notes when you replay the lecture. The first time you hear a lecture, you are likely to note the lecturer's main ideas but miss many important details and examples. These are easily added to your notes when you hear or see the lecture again.

AFTER THE LECTURE

Using the “BE” and GET” techniques should greatly increase and improve your note taking. Still, it’s likely that while recording lecture notes you’ll note a few things incorrectly and omit some key ideas. Therefore, continue to improve notes after the lecture by “upping” the number of correctly noted ideas. To do so, fill UP and fix UP.

AFTER THE LECTURE

1 Fill UP and Fix UP

- UP the number of ideas in notes by filling UP and fixing UP notes. Seek to correct notes and make them more complete by rereading your notes alone and in groups.
- Take a few minutes following the lecture, preferably that same day, while the material is still fresh in your mind, and read your notes thoughtfully. While doing so, seek to fix any incorrect statements and to fill in any missing information — particularly details and examples — because these were more likely omitted.
- Research shows that this revision process commonly adds another 20 percent of lecture information to notes. Students originally noting 40 percent of lecture ideas, for example, usually extend their notes to include about 60 percent of lecture ideas. This increase occurs because the original notes serve as prompts for remembering related lecture ideas that were not noted.
- To improve notes even more, meet with a few students from the class. You and your fellow students should take turns reading portions of your notes aloud. Group member should add missing points to their notes and offer noted points to help others complete their notes. Research shows that students using this technique have increased their notes so that they contain about 80 percent of the important lecture ideas.

