Listening and Note Taking

Skills to help you succeed!

Macon State College
Academic Resource Center
Academic Success Skills Workshop Series

Active Learning in Lectures

1. Prepare for class
2. Attend class
3. Actively listen

Preparing for Class

1. Reading
2. Notes review
3. Recommended problems
4. Reflection
Attending Class

1. A question of priorities

Active Listening

1. Intend to listen
2. Prepare ahead
3. Choose your seat
4. Conscious intention

A Few Things to Consider

1. Inventory of strategies
2. Tuning out
3. Tuning out strategies
4. Listening habits
5. Active listening
6. Distractions
7. Combating Distractions
Inventory of Listening Strategies

Consider the following and evaluate your strategy by responding to each question by moving your mouse over either "yes" or "no".

• I attend every (or almost every) lecture in each of my courses. Yes  No
• I prepare for class by reading the relevant parts of the text before the lecture. Yes  No
• I consult my course outline and I know which topics are going to be covered. Yes  No
• I go to each lecture intending to learn as much as possible. Yes  No
• I sit in a location where I can see and hear easily. Yes  No
• I avoid external distractions in a lecture: friends, doors, or windows. Yes  No
• I try to control internal distractions: hunger, worrying, or daydreaming. Yes  No
• I use abbreviations to capture the meaning of what is being said. Yes  No
• I can listen and take notes at the same time. Yes  No
• If I get lost during a lecture, I work hard to reconnect with the instructor. Yes  No

• I work on my notes and make sure they are easy to read. Yes  No
• If I don’t understand something in a lecture, I ask for help. Yes  No
• I review and edit my notes soon after each lecture. Yes  No
• As I consolidate my notes after each class, I look for and highlight the important information. Yes  No

Adapted from: Learning for Success: Effective Strategies for Students. Fleet, Goodchild, Zajchowski

How did you do?
Tuning Out?

1. Heard it before
2. Preoccupied
3. Difficult
4. Differing opinions

Strategies

1. Question yourself
2. Question the instructor
3. Focus
4. Connect

10 Best Listening Habits

1. Tune in
2. Get the message
3. Hear the speaker
4. Main idea
5. Listen before taking notes
6. Thought speed
7. Do not relax
8. Take care of distractions
9. Learn to listen
10. Word barriers
Active Listening Strategies

1. Review
2. Concentrate
3. Listen
4. Question

Dealing with Distractions

1. Internal
2. External

Combating Distractions

1. Eliminate the source
2. Avoid places, people and situations
Note Taking Strategies

1. Why take notes?
2. 5 R’s of note taking
3. Note taking methods

5 R’s of Note Taking

1. Record
2. Reduce
3. Recite
4. Reflect
5. Review

Key Words and Signal Phrases

1. What is note taking?
2. Focus
3. Class
Key Words and Signal Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cause-and-Effect</td>
<td>Consequently, therefore, so, a result, if…then, hence, so, accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumeration (Number) Words</td>
<td>The four steps are …, first, second, third, fourth, next, finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast Words</td>
<td>On the other hand, in contrast, conversely, although, however, despite, whereas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis Words</td>
<td>More important, above all, remember, in other words, finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Words</td>
<td>For these reasons, on the whole, in conclusion, in a nutshell, to sum up, in short, finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Words</td>
<td>This is important. Remember this. You’ll see this again. Here’s a pitfall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cornell Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Column</th>
<th>Record Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-- 2 Inches --</td>
<td>-- 6 Inches --</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the reading, write questions in this column for each main point in the record column.

Record patterns of main idea and support:
• in your own words when possible.

Use indentations:
• to show the relationships between main ideas and support.

Record Column

Write main ideas and supporting material in the right column:
• Use signals from the text
  • Titles & keywords = topics → main ideas
  • Transition words/phrase introduce details
    • First, next, some, this is called, there are two types
  • Abbreviations to get the full idea
    • Lower spaces between ideas so you can fill in more later
    • See how ideas relate to one another
Question Column

Write questions in the left column of your notes to quiz yourself on the material.

- Write questions in the question column on the same line as the item it refers to in the record column.
- Write a question for each new:
  • Topic
  • Main idea
  • Significant detail
- Write questions for details on which you think your professor will quiz you.

Quiz

Answer your questions in the left column.
- Cover the Record Column.
- Read your questions in the Question Column.
- Using your own words, answer your questions out loud.
- Uncover your notes and check what you have said against the facts.

Review

Review to improve your memory.
- If you spend 10 minutes every week or so in a quick review of your notes,
  • you will retain most of what you have studied
  • you won’t have to cram during an “all-nighter”
  • you will relate the facts and ideas to present lectures or readings.
Listen to the lecture about the “Legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

In the “Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” there are four main characters – including one that may not really exist. The first and most important character is Ichabod Crane. He is an ambitious schoolteacher, who hopes to marry the second character, Katrina Van Tassel. Katrina is the handsome daughter of a wealthy farmer. The third character is Brom Bones. He is Ichabod’s rival for Katrina, and he is also well known for his practical jokes. The fourth and final character is the frightening, ghostly figure of the Headless Horseman, who terrifies Ichabod into running away. But Irving strongly hints that this might simply be another of the characters in disguise.

Here are the notes:

**The Legend of Sleepy Hollow – 4 Main Characters**

1. **Ichabod Crane**
   - Most important
   - School teacher
   - Wants to marry Katrina

2. **Katrina Van Tassel**
   - Beautiful daughter of wealthy farmer

3. **Brom Bones**
   - Also wants to marry Katrina
   - Well known for practical jokes

4. **Headless Horseman**
   - Scary ghost
   - Scares Ichabod away
   - Might be another character (Brom?) in disguise
Note Taking Tips

1. Keep a separate notebook for each course.
2. Notes for each reading should begin on a new page.
3. Date and number all pages.
4. Never use a sentence when you can use a phrase, or a phrase when you can use a word.

Note Taking Tips, Cont.

A. Use indentations to distinguish between major (main ideas) and minor (supporting) points and details.
B. Put most notes in your own words, except for formulas, definitions, and specific facts.
C. Use abbreviations and symbols wherever possible.
D. If you completely don’t understand an idea, leave a blank space and ask your professor for help on it.

Note Taking Tips, Cont.

A. Develop a code system of note-marking
   1. Mark unfamiliar vocabulary & unclear ideas in unique ways:
      a. Highlight vocabulary in pink.
      b. Circle ideas that are still unclear
B. Make sure you can understand what you have written and if needed, make corrections.
C. Use drawings, arrows or other organizers to help you see concepts and relationships between them.
Mapping
1. Advanced learning, note taking, and study technique

Mind Maps
1. Central idea
2. Relationships become clear
3. Recall easier
4. Patterns
5. Making connections

Simple Map on Smoking
Efficient and Effective Notes
1. Thorough
2. Concise
3. Visible
4. Clear Connections
5. Legible handwriting
6. Symbols & abbreviations

A Few More Tips
1. Record the date
2. Don’t cram stuff on the page
3. Stay awake
4. Keep personal thoughts separate
5. Use a consistent format
6. Group and label ideas
7. Write what’s on the board
8. Use one side of the page
9. Condense and use shorthand
10. Look for patterns
11. Stay attentive

Finished Product
1. Re-read
2. Key words or phrases
3. Fill in missing information
4. Re-organize if needed
Wise Words

Take responsibility for your learning. If you don't understand something, then ask!

Help is Available!

See your instructor or a tutor if you need help!