LISTENING AND NOTETAKING

Good notetaking involves effective listening that includes concentrating on, selecting, summarizing, and finally, evaluating what is being said by the lecturer. The key to effective listening is to be an ACTIVE listener.

TO BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Prepare to listen.
Continually evaluate the material.
Listen with a questioning attitude.
React to the material.

HOW WELL DO YOU LISTEN?

Are you easily distracted?
Do you ignore nonverbal messages?
Is uninteresting material making it difficult to focus?

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR LISTENING SKILLS

1. Be prepared. Survey relevant test materials and notes. The more you know, the more interested you will be. Participate in an exchange of ideas rather than a bombardment of unfamiliar ideas and unrelated facts.

2. Acquaint yourself with a lecturer’s general lecture method and mannerisms. Pay attention to style, tone inflection of voice, pauses, accentuation of words, and nonverbal cues. Use these as signals for identifying important points.

3. Try not to be affected or distracted by lecturer’s mannerisms.

4. Transitional terms help in organizing information, as well as identifying key points.

Examples:

Numerical breakdown: the three main points are first of all
Significance: in general
the main point is
the main idea

Summarizing Cues: therefore
thus

5. Listen for supporting material for main ideas being presented.

6. Sit as near as possible to the front of the classroom as comfortable to facilitate:
   - Viewing of visual aids
   - Audibility of lecturer’s voice
   - Better concentration and less distraction
   - Nonverbal communication between lecturer and student.

7. Anticipate questions that you think will be answered during the lecture. Keep an open mind; you don’t have to agree with everything, but try to maintain focus until the message is fully developed.

NOTETAKING

Effective notetaking involves extracting and recording the important ideas covered in lecture in a way that will help you to recall them. Good notes provide a valuable means for review and learning, and can increase the probability of doing well on an exam.

WHY TAKE NOTES?

- To record information which may not be found elsewhere.
- To acquire important information which will be covered in an exam.
- To compile a permanent record for future reference.
- To be able to see the underlying organization and purpose of the lecture more clearly.

TO GET BETTER GRADES!!
SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR NOTETAKING

1. Think before writing. Relate what is being said to what you already know or have reviewed. Use your own interests/needs as well as information common to the course to guide your thoughts.

2. Preparing for class is an aid in helping you to become aware of the major concepts and in deciding what to record.

3. Be selective. Listen to everything, but do not try to write it all down. Search for the main ideas and sort out the important subpoints and details. Notes should be brief, legible and consistent.

4. Take accurate notes. Use our own words, but don’t waste time thinking of synonyms. Lecturer’s terms may be simplified later. Use brackets to separate your own ideas from those of the lecturer.

5. Abbreviate words whenever possible, but be consistent.

6. Don’t worry about missing a point. Leave spaces and fill what you missed later. Also, leave spaces for expanding and clarifying notes.

7. Record all important facts: dates, names, places, formulas. Copy diagrams and illustrations which will clarify your notes.

8. Draw a single line through mistakes, rather than erase or black out completely. This saves time and energy, and you may find later that the mistakes may have been important to record after all.

9. Integrate lecture notes with text material. This is helpful for clarification and retention of material. If text material is repeated in the lecture, you can make a notation for later referral to the text. Be sure to note supplementary examples or elaborations.

10. Review notes after class. Reread and edit your notes as soon as possible while the information is still fresh in your mind, adding and clarifying in order to increase your understanding. Write a summary (a paragraph or two) or formulate a summary question at the end of your notes to consolidate ideas and to reflect the relationship of facts and ideas with each other and as a whole.
1. **Tools**
   a. 8 ½ x 11 inch paper; eye-ease green paper preferred
   b. 3 ring binder
   c. Pen for permanence

2. **Organize notes**
   a. Keep notes of different subjects separate.
   b. Date notes.
   c. Label notes by recording topics.
   d. Use symbols to call attention to important words, phrases, headings, and subpoints, by underlining, capitalizing, and circling, boxing, etc.

Write on one side of the paper. The back side may be used for clarification, supplemental text notes/relevant text page numbers, or the left column of the Cornell Method of notetaking (see formats).

**LECTURE NOTES FORMATS**

1. Organized Standard Outline
2. Two-Column Unorganized Outline Format (Cornell Method)
3. T-Notes
4. Main Idea to Main Idea
5. Cognitive Mindmapping

Whatever format you use, always include a SUMMARY/SUMMARY QUESTION for each lecture.

For further assistance, contact the Learning Assistance Center, call 956-6114 or email learning@hawaii.edu