

Step 1: On a piece of paper make notes on the text below. Aim to summarise the text into the key points

Gather your note-taking materials.

It may sound pretty basic, but it's important to have all of your note-taking materials organized and ready to go before the start of any class, meeting or lecture. If you're writing with paper and pens, make sure you have an A4 sized notebook with plenty of blank pages and two of each color pen. If you're using a laptop, make sure it's fully charged or that you can sit near a power outlet. If you wear glasses, make sure you have them with you in case the teacher/lecturer writes down any important information on a black or whiteboard. If you bring your glasses, make sure to bring a small microfiber cloth so that you are able to clean them should the need arise. Also remember to position yourself in an area of the room where you can effectively see and hear the speaker.

Come prepared.

Before you come to a class, lecture, or meeting, make sure to review your notes from the last time round. This will bring you fully up to speed and ready to pick up where you left off. If you were advised to do any background reading to prepare for the class, make sure that you get it done. This will help you to understand any themes, concepts or ideas that the teacher/lecturer is likely to present in class. A good idea would be to outline the section, article, or chapter before hand. Write your outline on one side of the paper so that you can add your class notes to the other side. Remember the old adage "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail".

Be an active listener.

When note-taking, many people make the mistake of mindlessly taking down every word, without really comprehending what is being said. This is a mistake. If you don't make an effort to understand the topic while you're in class, you miss out on a valuable learning opportunity. Therefore, you should try to absorb the information you're hearing the first time round, then you won't have as much work to do or risk feeling confused come review time.

wikiHow (2016) *3 Ways to take better notes*. Available from: <http://www.wikihow.com/Take-Better-Notes> [Accessed 26th November 2016].

Now turn over and assess the strengths and weaknesses of your notes...

Peer Learning Reading and Notetaking Workshop: Evaluate your notes

Use this grid to evaluate your own notes. What are you good at and what will you work to improve?

	Poor notes	Your Rating (tick)					Effective notes
		1	2	3	4	5	
General	Hard to read						Easy to read
	Hard to understand						Easy to understand
	Difficult to learn from						Easy to learn from
	Poorly organised						Well organised
Detailed	Too detailed						Brief and too the point
	Not easy to see important points						Important ideas stand out
	Chunks copied from books or lectures						In your own words
	Easy to confuse your words with quotes						Your words clearly separated from quotes
	Hard to see where material comes from						Source material clearly referenced
	No abbreviations						Well abbreviated
	No system						Pages numbered and labelled