

Abbreviating

It just is not possible to write down everything a professor says when you are taking notes, nor is it necessary. One technique that will improve your note taking speed is using abbreviations. Using symbols to represent certain words is another technique you may want to consider using.

Some of the abbreviations used in instant messaging and texting can be utilized when note taking!

Examples:

money = \$

increase = ^

because = b/c

with = w/

without = w/o

psychology = psych

psychological = psych'l

business = bus

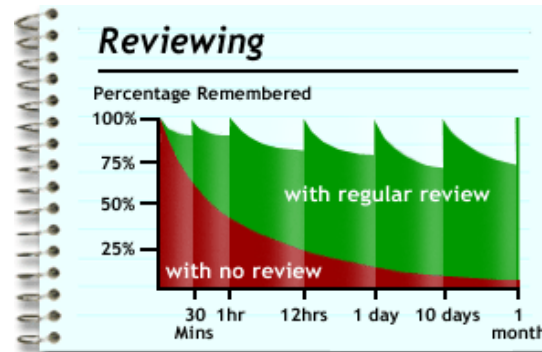
accounting = acct'g

university = univ

social work = swrk or sw

Review notes twice a week

Taking the time to review all your class notes (from the beginning of the semester) will save you a HUGE amount of time when it comes time to study for the test or exam. If you don't regularly review, you will have to basically re-learn everything.



Drop in the Learning Centre and meet with Raquel Lehto, Algoma U's Learning Strategist, for some one-on-one help with note taking skills.

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Note Taking Strategies

*Algoma University
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Listen and observe

Effective listening and effective note-taking go hand-in-hand. There are different levels of listening. Learning to actively listen (compared to just hearing) is a skill that must be developed. To actively listen requires concentration. Focus on what is being said, ignoring all distractions. You must compare what is being said to what you know and determine how the new information applies.



Main Ideas

Note taking involves listening and determining the main ideas that the speaker is presenting. **Doing the assigned readings before class is important because it helps with identifying the main ideas and new vocabulary presented in class.**

Listen for clues the speaker may be providing: long pauses to give you time to write things down, repetition to emphasize a point, writing on the board, providing lists (i.e. “there are 3 reasons for....”) and/or an increase in volume.

Use a system of note taking

When taking notes, it is important to have a style or system which delineates main ideas from sub points. There are 3 styles that work very well:

Cornell System

The Cornell system involves dividing up your paper into two columns: a smaller column on the left for headings and main ideas and a larger column on the right for the supporting details. A section across the bottom can be used for summaries, important notes or questions.

(Main Ideas)	(Details and Examples)
Daily Nutrition: Veg & Fruits	5 – 10 servings/day Variety: different colours and types Source of vitamins and fibre
Dairy	2 -3 serv/day Low fat Source of calcium - good for bones, teeth
(Summary, Questions, Notes) ***know all groups, serv/day and source of ___ for exam	

Outline System

The outline system uses numbers, letters, or Roman numerals to delineate main ideas from sub points. Indenting can also be used as a way to further differentiate ideas.

Daily Nutrition:

1. Veg & Fruit
 - a) 5 – 10 servings/day
 - b) Variety: different colours and types
 - c) Source of vitamins and fibre
2. Dairy
 - a) 2 -3 serv/day
 - b) Low fat
 - c) Source of calcium - good bones, teeth

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping uses lines and arrows to connect ideas.

Example:

