

Lecture Participation & Note-Taking

One of the best predictors of passing a course is class attendance, but getting the most out of class requires more than just showing up. Getting the most out of lecture means that you have to be an active participant. Active listening and note-taking is an excellent way to stay engaged and learn. This will help you understand the material and set you up with study materials.

1. **Arrive to lecture prepared.** It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the topic prior (yes, prior) to class. This means reading the textbook before class, reading previous class notes, or reading upcoming lecture slides if they are available.

Have you heard of the 80-20 Rule? This is one of the most obvious differences from high school learning and college-level learning. In high school, your teachers were responsible for providing about 80% of the information that you were learning and you were responsible for 20%. In college, these numbers flip. That means that 80% of the material will require you to prepare, review, and study outside of the classroom.

2. **Minimize distractions.** If available to you, sit towards the front of the class so you feel less compelled to tune out or look at your phone. In the case of online classes, listen to lectures in a quiet space with minimal distractions in a space that is conducive to note-taking.
3. **Evaluate what needs to be written down.** Listening to the material is always the top priority and you do not have to write everything down word for word from the lecture. It is unlikely that you will be able to keep up and this isn't the most effective way to learn. Select key points to write down and do this in your own words.
4. **Engage with the material critically.** Listen to what your professor repeats more than once or emphasizes and annotate that on your notes. Are there test questions you can predict? Do you remember the same material (or need to re-visit material to clarify) from your textbook? Is there a question you have that was not answered? Jot these down.
5. **Ask questions.** If you have follow up questions or if a topic is unclear, annotate that somewhere in your notes. It does not necessarily have to be immediately during class or to the professor. You can refer to your textbook or ask your peers. If you still have questions, send an email, attend a review session, and/or go to office hours.
6. **Review your notes immediately after class.** Take 10-15 minutes to read through your notes and note questions you may have. You can add additional information, ask questions, try to recall the information, or say them aloud.

Did you know that material that is not reviewed in the first 24 hours, you can lose between 50-80% of the information you learned in class? Reviewing your note will help to solidify knowledge and make studying for exams easier.

