

## Surviving the Lecture

In college classes, lectures are still the primary way faculty deliver information to students. Consequently, note-taking is still the primary means of sorting, organizing, and processing this material.



An essential skill for good note-taking is good listening. Most people believe that they are good listeners, but research has shown that most students do not listen well. So first of all, you should try to sharpen your listening skills.

Taking notes during a lecture can be a frustrating, almost overwhelming, job. Getting organized is the best way to deal with the rush of incoming information. Here are some tips:

- ✎ Use a standard size notebook. A looseleaf three-ring binder is the best because it allows you to insert handouts and rearrange your own notes.
- ✎ Sit near the front and center of the class. You will have the most direct communication with your professor, and you will less likely be distracted.
- ✎ Put a heading and a date on your notes for each day.
- ✎ Attend all lectures, even if attendance is not mandatory. Using someone else's notes can help, but it is no substitute for attending the lecture. When you hear the information, process it and write it in your notes. You are already beginning to learn the information. Reinforcement of the information through review of your notes completes the learning process.
- ✎ Try to prepare for each lecture by prereading the material in your text. You will find that you will understand the lecture better if you have some basic background. This preparation is one that very few students take seriously.
- ✎ Learn to identify main points and not get bogged down in detail. Professors often give cues to what's important by repeating information, changing their voices or rate of delivery, listing items in order of importance, and, of course, by writing on the chalkboard.

What should your notebook look like after a lecture? It should look a little like an outline with clear main ideas and some subpoints with a moderate amount of details and examples. There should be some blank space so that you add notes from your text or from the next day's lecture.

