

# KEY STUDY SKILLS

## HOW TO TAKE NOTES

The purpose of taking notes is two-fold. The first is to summarize the information you're learning so that it's easier to go back and read it later. The second is that by writing out the information, summarizing major points, and thinking through how to organize the information, you are studying the information already.

Familiarize yourself with [different note-taking structures](#). Different note-taking styles have their pros and cons. Know which you prefer.

Label and color code your notes. Labels make it easy to find what section or page of your notes you are looking for. Using different colored pens or highlighters to categorize different types of information in your notes is a good way to help your eyes quickly scan for the type of information you are looking for when reviewing. Alternatively you can underline, box, or use different symbols to mark your notes.

Rewrite your notes. Sometimes you have to write your notes quickly in class, or you weren't sure how to organize the information the first time around while studying. Taking the time to rewrite your notes lets you clean up and organize them, and more importantly it makes you reprocess all of the information.

Try to keep your notes short and sweet. You don't want to be rewriting your textbook. Only write what you need to remember. Also, you don't always need to write your notes in perfect grammar. Short-handing words and using phrases instead of sentences is fine as long as it helps you remember the information.

Create visuals/mnemonics. ROYGBIV, PEMDAS, and the fifty states song are all great examples of using creative tools to memorize information. In your notes, draw pictures or add references to movies, games, or shows. Whatever helps you remember the information. These tricks don't have to make sense to anyone but you.

Handwritten or Typed. For some students writing notes out by hand helps them internalize the information better. For others, typing helps more. Know which one helps you most. Typing might be faster, but it doesn't matter how fast you type the notes if it doesn't help you study at all. It's also an option to type them first, then hand write them later.

Keep your final set of notes clean and organized. Notes are useless for studying if you can't read them later. The more cluttered and difficult it is to read your notes, the less inclined you will be to use them to study as well. A tip for math specifically, is to keep your notes/examples separate from your assignments.

Review your notes as soon as possible. If you tend to take notes in-class, then try to spend just 2-3 minutes as soon as you get home reviewing them. Let your brain know that this information is important by revisiting it as soon as possible. Do this especially for classes where you feel like you forget everything you learned by the next day.