



Note Taking Strategies

Success Center at Southern Union College

Taking Notes during Lecture

- If something is not clear, ask the instructor to repeat him/herself.
- Ask the instructor if he/she can provide a PowerPoint of his/her lecture notes.
- Speak with the instructor at the beginning of class or after class for advice on how to take notes during lecture. He/she will more than likely tell you exactly what to write down.
- Ask the instructor if you can record him or her during lecture so that you can listen to the lecture later to catch any information you may have missed during class.

Summarize

- If you take notes word for word, summarize your notes immediately after class. Use your own words to help you understand key points, terms, concepts, instructions for assignments, etc.
- Jot down the most important facts; make sure you write down any instructions, directions, examples, diagrams, equations, fractions, etc.

Annotate

- Underline, highlight or put an asterisk (*) around main ideas, key concepts, and other important information.
- Write in your text in the margins or use sticky notes to map ideas, summary, or other important information in the text.
- Circle any unfamiliar words. You can look the words up to see what they mean as well as build your vocabulary.
- Develop questions that can help you write or understand the writer's point of view. Write down information that is known, unknown, or that you feel could be supported in an essay or paper.

Reading text

- Scan and read headings along with skim through the text to pick up main ideas or what's happening in the text.
- Map out what happens in the text (Plot Summary)
- Identify and write out connections, such as characters and events. How does each character interact with the other? What is the history and connection between the characters?
- Make sure you understand the text. Ask questions to clarify if needed and make sure you are prepared to answer any questions that may follow the reading or those given by the instructor.

Highlight to Identify What to Learn

- Read a paragraph or section first. Then go back and highlight what is important.
- Highlight key portions of any topic sentence and highlight supporting details.
- Be accurate. Make sure highlighting reflects the ideas stated in the passage.
- Highlight the right amount. Highlight no more than 20-30% of the material.

Annotating to Record Your Thinking

Annotating is a way to keep track of impressions, ideas, reactions, and questions as readers read. Annotating is a way of recording thinking/thoughts about the key ideas the reader has identified and allows the reader to interact with the reading as a critical reader. Readers can question, challenge, agree with, disagree with, or comment on what the writer is saying. **Read with a pen or pencil in hand and make notes in the margin during reading.**

Benefits:

- Highlighting and Annotating helps the reader remember information
- Involves interaction with the author and the content
- saves time
- and is a great way to become an active and critical reader.

Additional Tips on Annotating Text

- Highlight main ideas
- Use a different highlighter color for main ideas, vocabulary, and statements that reveal the author's feelings, attitudes, or biases.
- Create a key with the different highlighter colors to keep track of which colors represent main ideas, vocabulary, or the author's viewpoints.
- Draw arrows to connect ideas.
- Draw arrows from the text to the margins when you annotate. This helps keep thoughts organized.
- Circle and define unfamiliar vocabulary words.
- Every paragraph should have some highlighting and annotation
- If you highlight, you should annotate.

Work Cited

McWhorter, Kathleen, T. *In Concert: An Integrated Approach to Reading and Writing*. 3rd ed., New York, NY: Pearson Education, INC. 2019.