How to Take Effective Notes

I. Lecture Notes

The key to taking good notes during lecture is your ability to go back to your notes and be able to remember and recall important facts and ideas discussed by the instructor. Usually what an instructor finds to be important (and typically uses on tests) he will lecture about. In order for you to effectively use your lecture notes, they need to be visually appealing and well organized. If a page appears to be disorganized and/or cluttered, you will be less likely to review your notes and use them for preparing for exams. If, on the other hand, your notes are neat and well organized, you will be far more likely to utilize your notes for studying and review.

So, how can you take good notes from class lecture? The chart below gives some suggestions.

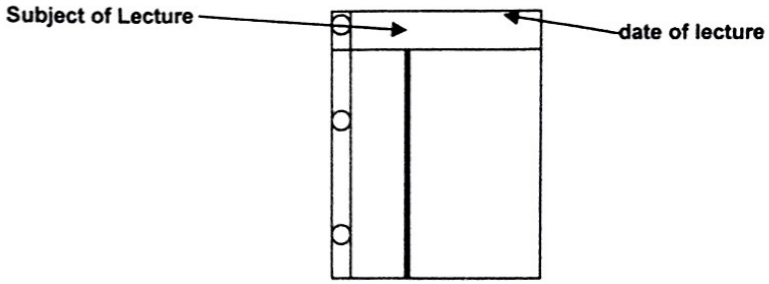
What procedure is used to write a modified outline?	Use modified outline (topic) Indent supporting details Separate points on separate lines Leave white space Leave a wide left margin	A modified outline, such as the one you see on the left half of this screen, is helpful to use as you take notes in classes. This requires leaving about two inches on the left side of your page for questions, either added during or after class, and taking notes on the right three quarters of the page. As you take notes, write the topic on the first line and then indent supporting details on subsequent lines, using a separate line for each point.
What four techniques can be used for speeding up the writing process?	Abbreviations Eliminate vowels Use word beginnings Use standard symbols Create your own abbreviations	While taking notes, it may be important to develop abbreviations to help you jot down more information. It doesn't matter what system you use for abbreviations but try to be consistent so when you look at your notes a few days after you've taken them, you still understand what you wrote.

THE CORNELL SYSTEM

The Cornell system for taking (lecture) notes is designed to save time but yet be highly efficient. There is no rewriting or retyping of your notes. It is a "DO IT RIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE" system.

1. First Step - PREPARATION

- ❑ Use a large, loose-leaf notebook.
- ❑ Use only one side of the paper. (you then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture.)
- ❑ Draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches from the left side of you paper.
- ❑ This is the recall column.
- ❑ Notes will be taken to the right of this margin.
- ❑ Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column.



2. Second Step - DURING THE LECTURE

- ❑ Record notes in paragraph form.
- ❑ Capture general ideas, not illustrative ideas.
- ❑ Skip lines to show end of ideas or thoughts.
- ❑ Using abbreviations will save time.
- ❑ Write legibly.

Measurement (msmnt)
- qualitative - descriptive
- quantitative - numeric
- accuracy - avg. close to actual
- precision - repeatable

Significant Figures (s.f.)
- calibration - meaning of smallest mark
- estimation - in between smallest mark
- s.f. - calibrated plus 1 estimated
- RULES!
    1. all nonzero #'s
       123 = 3sf
    2. sandwich zero's
       10203 = 5sf
    3. NO DECIMAL, ending zero's = ??? (can't tell)
       102030 = can't tell
    4. DECIMAL, ending zero's COUNT!
       102030.0 = 7sf
- rounding - rules <5 NO round
  =, > 5 Round!

3. Third Step - AFTER THE LECTURE

- ❑ Read through your notes and make it more legible if necessary.
- ❑ Now use the column.
- ❑ Jot down ideas or key words which give you the idea of the lecture. (REDUCE)
- ❑ You will have to reread the lecturer's ideas and reflect in your own words.
- ❑ Cover up the right-hand portion of your notes and recite the general ideas and concepts of the lecture. Overlap your notes showing only recall columns and you have your review.

Taking notes
Develop your own note-taking system. Use abbreviations. Make them up.
Jot a question mark in the margin if you need to clarify a point before the interview ends.
Always put quotation marks around direct quotes. Don't fixate on quotes.
If the subject is saying something you won't use or aren't interested in, don't write it down.
Re-read your notes immediately after the interview.
Write a three- to five-sentence summary in your notebook at the end of each interview.

II. Notes from Reading Material

One strategy you can use when reviewing information is SQ3R. This strategy has 5 steps:

S	Survey	look over the material to get an sense of the content
Q	Question	speculate about what you have read, ask yourself questions to clarify what you want to learn
R	Read	read the material
R	Recite	orally rehearse the material
R	Review	after 10 minutes, write down everything you can recall, check you recollections with the material

After this process, look at what you have missed and fill in the blanks in your learning. Consider this a fourth 'R' - Repair - repair the holes in your learning.
Try the SQ3R method with the following piece of text.

The Rocky Mountains

This is an almost solid line of very high and jagged mountains that extends from New Mexico to Alaska. Some of the mountains are over 14,000 feet in height and were a great hinderance to early settlers moving across the United States.

Many trees are found on the mountain slopes but then thin out and stop at the higher altitudes of the mountains. The tops of the mountains are generally made up of bare rock and some sparse vegitation and may be covered with snow year around.

The winters here are harsh and and lots of snow covers the region, but during the spring and summer this snow melts and is the source of many rivers that flow throughout the country.

Tourism and the mining of minerals is important to the economy of this region.

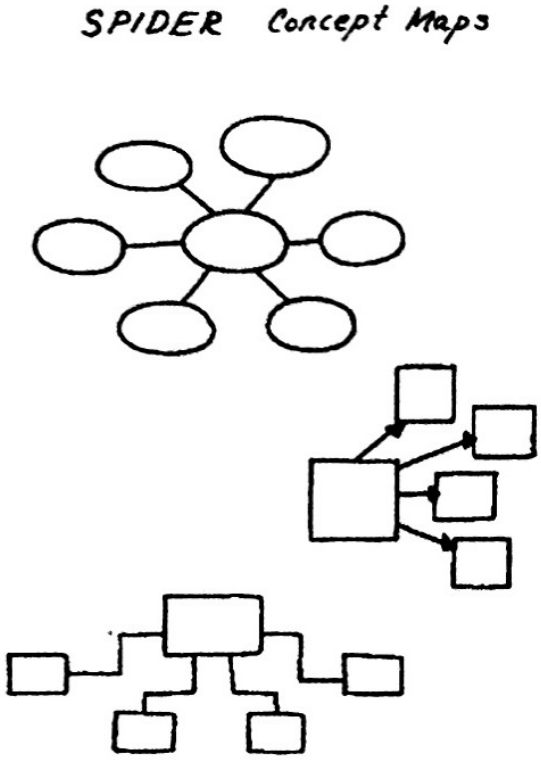
Geography USA: Landforms and Regions, http://hal.calc.k12.la.us/~sjwelsh/pages/schon/geography/landform.htm

Concept Mapping

Kinds of Concept Maps: There are four major categories of concept maps. These are distinguished by their different format for representing information. Examples of three of the four types are presented on the following pages.

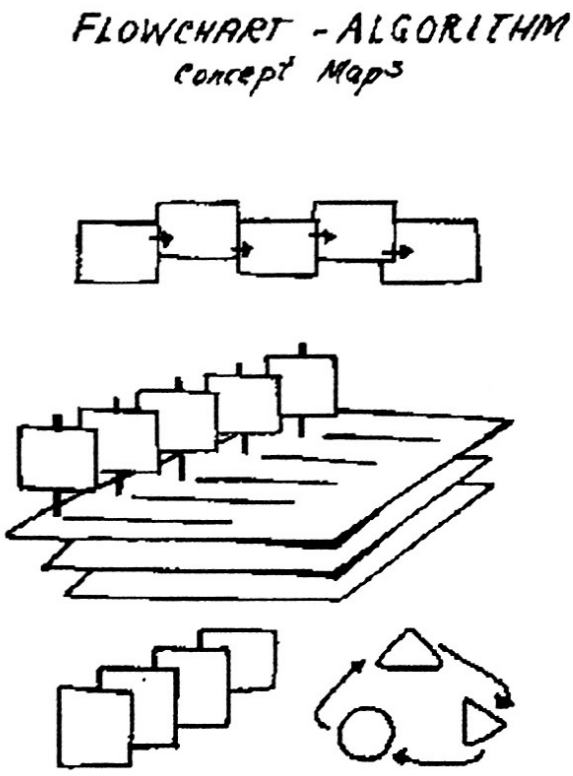
Spider Map (or Graph)

The "spider" concept map (or graph) is organized by placing the central theme or unifying factor in the center of the m. Outwardly radiating sub-themes surround the center of the map.



Flow Chart

The flowchart concept map organizes information in a linear format.



Hierarchy Concept Map

The hierarchy concept map presents information in a descending order of importance. The most important information is placed on the top. Distinguishing factors determine the placement of the information.