

TAKING NOTES



AGENDA

- Starter
- Get Set
- Easy as One, Two, Three
- Go!
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will identify important details in note taking and recognize their significance.

Students will learn strategies for taking effective notes.

Students will practice and evaluate note-taking skills.

Materials Needed

- One copy of the “Notes That Work Are...” activity sheet for each student (Part II)

Starter (3 minutes)

Ask students to take out a sheet of paper and write today's day, date, and the name of this class in the top right corner. Ask the following questions:

- If you put this paper in your folder right now and looked it over next week, would it remind you about what happened in this class today? (*Students should say no.*)
- Would it remind you of any homework that was assigned? (*Students should say no.*)
- Would it help you recall important information we discussed? (*Again, students should say no.*)

Point out that if the paper contained notes, the answers would be different. Notes are an important way to remember and learn. Explain that learning how to take notes will become more and more important, as note taking is necessary in school and on the job. Explain to students that they will learn about taking notes that work for them.

Part I Get Set (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify important details in note taking and recognize their significance.

1. Students focus on active learning.

Point out that students can take notes that will help them only if they are actively listening, reading, watching, or thinking. Review active learning by making the following points:

- Actively doing something means paying attention to what you are doing, thinking about it, and making connections to other things that are happening. It means that you are focusing on what you are doing.
- Passively doing something means not paying attention, thinking, or making connections. It usually means that you are doing or thinking about something else at the same time.

2. Students practice taking notes.

Tell students to write notes that will help them describe the classroom to a friend who is not in this class or to a family member. Give students three or four minutes to write their notes.

3. Students review their notes.

Ask a series of questions to help students focus on important details. Have students read their notes. Point out details that are mentioned, such as the following:

- The number of people in the class
- How the desks or tables are arranged
- Placement of the teacher's desk
- What is on the walls
- Whether or not there are windows and what they overlook

Invite students to share other features they may have listed and to evaluate their importance. Ask students to give examples of details that they think are not important.

Point out that students did not need to write down every single detail of their classroom in order to describe it. Explain that this is also true of taking notes during class or when reading; it is not important to write down everything the teacher says or everything they read. Emphasize that when taking notes, students should focus on key points and details that are important and relevant.

Part II Easy as One, Two, Three (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students learn strategies for taking effective notes.

1. Students learn how to take notes that are easy to use.

Distribute copies of the “Notes That Work Are...” activity sheet. Explain that you are going to give students some tips on taking effective notes. Tell students to write these tips on the activity sheet.

The teacher's notes that follow correspond to the outline on the activity sheet. Refer students to section 1 of the outline. Explain that they are to write each of the following tips on the lines of the activity sheet. Tell them that these tips will help them take notes that will be easy to use:

- Write the subject, the day, and the date at the top of each page. (Explain that this keeps notes organized and in order.)
- Leave lots of space between sentences. (Explain that this will give students room to add to their notes or write questions.)
- Use abbreviations and symbols for words. (Explain that this will enable students to write faster. You might make a list of common symbols on the board. For example, “b/c” for “because,” “=” for “equals” or “is,” an arrow for “results in” or “produces.”)
- Don't worry about writing complete sentences or spelling correctly, unless asked to do so or unless misspelling would lead to confusion.

2. Students learn how to take notes that are important.

Ask students to write in section 2 of the activity sheet these tips, which will help them identify what's important when taking notes:

- Write down only the topic, main ideas, and important details—not every word that's said or read.
- Write down questions the teacher asks. Find the answers when you are studying later.
- Copy information that's displayed on the board.
- Star, circle, or underline anything that the teacher repeats or tells you is important to remember.

3. Students learn how to review notes.

Refer students to section 3 of the activity sheet. Explain that notes are important for review and study. Tell students that the following tips will help them know when to review their notes:

- Read over your notes at the end of the day when you are studying. Answer questions in your notes. Fix notes that don't make sense.
- Plan ahead and be prepared for your classes. Check your notes for homework and assignment due dates.
- Save your notes and review them before quizzes and tests.

Tell students to keep their activity sheets in their folders and read them occasionally to remind themselves of how to organize and use their notes. Doing this will help them become more successful students.

Part III Go! (15 minutes)

Purpose: Students will practice and evaluate note-taking skills.

1. Students exchange information with partners.

Ask students to find partners. Explain that each student will give verbal directions to their partner on how to get to a certain place from school. Tell students not to say the name of the place; they can only give directions.

Tell students that when they give directions, they should concentrate on how they get from school to their chosen places, and think through the routes step by step. Tell students that as they listen to their partners' directions, they are to take notes in order to pass on the directions later.

Give students about six minutes to exchange information. Halfway through the allotted time, tell students to change roles.

2. Students evaluate information.

When time is up, ask students to quickly review their notes to make sure they are complete. Then, have students retell the directions to their partners and, if they know it, the name of the destination. Students should use their notes when giving back directions to their partners.

Tell students to evaluate how well their partners took notes on the directions. Have them award a score of 10 if they are able to reach the destination successfully, five if they are in the neighborhood, and zero if they become totally lost.

3. Students reflect on their abilities.

Ask those who received a score of 10 to share their notes. Invite a few volunteers who received lower scores to describe how they got off track.

Explain that taking good notes takes practice. Point out that if students continue taking notes, they will get better at it.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

Ask students to describe three characteristics of effective note taking. Elicit from students the following **key points** that were taught in this lesson:

- Taking notes in your classes and when you read will help you become a more successful student.
- Take notes that are easy to use.
- Review your notes when you study each day and when you prepare for tests.

Student Assessment

1. Why is it important to take good notes?
2. List three things you can do to make sure your notes are on target.
3. Read a news or magazine article and take good notes on it.

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“Practice is the best of all instructors.”

Have students discuss how this applies to note taking.

Addressing Multiple Learning Styles

Obtain a large, detailed photo or painting of a city scene. Divide the class into three groups, and have each take notes on the scene. Group one should take notes as if they are police investigating a crime. Group two are filmmakers checking out a movie location. Group three are tourists.

Have the groups compare notes. Discuss the differences between the groups' notes.

Writing in Your Journal

Have students write about one way in which they plan to improve their note taking.

Have students review their notes one week later to see if they've met their goals.

Using Technology

Find an age-appropriate video on www.youtube.com about a topic of interest to your students. Have students view the video and take notes on it.

Discuss as a class the different notetaking methods that students used during the video. Have students point out which of their classmates' techniques they might consider adapting for their own use.

Homework

Have students look through old notes that they've written, and have them identify ways they could improve their note-taking skills.

Have students share what they found with the class.

Additional Resources

If students need additional reinforcement, teach relevant lessons from *Note Taking Made Easy!* by Deana Hippie.

Allow students to experiment with various note-taking methods. Have them discuss what works best for them and why.

NOTES THAT WORK ARE...

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❖ _____

2. _____

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❖ _____

3. _____

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❖ _____

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