

FAQs: Note-taking in High School AND 10 Tips for Becoming a Student

What are the benefits of taking notes in a high school classroom?

One of the benefits of taking notes is that you begin to study as you take notes. You can then use your notes as a study guide for tests. You should frequently review your notes, highlighting portions that you need more work on. You should also add more information to your notes as you learn more about a topic. One suggestion is to take notes in class, then use the textbook to clarify the information. Or, if you take notes from your textbook, use your notes during class lectures and add information that your teacher shares. Make note of any questions that arise as you take notes, then ask your teacher to clarify.

When should I take notes in a high school classroom?

Every day is best, so you will develop the habit. Take at least a few notes every day. One way to start this habit is to write the date on a sheet of notebook paper shortly after you enter the classroom. Then record any information about the day's assignment that is on the board. On the same sheet of paper, you should also write any notes that the teacher makes during the class. In other words, if the teacher writes it, you should write it.

Should I wait until my teacher tells me to take notes?

NO --

Here are some other tips about WHEN to take notes in a high school class.

Take notes when the teacher:

- Says, "This will be on the test."
- Says, "This is an important point."
- Repeats the same information twice
- Slows down as she speaks, giving you time to write.
- Explains the same concept in several different ways.
- Says, "This is not in the textbook, but it is important."

What is the best method for taking notes?

There are many ways to take notes. There are outline notes, visual diagrams, cloze notes, and Cornell Notes.

Outline notes

Body Language and Oral Presentations Traditional Format

I. BODY LANGUAGE (conveys your state of mind)

A. Movement

1. Strive for natural movement.
2. Control distracting movements (pacing, fidgeting)
3. Develop skitural style
 - (a) Move forward to stress points
 - (b) Step back and focus attention on screen
4. Hold objects so audience can see them (never put them away)
5. Avoid excessive and uncontrolled movement.

B. Facial Expressions

1. Smile.
2. Appear relaxed and friendly.

C. Gestures

1. Use natural gestures to emphasize what you're saying.
2. Integrate and coordinate gestures with text.
3. Examples
 - (a) Number of fingers = number discussed
 - (b) sizes shapes - full, small
4. Use gestures to help judge yourself.
5. Use gestures based on audience size.

D. Posture

1. Practice good posture.
2. Don't prop up against wall or desk.
3. Don't sit under 45° part of presentation.

Visual diagram notes

Cloze notes

Name _____ Class _____ PLATE TECTONICS

Review

Inside the Earth

The Earth is divided into four main layers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The Crust

- The crust makes up _____ of the Earth.
- The crust of the Earth is broken into many pieces called _____
- Two types of crust:
 1. _____ (made of basalt)
 2. _____ (made of granite)

The Mantle

- The upper part of the mantle and the crust make up the _____
- The mantle is the _____ layer of the Earth.
- The mantle can be divided into two regions: the _____ and _____ mantle.

Lithosphere

- The _____ ridge of the Earth.

Atmosphere

- Soft layer of the mantle

Cornell Notes

Cornell Notes		Name _____
		Date _____
		Class _____
		Period _____
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Idea • Key Question (after notes are completed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key words & ideas • Important dates/people/places • Repeated/Stressed Info • Ideas/brainstorming written on board / overhead projector • Info from textbook/stories • Diagrams & Pictures • Formulas 	
Summary of your notes in your own words		

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Whether it is back to school time or any time of the school year, studying equals academic success. However, some students do not know how to study. Here is a top 10 list of what students can do to improve study habits.

10. Select a consistent place to study

Some people need total quiet while others can study well with music in the background. The key is to find a comfortable place and study there regularly, such as the kitchen table, a desk, a favorite chair, bed, etc.

9. Don't wait until the last minute

Study a little every night instead of cramming late the night before the test. A good night's sleep helps. Bleary eyes and a tired body do not.

8. Buy an agenda book and use it

Most students have an agenda book, but they don't write anything in it. On Monday, write down all of the week's assignments. Most teachers have them posted in the classroom.

7. Dedicate a space for every class in your book bag

Keep papers separated by class with a binder. There should be a place for class notes, handouts and homework assignments. Some of the larger binders can accommodate all classes. It is really a matter of personal choice; just keep papers separated by class.

6. Stay organized throughout the year

Most students have many binders and folders, but they do not use them. Many stuff every single paper from school into one binder. Half of their papers become misplaced or lost. Do not use the "shove" method when papers are returned, i.e. shove everything in one binder. Place them in the correct folder. If you are using a three-ring binder to keep papers organized, take the time to open the metal prongs and place them securely in it. If someone helps you organize your papers, take the time to continue putting everything in its place.

5. Make study cards

On the front of a note card write the word or idea. On the back, write the definition or important information. Have a friend or parent ask you about the word and/or provide a definition. (Digital flashcards like Quizlet and Studystack can also be used.)

4. Make your own study guide

One great way to study is to make a list of the important information from a chapter and write it in your own words. Copy down any words that are written in bold or in italics. Look at chapter headings, section headings and review sections at the end of a chapter for other important information to add to your study guide. Merge this information with class notes.

3. Talk about assignments with friends

Discussing assignments with friends is another great way to study. This is very helpful when studying for novel tests. Friendly discussions about books help deepen understanding.

2. If you are struggling, ask for help

Start by talking to the teacher. The guidance counselor generally has a list of tutors in the area. Some high school students need to complete community service hours to be in clubs or in honor societies. You may be able to get a free tutor.

1. Make academics a focus in your life

Studying takes time and effort. Get organized, ask for help and put forth effort aimed at improving your study habits now.

Starting good study habits now will help you later in life. It does take more effort to study and to become organized; however, academic success will make you feel good about yourself and your parents smile.

– from "Top 10 Study Tips" by Kellie Hayden.