PAR 5 Note-taking Strategy  
(BASED ON THE CORNELL METHOD)

Learning from lectures involves more than just sitting in class – start the process before class and finish it after.

**PREVIEW BEFORE CLASS — GET READY AND GET INTERESTED**

- Look through chapter; skim chapter headings and summary; look over course outline; find out what you’re going to be learning about; start thinking about the topic.

**ACTIVELY LISTEN AND SELECT — DURING THE LECTURE**

- Listen to the beginning—is there a plan for the lecture? If so, write it at the top of your page.
- Work out how your professor shows that something is important—What does he/she say? e.g. says it’s important/writes it on the board/underlines it/repeats same point…
- Keep your preview in mind as you listen—maybe the same points emphasized in the chapter are going to be important here.

**RECORD — DIVIDE PAGE; USE RIGHT HAND COLUMN (SEE OVER-PAGE)**

- Don’t try to write everything down—be selective; focus on the important ideas.
- Leave room to add more details later.
- Try to write down key words and concepts rather than sentences.
- Abbreviate in a way you’ll understand later.
- Also note to yourself what was happening—e.g. here prof. gave an example, digressed to answer a question, etc.
- If you forget an idea before you finish writing it down, show that you did this i.e. the concepts in cell division were …?

**REVISE — WITHIN 24 HOURS OF THE CLASS**

- Read over your notes.
- Fix unclear points; use your textbook or compare notes with a friend to fill in gaps or places where you got lost.

**REDUCE — USE THE LEFT HAND COLUMN TO LABEL THE IDEAS IN THE LECTURE**

- Use labels to summarize the points of the lecture.
- Try to think like your prof—why did he/she include this point? Why give these three examples? What major points was she/he trying to make?
- Get a sense of how the lecture was organized.
- Categorize ideas into main themes.

**RECITE — TALK YOUR WAY THROUGH THE LECTURE POINTS**

- Read the labels but cover up the right hand side—see if you can recall what was there.
- Talk your way through and elaborate on points.
- Try to “teach” ideas out loud or do example problems.
- Check that you understand—make a plan to follow up on anything you don’t (ask prof, next class, ask a friend, etc.)

**REVIEW — REMEMBER THAT REVIEWING LEADS TO RETENTION!**

- Create graphic organizers such as maps or matrices to organize and learn the concepts from the lecture.
- Test yourself on the ideas from time to time.
## ONE FORMAT FOR ORGANIZING NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Margin</th>
<th>Class Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Record</strong></td>
<td>Record class notes here</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1) info        | - Be selective  
|                | - Use abbreviations  
|                | - Note topic, details, examples(s)  
| 2) space       | Use lots of space |
|                | - Leave room to add more details  
|                | - Write on one side of loose-leaf only  
| **Clarify**    | Edit notes and fill in summary margin after class |
| **&**          | - Go over notes soon after class  
| **Organize**   | - Clarify and expand information  
|                | - Categorize main ideas  
|                | - Write key words in the summary margin  
|                | - Make a table of contents for Power Point slides  
| **Find patterns** | Look for patterns among main themes |
|                | - Check for these relationships:  
|                |   - time/process sequence  
|                |   - cause & effect  
|                |   - comparison/contrast  
|                |   - concept & example  
|                |   - topic + categories  
| **Recite ideas** | Explain main ideas out loud |
| **or**         | - Cover your notes and use margin words as prompts  
| **Do problems** | - Talk your way through your notes  
|                | - Uncover notes and check for completeness  
| **Review**     | Review regularly |
|                | - Test yourself from time to time  

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