

A Parent's Guide to Effective Study Habits

By: Lia Walters/ Special Education Facilitator



Strong note-taking skills are essential for students to become active participants in their learning experience. Taking notes helps focus students' attention on the lesson being taught, thus increasing their concentration, retention and understanding of information. In addition, this skill develops listening sense, allowing the reader to recognize main ideas and understand the organization of material.

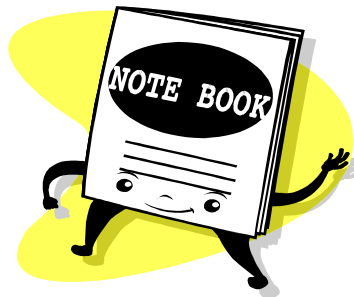


Topic 4: Note-Taking Skills & Strategies

How to Get Started:

The student must become an active listener. Note taking skills can be enhanced by working on listening abilities. (Refer back to last month's issue on Listening Strategies.) Get yourself ready to take notes. Students should identify main ideas and the organizational pattern of the speaker. The student should be aware of the lecturer's gestures, voice and be especially mindful of the beginning and end of the lecture.

HELPFUL TIP # 1: Essential for note-taking skills is organization of materials (notebooks, planner, pens, pencils, highlighters, calculator, dictionary, etc)



Be Prepared Before Class:

The student should attend class prepared by having read the assigned textbook material. The student should review the last session's notes prior to class. Notes should begin on a fresh new page. Have the date on each page including all handouts. Identification of the chapter and topic being covered on the top of the page helps the studying process.

HELPFUL TIP # 2: Students should anticipate the teacher’s goal for the lecture, keeping in mind “what the teacher wants them to learn for the class period”

Stay Focused:

It is important for your children to stay focused in class on what the teacher is saying and not let their minds wonder. They can accomplish this by participating in class activities, watching for clues to identify the most important information, such as repetition (vocal emphasis and excitement) as well as information highlighted on the board. When note taking a student should highlight important information that the teacher states will “be on the test.” Using symbols and abbreviations whenever possible and for abbreviations for commonly used words, by writing the first few letters, can be helpful when taking down a large amount of information.

Two well known note taking methods are:

The Cornell Method:

Record
Reduce
Recite
Reflect
Review
Recapitulate

The PARR Method:

Prepare
Abbreviate
Revise
Review

HELPFUL TIP # 3: Make sure your child does not try to write down everything the teacher is saying...notes should summarize important facts and main ideas.

After Class:

The student should edit or revise their notes as soon as possible after class to fill in gaps while the information is still fresh in their minds. Students should re-view, re-organize and re-write notes to retain information and break down studying time into chunks.

HELPFUL TIP # 4: Utilizing Blackboard for teacher notes, a friend’s notebook and/or the textbook to fill in the gaps is an essential tool.

This month’s strategy highlighted note-taking skills as an essential tool for high school students to succeed in becoming independent, efficient, and motivated learners. The benefit of successful note-taking skills enables the student to reduce study time, increase retention of knowledge, and provide resources for future projects, assignments and exams.

Resources:

Davis, L. and & Sirotowitz, S. (1996). *Study Strategies Made Easy: A Practical Plan for School Success*. Florida: Specialty Press Inc.

Dodge, J. (1995). *The Study Skills Handbook*. New York: Scholastic Inc.