

Coping with Poor Lecturers

What strategies can you use when faced with poor lecturers? Find their type below and use the ideas listed!

The Expert—forgets that material that is elementary for him or her is difficult for students. Mentions things rather than explaining them. Leaves out connections between ideas.

Strategy: Ask questions (lots and lots if necessary!)

The Rambler—consistently goes off track.

Strategy: Ask carefully worded questions related to the last main point when the instructor rambles.

The Mumbler—speaks too softly, talks into notes, does not enunciate well, etc.

Strategy: Sit up front, listen closely, ask lecturer to repeat information, compare your notes with others.

The Tortoise and The Hare—speaks too slowly or too quickly.

Strategy (tortoise): Ask to repeat or clarify.

Strategy (hare): Step up your internal dialogue, review what has been said, anticipate what is to come, make connections.

The Star of the Show—more interested in the impression he or she makes than in conveying information.

Strategy: Focus on what is being said, try not to be distracted.



Ways to Reduce and Streamline Notes

*Eliminate small connecting words such as: is, are, was, were, a an, the, would, this, of. Eliminate pronouns such as: they, these, his, that, them. However, be careful NOT to eliminate these three words: and, in, on.

*Use symbols to abbreviate, such as:

+for plus
& for and
= for equals
- for minus
for number
x for times
> for greater than, more, larger
< for less than, smaller, fewer than
w/ for with
w/o for without
w/in for within
—> for leads to, produces, results in
<— for comes from
/ for per

For example:

“The diameter of the Earth is four times greater than the diameter of the Moon”
Becomes:
“Earth = 4x>diameter of Moon

*Substitute numerals with symbols, for instance:

Substitute “one” with 1
Substitute “third” with 3rd

*Abbreviate:

Drop the last several letters of a word. For example, substitute “appropriate” with “approp”.

Drop some of the internal vowels of a word. For example, substitute “large” with “lrg”.

Developed by the
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Wallace State Community College—Hanceville

Effective Note-Taking Strategies



Why Take Notes?

- *Instructors share information not available in textbooks.
- *Notes are a storehouse of information for later use, e.g., when you take more advanced courses.
- *We remember more when we write things down.
- *Taking notes helps you to listen attentively and to think critically.
- *It helps you prepare for tests and to concentrate in class.
- *Studies show that people may forget 50% of a lecture within 24 hours, 80% in two weeks, and 95% within one month if they do not take notes.

Get Yourself Ready To Take Notes

- *Improve your listening skills. Try to identify the speaker's pattern and identify the main ideas. Watch for their gestures and listen for changes in their voice. Listen carefully at the beginning and end of the lecture—many speakers will list all the main topics the lecture will cover at the beginning of the lecture and will summarize at the end.
- *Set a goal. The general goal is to record enough information to be able to reconstruct the important elements of the lecture.
- *Be organized. Carry all necessary items (notebook, planner, pens, pencils, calculator, paper clips, hole punch, small dictionary, etc.) to class and study periods every time you meet. Keep the syllabus and all course material together. Choose the kind of notebook and binder that works best for you in the classes. Usually a loose-leaf notebook works best so you can insert materials as needed.

Before Class.....

- *Read the assigned textbook material.
- *Shortly before class, review the last session's notes and skim the textbook.
- *Sit near the front of the class in the center of the room.
- *Begin notes for each lecture on a new page.
- *Date each page of your notebook, and date/number each handout. Keep handouts together and insert in notebook.
- *Identify the chapter being covered and the title of lecture at top of the page.

During Class.....

- *Don't let your mind wander—stay focused on what the instructor is saying.
- *Be brief—write down only the major points.
- *Watch for clues about important information. The speaker is usually making an important point if he or she: pauses before or after an idea; uses repetition to emphasize a point; uses introductory phrases to precede an important idea; writes an idea on the board.
- *Highlight information the instructor states is important or will be on the test.
- *Use symbols and abbreviations whenever possible.
- *Write legibly—notes are useless if you can't read them later!

After Class.....

- *Edit/revise your notes as soon as possible after class.
- *Fill in the gaps.
- *Add words to clarify your ideas.
- *Add any missing information.
- *Add any additional details to help clarify points.
- *Check for accuracy.
- *Reorganize information to make studying easier.
- *Organize your notes using diagrams, charts, matrixes, etc.
- *Add key words or questions in the left margin.
- *Review notes immediately after a lecture.
- *Review notes regularly; information is retained better when learned in small chunks.

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Other brochures are available on the following topics: *Stress Management, Time Management, Effective Writing Strategies, Effective Study Strategies, Effective Reading Strategies.*

Check the bulletin boards around campus for upcoming free workshops for students!

Some items in this brochure were reprinted from materials from the Learning Assistance Center, Eastern Illinois University, and the Academic Resource Center, Sweetbriar College.