Note-taking Tips

The very act of writing something down may improve your retention of that information. Note taking also increases concentration. Here are some tips for better note-taking:

- Write titles and headings on the page correctly.
- Label all notes in notebook with date, topic and page.
- Leave a wide margin so you can add questions, comments, or new information to it later; make a wide left margin as the recall column.
- Skip lines between subtopics.
- Circle, underline, or highlight key phrases in notebook when studying.
- Interact with the notes soon after taking them; review them, transcribe them into a different form, recite them.

To take notes from a textbook:
Use the chapter format to guide you (headings, text boxes, chapter summaries, questions). Skim the whole section before beginning your note-taking.

- Write in your own word what you read.
- Describe a sequence of events, steps, or ideas.
- List main topics and subtopics in outline form.
- List details for each main idea and subtopic.
- Make semantic map (graphic organizer) for main ideas and subtopics.
- Categorize details.
- Write a summary for each section.

To take notes from a classroom discussion:
Use the tips above.

- Write in your own words what is said. Don't try to write down every word.
- Invent a personal form of shorthand of symbols and abbreviations for common words or phrases.
- Use arrows, stars, or asterisks to indicate most important points
- Practice good listening techniques such as: look directly at the speaker; do not talk when the speaker is talking; think along with the speaker.
- Listen for key words such as:

  There are 3 reasons . . . ; In conclusion. ; An important point is. . .