

Notetaker Training Guide

Welcome to Cleveland State University

Office of Disability Services

- Thank you for signing up to be a notetaker. As a notetaker for Cleveland State University, you are performing a valuable service for students.
- This training will prepare you to take clear and complete class notes that other students can use to study and complete assignments.
- In addition, you will learn to take better notes for yourself!
- We hope you enjoy your experience and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Overview of Notetaker Training

This training will consist of three parts.

- Part I: What is notetaking?
- Part II: Taking good notes
- Part III: What do I do next?

Part I: What is Notetaking?

There are laws that require schools to provide notetaking for students with disabilities.

- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990
 - www.ada.gov
- ADA Amendment Act 2008
 - www.ada.gov
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - <http://ww2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/disability.html>

This allows for students to have equal access to instruction during and after class.

Notetaking is creating a written record of the main points and supporting details of a class including:

- Lectures
- Class discussion
- Demonstration, such as labs
- Videos or films shown in class
- Guest speaker
- When taking notes, should you write word for word? No!
 - Even the best notes are not word- for- word record of everything an instructor and others say
- What should notes include?
 - Notes should always include all learning points and other important information, such as assignments, class announcements, and test dates.

Even if the teacher says something that you must include it in the notes.

- This means including things like:
 - Major topics or themes
 - Basic concepts
 - New or difficult vocabulary

- Assignments
 - Class announcements
 - Test, quiz, and projects due dates.
- Notetakers are hired on semester basis.
- Persons providing notetaking services must be:
 - Reliable
 - Responsible
 - Prompt
 - Trustworthy/ethical
 - Good listener
 - Motivated/good attitude
- Responsible and reliable
 - Excellent class attendance
 - Secure a backup plan for notes in case of emergency
 - Have good short term memory
 - Generally good student
- Prompt
 - Arrive to class on time
 - Supply notes within 24 hours
- Trustworthy/ethical
 - Practice confidentiality and respect the student's right to privacy
 - When faced with a dilemma, utilize good decision making skills such as consulting with the students, instructor, or the Office of Disability Services.
- Good listener
 - Pay attention to what is being said, not just hearing but understanding
 - A good listener thinks, processes, and analyzes

- A good listener will hear instructor's cues during lectures, followed by key information
- Motivated/good attitude
 - Exhibit a professional manner
 - Be positive, friendly, and approachable
 - Practice common courtesies
- Notetaker's role
 - Neat legible penmanship
 - Arrange for substitute notetaker when needed
 - Check spelling of unfamiliar terms and names in notes
 - Allow the teacher to review the notes
 - Seek feedback from Disability Services
 - Contact disability services if having problems
 - Maintain confidentiality
- Not notetaker's role
 - Ask questions on behalf of the student
 - Review the homework completed by the student
 - Tutor the student
 - Act as an interpreter or intermediary for the student
 - Act as a personal assistant for the student.

Part II: Taking good notes

- Think about the last time you may have borrowed notes from a classmate. Did you find that...?
 - The handwriting was too sloppy or too light?
 - The page was crowded?
 - Names and words were spelled wrong?
 - There wasn't enough information to understand what the class was about?
 - You couldn't tell what was and wasn't important?
 - You didn't understand the abbreviations and symbols?
 - There was doodling and inappropriate items on the page?
 - It was generally hard to read?
- Now reflect on your notes. How well do you...
 - Check and correct spelling?
 - Date and number each page?
 - Indicate important information?
 - Write legibly?
 - Skip lines between topics and ideas?
 - Summarize ideas?
- It is important to remember that there are two aspects of taking notes. They include:
 - Understanding the information that is being taught
 - Recording the information in a clear and useful form.
- Often, instructors will provide cues during their lectures that allows you to know important information and key points. These cues include:
 - Writes on chalkboard
 - Repeat information
 - Speaks more slowly
 - Gives a definition

- List a number of points/steps
- Refers to specific text pages
- Explains why and how things happen
- Describe a sequence
- Refers to information as attest item
- Changes tone of voices
- Uses body language
- Uses visual aids.
- A good note taker also identifies what an instructor says that should be included in the notes. Phrases that can clue you in of important upcoming information include:
 - “Now this is important...”
 - “Remember that...”
 - “The basic concept is...”
 - “You’ll need to remember this...”
 - “This will be on the test...”
 - “First you must understand that...”
 - “There are two main reasons why...”
 - “For example...”
 - “In addition...”
 - “However...”
 - “In contrast...”
 - “In summary or in conclusion...”
- There are some tips to be aware of when taking notes:
 - Headings
 - Every page should have a heading that includes:
 - ✓ Class name or number
 - ✓ Date and time
 - ✓ Page number

- Margins
 - Leave 1 to 2 inches on all sides of page to keep notes from looking crowded and to give the student room to add his or her own notes later
- Skip lines between ideas
 - Don't crowd a lot onto one page. "White space" on a page makes the notes easier to read and let students write their own comments
 - When a page is packed with writing, it is hard to see what is important.
- Tips for note taking (continued)
 - Indicate activity
 - Try to reflect activities other than lectures such as:
 - ✓ Demonstrations
 - ✓ Videos or other media
- Indicate speakers
 - Note if a comment in the notes came from someone besides the teacher.
- Abbreviations
 - If you'll need to write the same name or term many times, use an abbreviation, being sure to say what is and use it consistently
- There are many different ways to format your notes.
- Examples are paragraph format, outline format, two column format, and three column format.
- It is important that you find a format that works well for you.

Text/paragraph format

- Includes complete sentences
- Each sentence expresses a complete thought
- Space between each paragraph

Outline

- Relies on a strong structure
- Use Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers and lower case letter to label each level.
- Roman numerals (I, IV, etc.) denote *major topics*
- Capital letters denote *key information*
- Numbers denote *specific information*
- Lowercase letters denote *details*
- Use short phrases and single words

Two-column format

- Use dividing line for larger column and smaller column
- The larger column is used for basic notes and details
- The smaller column is used for key information
- This format uses key information and short phrases.

Three-column format

- This format is similar to the two-column format, except that there is a third column for your own notes
- The first column should be about 2" and include key concepts
- The second column should be about 4" and include detailed notes

- The third column should be about 1” and include questions or reminders.

PART III: WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

- Now that we've learned what note taking is and how to take good notes, it is time to take the next steps:
 - Log into the DSOS at <https://andes.accessiblelearning.com/CSUOhio/Login.aspx> to request classes to take notes.
 - Make sure your Disability Services Online System (DSOS) account is updated.
 - ✓ This is important because this information is how we contact you for assignments and to arrange compensation!
 - Check your campus email regularly or have it forwarded to a personal e-mail you check regularly. You will be notified of notetaking assignments and important reminders through campus e-mail.

Completing the Training

- You have now come to the end of the Notetaker training. Follow this link <https://www.csuohio.edu/disability/ods-notetaker-training-quiz> to take the quiz.
- Quizzes must be completed in order for you to receive the \$50 per credit hour compensation or a Certificate for Volunteer Hours at the end of the semester.

Information about compensation and instructions about all steps involved in submitting notes can be found at www.csuohio.edu/disability/notetaker

If you have any questions, please contact: odsnotes@csuohio.edu or 216-687-2015.

References

- The University of Akron, Office of Accessibility. Online Notetaker Training Manual. Retrieved on 8/6/2018 from <https://www.uakron.edu/access/notetakers/>
- Cleveland State University, Office of Disability Services. Students Sharing Notes. Retrieved on 8/6/2018 from <https://www.csuohio.edu/disability/notetaker>