

Improving Your Listening and Math Note-Taking Skills

Listening Skills

Being an effective listener is critical to taking good notes.

Group Discussion

In groups of four, discuss each of the following questions.

- A major impact on learning is where a student sits in the classroom.
 - Where should you sit in the classroom to maximize your learning?
 - How does where you sit relate to your learning style?
- Students are less likely to lose track and are more focused if they are prepared to take notes at the beginning of class.
 - What are some ways to be prepared at the beginning of class?
- During a lesson, it is not uncommon to lose track and become confused, resulting in incomplete notes.
 - What can you do if you find that you are unable to keep up with the lesson?
- Students who apply attentive listening skills, such as direct eye contact, good posture, nodding of the head, and not interrupting the speaker, generally are more focused and get more out of a lesson.
 - Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - What other strategies can you use in the classroom to improve learning?

Note-Taking Skills

Good note taking is important for a number of reasons. For example:

- to solidify a mathematical concept
- to write down examples with explanations
- to refer to when working on homework
- to study for tests and exams

Activity

Look over the notes you took for your most current math lesson, and trade them with a partner. Mark your partner's note-taking skills according to the following criteria. Place a checkmark beside each item that your partner has successfully completed.

1. ____ The lesson page came from an organized binder/notebook.
2. ____ The lesson has a title.
3. ____ The date is at the top of the page.
4. ____ The lesson is complete and includes all the examples that were presented.
5. ____ The mathematical examples are presented in a step-by-step manner.
6. ____ English explanations for math work are present when necessary.



Name: _____ Date: _____

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7. ____ The work is tidy and easily readable.
8. ____ Colour, or another technique, has been applied to emphasize important items.

How did you and your partner do? In future, keep in mind the above criteria when you take notes.

Effective note taking is one of the best ways to prepare for a test. Here are some additional note-taking hints that can help you to be even more successful.

- Be prepared for good note taking. Come to class with more than one writing instrument and a ruler.
- Be sure when to take notes. If in doubt, ask the teacher.
- When copying mathematical examples, you may wish to divide your page vertically into two sections. Place the example in one column. In the other column, insert explanations for each step, write down rules, or add other comments.
- Copy down each and every step of an example. You may already understand them, but this level of detail will pay off later when you might have forgotten some material.
- If you are unsure about a step, ask the teacher for clarification. This will give the whole class a chance for review. Many students fail to ask questions because they are uncomfortable. This is one of the most critical study errors that a student can make.
- Sometimes the teacher may add comments orally and not write them on the board. If you find these comments important, add them to your notes.
- When the teacher gives hints as to what will be on the test, copy and highlight them.
- Review your notes after class. Check your notes against the lesson in the textbook. Ask yourself if your notes make sense. Add comments beside examples to clarify each step in the solution.

