



## WRITING CENTER TIP SHEET: NOTE TAKING

### Three Methods of Note Taking

There's no one way to take notes—experiment with different options and see what works best for you. What you will need to do, however, is be a good listener and an active participant in the lecture to get the most out of it.

#### Cornell Method

- \_ Draw a line about 2.5 inches from the margin of your notebook.
- \_ During the lecture, take notes only on the right side of the line. Be sure to skip lines to signal a topic change, or leave room to add material you may have missed.
- \_ After the lecture, spend 5-10 minutes rereading what you wrote.
- \_ When you prepare for an exam, use the blank lefthand column to jot down the major points of the lecture and possible essay questions.
- \_ To review for the test, just cover the right side of the notepaper.

#### Outlining Method

- I. Topic sentence or main idea (Renaissance Painters)
  - A. Major points providing information about topic (Leonardo da Vinci 1452-1519)
    1. Subpoint that describes the major point (famous works: *Mona Lisa*)
      - a. Supporting detail for the subpoint (Studied under Andrea del Verrocchio)

#### List Method

- \_ Write down the main topics of the lecture (Renaissance Painters)
- \_ Create bulleted lists of supporting details and subpoints under each topic
- \_ Leave 3-6 lines blank at the bottom of each page
- \_ After the lecture, spend time highlighting the key points for reviews and exams
- \_ For exam review, pick out the key details from each page and write them in at the bottom.



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### Signal Words to Listen for in Any Lecture

Listening for signal words will help you to organize your lecture topics and keep track of what details are important.

#### Main idea signals

"There are three reasons why...." (HERE THEY COME!)

"First...Second... Third...." (THERE THEY ARE!)

"And most important,...." (A MAIN IDEA!)

"A major development...." (A MAIN IDEA AGAIN!)

#### Support material signals

"On the other hand...."

"Also...."

"On the contrary...."

"Further...."

"For example...."

"Furthermore...."

"Similarly...."

"As an example...."

"In contrast...."

"For instance...."

#### Conclusion or summary signals

"Therefore...."

"Finally...."

"In conclusion...."

"In summary...."

"As a result...."

"From this we see...."

#### Significant material signals (possible exam questions)

"Now this is important...."

"Remember that...."

"The important idea is that...."

"The basic concept here is...."

*\* above material credited to: [www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/helplist.html](http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/helplist.html)*

In order to be an effective listener, stack the deck in your favor:

- \_ sit close to the front of the room (fewer distractions)
- \_ maintain eye contact with the lecturer
- \_ ask questions about material you don't understand