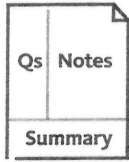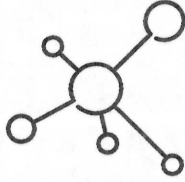# NOTE TAKING 101

In the university, taking notes and using notes later is a key part of learning and remembering information from lectures, class discussions, and other activities. Because note taking is such an important part of the learning process, it's a good idea to take time to evaluate your processes and experiment to find what note taking strategies work for each of your courses.

There are some common ways to take notes, and you've likely tried a few of them already. Keep in mind that how you take notes in different classes can—and should—vary. Here are a few note-taking strategies to try:
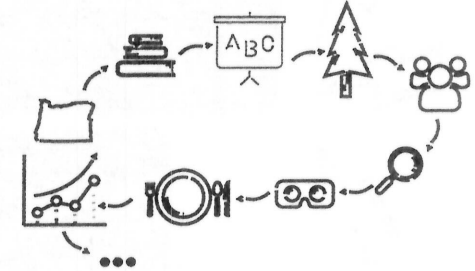
CORNELL:

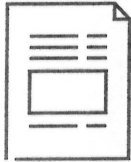**OUTLINE:**

MIND-MAP:

MATRIX:
X vs. Y

LECTURE SLIDES:

FLOWCHART:

NOTE TAKING IS A PROCESS THAT HAPPENS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER CLASS

BEFORE

☆ Print out and review any lecture notes or slides

☆ Look for and connect your notes to learning outcomes

☆ Identify main concepts and terms you expect to learn

☆ Write questions you hope the lecture will answer

☆ Be sure notes include information from all other assigned work for the week (Canvas or online content, readings, upcoming homework, videos, etc.)

☆ Try a few of the week's assigned practice problems

DURING

☆ Take notes in your own words

☆ Use consistent abbreviations and symbols

☆ Include notes for all aspects of the class (lecture, discussion, student questions/answers, visuals)

☆ Add depth and detail to the notes you bring to class

☆ Answer any questions you wrote before class

☆ Note new questions or areas of confusion from the lecture so you can review those concepts later

☆ Capture main ideas and sufficient detail (definitions, examples, images)
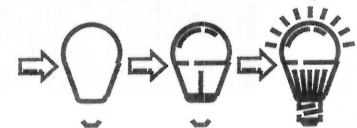
☆ Make and visualize connections between concepts

AFTER

☆ Make time to return to your notes after class

☆ Add to your notes at moments you marked confusing

☆ Relate your notes to the week's learning outcomes

☆ Compare notes with a classmate to catch missed info

☆ Transform your notes into a new format (e.g., visual, mind map, quiz questions, study guide)

☆ Summarize your notes in writing, verbally, or—better yet—both!

☆ Connect current class notes to concepts from the previous classes/weeks

☆ Use your notes to self-test on key concepts

4 WAYS TO POWER UP YOUR NOTE TAKING STRATEGIES!

#1 TAKE NOTES IN YOUR OWN WORDS
- Your working memory stresses less when you think in your own words.
- When you transcribe lectures, you spend less time learning concepts during lecture

#2 TRANSFORM YOUR NOTES AFTER CLASS
- Transforming notes into a summary, diagram, or mind map creates new retrieval paths to your memory
- The test won't look like your notes; using and applying notes gives you practice with the material in different formats

#3 TAKE NOTES NO MATTER WHAT
- Instructor notes and slides are a good starting point, but your thinking matters!
- Include associations, questions, and details that might not be captured in the slides

#4 TAKE NOTES BY HAND IF POSSIBLE
- Note-taking on your laptop can invite multi-tasking and distract from listening and learning
- You can always convert your notes to a digital format later as part of your study process

3 MORE WAYS TO POWER UP YOUR NOTE TAKING STRATEGIES!

#5 USE CONSISTENT ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS
- Using abbreviations and symbols for common words saves time
- It's helpful to develop personal associations; signal these connections with symbols

#6 BE OPEN TO TRYING NEW THINGS
- Visit the ASC in Waldo 125 to talk through what strategy will work best for your course
- Challenges yourself to take notes in a new style to find what works for you

#7 TAKE NOTES IN ALL OF YOUR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
- Remember that class discussions and student comments are learning opportunities and can spur and deepen your thinking and understanding
- Online activities will be rich with note-worthy material, too (discussion boards, videos, practice problems)