

Excerpt from *How to Study in College* by Walter Pauk,¹ creator of Cornell Notes.

Instant Replay

As soon as you leave the lecture room, while walking to your next class, mentally recall the lecture from beginning to end. Visualize the classroom and the lecturer and any blackboard work. After mentally recalling the lecture, ask yourself some questions: What was the lecturer getting at? What really was the central point? What did I learn? How does what I learned fit in with what I already know? If you discover anything you don't quite understand, no matter how small, make a note of it and ask the instructor before the next class to explain it.

Avoiding Ice-Cold Notes

During your first free period after class, or that evening at the latest, read over your notes to fill in gaps and to give yourself an overview of the lecture. Review your notes while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. Ice-Cold notes are frustrating and are time wasters. Days after a lecture, you do not want to be gazing at your own writing and wondering, "What did I mean by that?"

Two Dozen Dos and One Dozen Don'ts

Dos

1. Look over previous notes before class. (Maintains continuity.)
2. Attend *all* lectures. (It's a continuing story.)
3. Be academically aggressive. (Sit up straight with "rolled-up sleeves.")
4. Take a front seat to see and hear better. (You won't dare snooze.)
5. Use a large, loose-leaf binder. (Gives ample room.)
6. Carry lined loose-leaf (8 1/2 x 11) sheets to class. (Insert into binder on return.)
7. Write on only one side of the sheet. (Spread out for review.)
8. On top sheet, record course, lecturer and date. (In case of spill.)
9. Begin taking notes immediately. (Don't wait for inspiration.)
10. Write in short, telegraphic sentences. (Parsimoniously meaningful.)
11. Make notes complete for later understanding. (Don't sit there puzzling.)
12. Use modified printing style. (Clear letters, not scribbles.)
13. Use lecturer's words. (Lecturers like to see their words in exams.)

¹ Pauk, Walter. *How to Study in College*. 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

14. Strive to detect main headings. (As if you peeked at the lecturer's notes.)
15. Capture ideas as well as facts. (Get the drift too)
16. Keep your note-organization simple. (Easy does it.)
17. Skip lines; leave space between main ideas. (Package the ideas.)
18. Discover the organizational pattern. (Like putting together a puzzle.)
19. If the lecture is too fast, capture fragments. (Jigsaw them together later.)
20. Leave blank spaces for words to fill in later. (Thus avoid voids.)
21. Develop your own abbreviations and symbols. (Not too many, but enough.)
22. Record lecturer's examples (If you don't, you'll forget.)
23. Identify your own thought-notes. (What's mine? What's the lecturer's?)
24. Keep separate loose-leaf binders for each course (Don't combine notes yet.)

Don'ts

1. Don't sit near friends. (Can be distracting.)
2. Don't wait for something "Important." (Record everything.)
3. Don't convert lecturer's words. (Takes time and invites imprecision.)
4. Don't look for facts only. (See the idea too.)
5. Don't give up if the lecturer is too fast. (Some is better than none.)
6. Don't stop to ponder. (Do so later in your room.)
7. Don't over-indent. (You'll run out of right-side space.)
8. Don't doodle. (It breaks concentration and eye contact.)
9. Don't use spiral-bound notebooks. (Can't insert handouts.)
10. Don't consider any example too obvious. (Copy it!)
11. Avoid using Roman numerals. (You'll get tangled up.)
12. Avoid too many abbreviations. (Trouble deciphering later.)