

# NOTE TAKING SKILLS

## HINTS FOR EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING

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1. Use as few words as possible – do not write full sentences.
2. Use abbreviations.
3. Keep lots of space on the page as you take notes: skip lines between details and leave extra space to add information later.

Once students learn and master the mechanics of two-column note taking by from written material, they can try taking notes from lectures. It is a difficult skill to learn, and you can help your child prepare by emphasizing the following sub-skills.

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### Abbreviation Skills

Many educators (and parents!) assume that most middle and high school students know how to use common abbreviations (e.g., Mr. for Mister, w/ for with). However, many students do not automatically abbreviate. Have your child practice with abbreviation skills. It can be fun, and doesn't require much time. All you need to do is ask your child how to abbreviate words when you are writing or talking together. Frequent practice is important.

### Word Economy

Many students are tempted to copy whole sentences from their reading, or to write down every word from a lecture. This is not an efficient way of taking notes. Encourage your child to take notes as if he were writing a telegram. Charge points for every letter and word he uses as a way of teaching word economy. Another way to develop word economy skills is to create a set of notes that is too wordy and ask your child to make it more concise. Eventually, word economy will become automatic and make note taking easier.

### Visual Marks and Highlighters

Encourage your child to use marks and highlighters to organize notes on the page. Here are some suggestions:

- Draw a horizontal line across the page to signal the end of one main idea and the start of another.
- Number the details that support the main idea.
- Highlight the key words, names, and dates.
- Insert questions marks next to notes that are unclear, or where you think information is missing. Then ask a classmate or the teacher for the missing information.

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