Taking Notes in College: What Not to Do

• Deciding that the information will be dull before you even hear it
• Criticizing the professor
• Using the same note taking format in every class
• Letting environmental distractions divert your attention
• Missing subtle inflections in the professor’s voice
• Overlooking the professor’s body language
• Abbreviating too much
• Writing so few words that the point is absent or ambiguous
• Trying to write every word that the professor says
• Writing so sloppily that you can't read your own notes later on
• Focusing only on factual information or minor details, while losing sight of the overall organization of the lecture or connections between ideas
• Storing loose-leaf notes out of order, undated, and not numbered
• Not reviewing the previous day's notes before each lecture
• Hesitating to ask a professor to slow down or repeat
• Writing on every inch of the page, leaving no room to add information after class
• Neglecting to reread your notes until right before an exam
• Putting away your notebook near the end of class, even though the professor is still talking Closing your notebook during a class discussion, a film, or a guest speaker
• Sitting in the back of the room or too close to an open door
• Texting or letting your cell phone distract you
• Feeling impatient or giving up if the professor speaks with an accent
• Relying on a taping device and not taking notes during class
• Leaving your coat on and getting warm and drowsy