Note-Taking

In-class strategies:

- Prepare yourself to absorb the concepts that will be presented in class. Do the assigned reading ahead of time so that the information is already familiar, making it easier to prioritize key information from less-significant details.
- Focus on main concepts and major ideas. Use examples and details to clarify these concepts, but don't worry about catching every single smaller detail.
- Add your notes to course study guides, handouts, and presentation slides to minimize how much you must write.
- Increase your writing speed:
    - Use abbreviations, symbols, and other shorthand.
    - Writing in cursive is faster for most people.
    - Focus on main ideas and key terms. Next prioritize helpful examples or significant details. Let minor or irrelevant details go.
    - Put a question mark by anything you are unsure of, and follow up with the instructor or a classmate as soon as possible.
- Focus on the instructor and try to maintain your full attention. Make check marks in the corner or margin of your page every time your attention wanders to help you become more aware of when and why you tend to lose focus.
- Try different note-taking strategies to find a good fit for your learning style and the course material, and be ready to adapt as needed. Note-taking styles: Cornell format, outline format, paragraph format, list format.
- Use graphic organizers: draw pictures, diagrams, charts, maps, and timelines to organize information visually and identify connections.

Out-of-class strategies:

- Review class notes as soon as possible after class to cement the new knowledge. Your brain will lose the most information within the first 24 hours. Seek to move information from short-term to long-term memory storage in those first 24 hours to save yourself study time in the long-run.
- Note anything needing clarification or further questioning (e.g. any concepts that you don't fully understand, proper nouns that you aren't sure how to spell).
- Organize information for easy studying. Type your notes or rewrite them neatly. File them somewhere accessible, like in a binder or computer folder.
- Convert notes into study materials that will help you to prepare for exams, quizzes, and other assessments. Create graphic organizers and keep running lists of important concepts or terms. Write summaries. Make your own study guides. Write out potential test questions and try to answer them.

Graphic organizer examples:

Stage 1	• 1a • 1b	
Stage 2	• 2a • 2b	
Stage 3	• 3a • 3b	

a

c   b

a
b
c

1	2
x	x
y	y
z	