

PEAK LECTURE PERFORMANCE



Alright, alright. We're prepped and ready to take notes. Those pens have ink, that paper is lined. And these won't be just notes. No. They will be spectacular, glowing on your page, links of knowledge.

Or sociological concepts. Or philosophical definitions. But remember, the more significant something is to you, the more interested in it you will be. Aristotle? Or Arist-awesome-ness? The choice is yours.

Pay Attention to Your Instructor. Please.

- This is a no brainer, but it needs to be said. You attend class to learn. Your instructor is providing you with the stuff to learn, so you need to pay attention to them
- Again, THEY ARE GIVING YOU THE ANSWERS TO YOUR TEST/EXAM QUESTIONS
- I know, I know. Not all instructors are created equal. Some are boring. Some cough. Some are all over the place like an untethered balloon
- It is a challenge, but do your best to keep taking notes
- Do they provide slides ahead of time? If so, look at them before class. These slides will provide an outline for the material your instructor plans to cover. Having this outline will help you to listen actively. Your professor is lecturing on King Henry VIII? And the slides list the topics of Wives, Wars, and Gangrene?
- Now you can go into class expecting to learn about H's wives, wars, and gangrene. Knowing what to listen for will help keep your attention

Make Those Notes Your Own

- The best way to study, the best way to learn material... is to make that material your own
- In other words, put information into your own words

- This isn't always possible during lecture. Some professors like to talk, which means you will be writing
- At the end of class though, you are left with notes that are your professor's words, not yours
- And taking notes in your own words makes you more engaged with the material, increasing your attention
- Yes, there will be times you'll need borrow a classmate's notes or you might possibly have a notetaker. That's okay! But take those notes, read through them, and rewrite them in your own words
- You will learn the material more deeply, which is exactly what you want for tests and exams

Write Over Type

- Yes, some professors hardly come up for air when they lecture, and even a 50 minute class can leave your wrist and hand aching
- But when you write information by hand, you are more engaged and forced to think about what you're writing
- Because you are forced to think, you are creating a "writing" pathway in your brain to where that information is stored
- You create a "hearing" pathway when you listen to your professor
- A "writing" pathway when you take notes
- And a "sight" pathway when you read your notes
- It is the same information, but stored three different ways in that noggin' of yours, tripling your chances of remembering that information come testing time

Be Aware of Cues

- It is impossible to record every word in a lecture
- When taking notes, you want to record the words that matter
- If your professor takes the time to write something on the board, that means it's important
- If they give you handout on something, it means that information is important
- If they have PowerPoint slides, the information on those slides is important

- Pay special attention to information given at the beginning and end of lectures

- This is often when instructors will provide reviews, reminders, and previews on what is to come
- Look for VERBAL cues that signal important information
 - “The point here is...” or “This is significant because...”
- Or if they repeat or rephrase information
 - “In other words...” or “To put it another way...”
- Or if they make sure you're understanding the information
 - “Does that make sense?” or “Is that clear?”
- And watch for tone of voice
 - If they deliver information in a LOUDER or more EXCITED!! tone,
 - Or, if they deliver information at a s.l.o.w.e.r pace with... added... pauses...
 - All this indicates what they're saying is stuff you should know
- Look for NONVERBAL cues as well
 - Facial expression. Is your professor grinning? Eyebrows raised?
 - Are they animated? Stomping their feet? Clapping their hands? Pointing at the board?
 - Are they moving toward you and making more direct eye contact?
 - All this indicates too, that the information they are conveying is important and you should be writing it down

Don't Stop Taking Notes

- You may not always understand what your instructor is talking about
- That doesn't mean you should quit writing
- By taking notes, you have something on which to learn and make sense of the material
- Go home and review
- If it still doesn't make sense, reach out to your instructor or a tutor

Be Organized

- Date your notes. This will make it easier for you to find information from specific classes
- Number your pages if you use loose-leaf
- Use **HEADINGS**
- This keeps related information in the same place
- When your instructor switches topics, leave some space
- The white space indicates a change in content and enables you to add any information they might have as an afterthought
- It also gives you space to rewrite your instructor's words as your own
- Be listening for VERBAL cues that indicate a change in topic
 "Now for..." or "Let's take a look at..."

- By keeping the information in your notes organized, not only are you improving the quality of your notes, but your understanding and retention of the material

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