BEFORE CLASS, DO YOU

_______ have extra pens and sufficient paper or notebook space?
_______ have a fully-charged battery if you’re taking notes on a laptop?
_______ keep the course syllabus in your notebook and refer to it often?
_______ arrive early to get a good seat and review your notes from previous classes to understand relationships?
_______ sit near the front and away from the door to minimize distractions?
_______ try to sit near the center of a row so you can see both ends of the board?
_______ remove your coat so you’re not too warm?
_______ keep all your notes together in a spiral notebook or on loose-leaf paper in a binder?
_______ use a separate notebook for each class so if you lose a notebook you won’t lose all your notes?
_______ read all assigned material BEFORE class so you can listen and participate more actively?
_______ use 8½ x 11 paper?
_______ draw a 2-inch margin on the left-hand side of each page or leave the backs of each page blank, and after class use this space for editing or summarizing your notes or for writing questions based on the notes?

DURING CLASS, DO YOU

_______ always date your notes?
_______ number each page if you’re taking notes on loose-leaf paper?
_______ write legibly and streamline your handwriting? (Recopying notes can be an effective study strategy but if you don’t have time, your original notes must be readable.)
_______ observe the instructor’s style and notice changes in voice or body language?
_______ copy all material on the board?
_______ listen for key phrases such as “The most important aspects ...” or “Four of the most commonly identified causes...” or “A vital component...”?
_______ record all examples, to increase your understanding of terms or concepts?
_______ occasionally look over the last few lines of notes to fill in gaps or rewrite illegible words?
_______ use signals (such as ?, ×, or ⚫ ) to indicate when you’re confused?
_______ leave plenty of blank spaces, especially if the lecture moves rapidly, and then fill in very soon after class?
_______ develop abbreviations that you’ll recognize later?
_______ use numerals instead of writing out numbers?
Taking Notes in College Lectures

_______ omit letters in long words or write only the beginnings of long words? (“govmt” instead of “government,” “mgmt” instead of “management,” and “reprs” instead of “represent”)

_______ notice how much time the instructor spends an idea? (The more time spent on an idea, the more important it is, thus the more prominence it may have on the test.)

_______ indent, to distinguish main ideas from details and examples?

_______ continue to take notes during class discussions, films, guest speakers?

_______ avoid trying to write down every word an instructor says? Instead, do you listen and then rephrase succinctly yet accurately?

_______ look at the instructor and maintain eye contact?

_______ ask questions when you’re confused?

_______ date handouts and keep them with the day’s notes?

_______ take notes right up to the end of class?

_______ politely ask your instructor to slow down if you can’t keep up?

_______ if your instructor distributes PowerPoint slides, do you write additional details in the spaces provided?

**AFTER CLASS, DO YOU**

_______ think about the content of the lecture after you leave the class?

_______ edit your notes in the 2-inch margin or on the backs of pages soon after class (preferably within 24 hours)?

_______ fill in any gaps in your notes very soon after class?

_______ highlight, circle, or mark important ideas and new terms?

_______ review your notes frequently, perhaps even daily, for difficult classes? (Research shows that many shorter study sessions over time result in greater retention than last-minute cramming.)

_______ write possible test questions as you review your notes and then see if you can answer them?

_______ get acquainted with other students in the class and exchange contact information?