



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**Monterey Bay**

**VOLUNTARY NOTE-  
SHARER HANDBOOK**

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY MONTEREY BAY  
STUDENT DISABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY CENTER (SDAC)**

Health and Wellness Services (Bldg. 80, Room 110)

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# KEYS TO BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL NOTE-SHARER

## INTRODUCTION

The need for note-taking in college is vital. Information, which is presented during lectures, demonstrations, discussion, and other learning situations, is crucial to the understanding of the course material. Some students with disabilities may have a difficult or impossible time trying to take notes for themselves. This does not mean that they are any less academically capable than other students - it simply means that they need some assistance.

Students with disabilities that take advantage of the resources available to them, including notes from a voluntary note-sharer, may experience more success academically than those who do not utilize these services.

## STUDENT DISABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY CENTER NOTE-SHARING SERVICE POLICY

Student Disability & Accessibility Center (SDAC) provides a means for which eligible students can arrange for a fellow classmate to share notes. The primary responsibility for asking and arranging for a note-sharer rests with the eligible student. Arrangements for sharing of notes can be made between the note-sharer and the student receiving notes, such as typing your notes and emailing them to the student or sharing them via Google Docs.

For more information, please see the following:

- <https://csumb.edu/sdac/academic-accommodations/notetaking/>
- <https://test.csumb.edu/sdr/assistive-technology-online-learning/>

## WHAT YOU NEED TO BECOME A NOTE-SHARER

### Qualifications for voluntary note-sharers:

- Knowledge of college-level English vocabulary and language, with the exception of some entry-level freshman courses. Spanish or other languages may be needed (but is not required) depending on the courses of students with disabilities.
- The ability to provide clear and organized notes, maintain confidentiality and integrity of coursework, and comply with SDAC policies and procedures.
- Have been enrolled the previous semester at CSUMB with a minimum 2.5 GPA. First-time CSUMB students (freshman or transfer) can submit an unofficial transcript from their previous college or high school. If the note-sharer does not have access to this, they should notify SDAC as soon as possible.

### Primary Duties and Responsibilities for voluntary note-sharers:

- You are expected to go to every class—the student is depending on your notes. Be sure to exchange phone or email information with the student.
- If I miss a class, I will inform the student I'm sharing notes with that I will not be there and I may provide a suggestion for a replacement in my absence.
- Bring the necessary materials/equipment that you use to take notes.

- Provide a copy to the student within 24 hours, understanding that it is best to provide notes **within 2 hours of each class**. It is important to the student requesting notes that you be responsible, reliable, and prompt.
- Any student authorized for note-taking services may be late to class and/ or absent due to disability related reasons. In these situations, we ask that you please continue to take notes until otherwise told to do so by SDAC.
- SDAC sends all correspondence through the CSUMB Google email system. You are expected as a student and note-sharer to monitor your CSUMB email account at least once a week.
- Uphold the SDAC Confidentiality Agreement (at end of the document).

## TIPS FOR TAKING NOTES EFFECTIVELY

The following information is provided to help you in your note-sharing responsibilities so that both you and the student for whom notes are being provided will obtain the maximum benefits from your efforts. Please take the time to read this information now and several times throughout the semester in order to familiarize yourself with it. Good luck and thank you for doing your best.

- Be IN class ON time!
- Prepare for lectures by clearing your mind and relaxing to avoid distractions.
- **Always** record the date, course name, and page number on each page of notes. This is particularly important if the notes are to be copied or transcribed at SDAC.
- Leave plenty of blank space and use enough paper so that notes are spacious. This will enable you to add to or further define notes later in order to make them easier for you and the other student to read and comprehend.
- Try not to “doodle” in the margins as this inhibits note-taking and interferes with concentration, as well as distracting the reader.
- Print legibly on one side of the paper so that the notes will copy well.
- Try to use dark blue or black ink. Try to avoid pencil and light-colored ink as this will make photocopies difficult to read. Avoid highlighters as they do not show up at all when photocopying. The student requesting notes might request them to be taken with a thick felt-tipped pen for visibility reasons. Please try to accommodate the student requesting notes.
- When unsure of a word, idea, or spelling, make your best effort and go back and correct it later, if necessary.
- Be sure that you and the student you are working with discuss any abbreviations you may use. Keep abbreviations consistent throughout the course. You may want to put a legend of your abbreviations on the first page, in a box, which explains what each means.  
Some useful abbreviations include:

i.e. - that is	w/ - with
e.g. - for example	w/o - without
sp. - spelling	+ or & - and
ff. - following	ch. - chapter
p. or pg. - page	~ or approx. - approximately
# or no. - number	@ - about, around, at

- Be unbiased in your taking of notes. Make a special effort to record all topics covered during lecture even though some information may seem insignificant or obvious to you. Distinguish between opinion and fact.
- Use your own words, unless the instructor is giving a technical definition (in which case, you should take down what he/she is saying verbatim).

- Identify and record all main or principle points. This is the “meat” of the lecture and will tie all other points together. This is important for grasping concepts or ideas.
- Record all secondary principle points. These will explain, illustrate, and/or support the main points through examples, descriptions, and/or explanations. All specific names, dates, formulas, numbers, technical terms, and concepts should be recorded.
- Write with sufficient detail so that the notes will have meaning without additional explanation. Include definitions of words, phrases, and concepts as often as possible.
- Note accurately professor/teaching assistant office hours, locations, and times, as well as locations and times for exams and/or optional study sections.
- Place some identifying mark (ex. asterisk, box, or underline) near the words or concepts that by voice inflection seem to have importance. Record answers to questions that are pertinent to course content. Use diagrams and illustrations effectively; draw them if they are drawn on the board, overhead, etc.
- **Ask the student for whom you provide notes to give you feedback on your notes.** Check frequently to see if the material is legible, understandable, neat enough, and sufficiently complete and organized. Ask for specific information on how to improve your notes.

## LISTENING TIPS

To figure out what an instructor is thinking and if it is important for you to know, pay attention to the following clues. It is worth writing down if the instructor:

- Writes down key information on the board or other visual aid. Outlines are especially helpful in organizing what the instructor has to say.
- Repeats information.
- Speaks slower. (He/she may be giving you more time to write)
- Refers to specific pages in the text.
- Explains how or why things happen. He/she may use words like “because,” “as a result,” “therefore,” or “for this reason.”
- Gives examples to ensure the idea is clear to everyone.
- Refers to information as a test item. He/she may use phrases like, “you may see this again,” or “this would make a good test question.”

Pay attention to the end of the lecture as closely as the beginning. Lecturers do not always pace themselves well and might cram important information into the last few minutes. Record this information as rapidly as possible. If necessary, stay a few minutes after class to write down as much as you can remember.

## **ORGANIZATION OF LECTURES AND NOTES**

**Lectures often follow this type of format:**

- A. Introduction
  1. History or background on the subject
  2. Areas related to the subject
- B. Main Body
  1. Headings
  2. Subheadings
- C. Summary
  1. Tying loose ends together
  2. Important points stressed

**Organizing the material into some form of an outline is helpful. One format within the outline is:**

1. Descriptions
2. Examples
3. Explanations
4. Filler information or material which is off topic

## **STYLES OF TAKING NOTES**

### **Outline Style**

Outlines work particularly well when the material being presented is well organized and when the information moves from main ideas to support detail. In an outline style of note-taking, each point written is separately lettered or numbered.

### **Phrase Style**

When the manner in which a lecture is presented approaches a situation much like storytelling, jotting down phrases is a great way of following the flow and ideas of the lecture.

### **Vocabulary Style**

Many courses, particularly at the introductory level, deal extensively with the development of new vocabulary. In taking notes for the course, one of your main jobs is to list new vocabulary items and to spell them correctly. You are not learning new words just for the sake of learning new words, but also to be able to formulate questions about concepts involving these words.

### **Pictorial Style**

In many of your classes, your notes will be essentially nonverbal. Some examples include diagrams, mathematical formulas and problems, drawings, and all sorts of charts and graphs. These pictorial representations are most important because they condense and summarize information that is difficult to write out.

## **COMMON PROBLEMS WHILE TAKING NOTES**

### **General Format**

- Illegible handwriting
- Notebook or paper is too small
- Lines too narrow

- Too detailed
- Writing on both sides of the paper
- Writing in pencil or light-colored ink

**Organization or Form**

- Poor labeling at the top of the page(s)
- No numbering of pages
- No emphasis marks
- Just a listing or incomplete sentences
- Inadequate indentation
- Lack of any or not enough white space
- Subtopics unrelated to heading

**Phrasing**

- Wordiness
- Meaning unclear or not conveyed
- Not in own words (where appropriate)
- Unfinished section or writing

**LISTENING ACTIVITIES**

- Listening requires energy.
- If you have problems focusing your attention, try to create a picture in your mind. Make a movie out of what is being described.
- Listen for possible test questions or ideas that may end up on the test.
- Participate in discussions. Involvement means your energy level is higher.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something. Sometimes a lecture isn't set up for students to ask questions so write them down and ask the instructor after class.
- Sit up. You waste energy when you slouch. Attention of the body promotes attention of mind.
- Postpone debates; the voices in your head that want to speak out, usually argumentatively. This is natural, but it is difficult to listen when you are making mental judgments.
- Let go of all thoughts about your instructor's personal idiosyncrasies. Don't be distracted by an unusual lecture style.
- Always ask yourself questions about what is going on but be sure to notice when the debate in your head gets going and squelch it.
- If you have a strong idea that won't be squelched, write it down and continue to listen.
- If you daydream with a book, the book is still there when your daydream is over. If you daydream in class, information has passed you by.
- Gently bring your attention back to class when it wanders. Don't waste your time and energy feeling guilty about it, just DO IT.

<b>Bad Listening Habits</b>	<b>Good Listening Habits</b>
1. Calling a subject uninteresting.	1. Tune into the speaker to see if there is anything you can use.
2. Criticizing a speaker's delivery or personal appearance.	2. Getting the message is more important than the speaker's delivery or personal appearance.
3. Getting over stimulated and preparing a rebuttal before hearing all of what is said.	3. Hear the speaker out before making a judgment.
4. Listening for only the facts.	4. Listen for main ideas, concepts, principles, etc. as well as the facts.

5. Trying to make an outline out of everything you hear.	5. Listen for two or three minutes before taking notes to see how the speaker is organized.
6. Faking attention to the speaker.	6. Good listening is not relaxed. Good listening is hard work and requires effort.
7. Tolerating distractions in a listening situation.	7. Get up and do something about the distraction: shut a window, close a door, request the speaker to speak louder, etc.
8. Evading difficult material.	8. Learn to listen to difficult subject matter. Force yourself to listen to something other than easy material.
9. Letting emotional words affect your listening.	9. Don't let words interfere with good listening. Be aware of word barriers and don't let symbols stand between you and the message.
10. Wasting the difference between speech and speed (100 to 200 words per minute) and thought speed (up to 800 words per minute).	10. Make thought speed an asset, not a liability. Anticipate the next point, making contrast or comparisons, or identify evidence.

## **SDAC Confidentiality Agreement**

The office for Student Disability & Accessibility Center (SDAC), as part of Health and Wellness Services, is dedicated to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the people who request, use, or have used our services.

As a voluntary note-sharer for a student authorized by the office for the Student Disability & Accessibility Center (SDAC), I acknowledge the need to be ever circumspect against breaches of confidentiality.

No staff member, student assistant, vendor or volunteer shall reveal any information regarding a client of this office, unless the client has authorized the disclosure of that information, including, but not limited to, that person's identity or any other personal information.

Unless a client of SDAC authorizes disclosure, no information regarding the client may be disclosed to anyone within or outside of the office for SDAC. When a client waives confidentiality, staff members, student assistants, vendors and volunteers must exercise utmost caution not to exceed the parameters of the waiver. Any doubt regarding disclosure must be resolved in favor of confidentiality.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, understand that any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and may be cause for removal as a staff member, student assistant, vendor, or volunteer from the office for the Student Disability & Accessibility Center (SDAC).