Taking Classroom Notes

Your teachers regularly introduce you to new concepts and subjects. To understand these ideas and put them to good use, you need to practise effective note taking. Use the information below as a guide.

- **Use an effective note-taking format.** A format is a plan or method of organisation.
- **Label your notes** at the top of the page with the topic and date. Also number the pages to keep information in good order.
- **Record important information** that your teacher puts on the board.
- **Practise good listening skills** during discussions and lectures. Be alert for clues that important information is coming up—"There are four types of ..." or "Please remember that ..."
- **Number information** that is presented in steps.
- **Pay special attention to new vocabulary words.** Guess on the spelling, if you're not sure. Circle words as a reminder to check the spellings and definitions later.
- **Write down key words or phrases.** If you try to write complete sentences, you may not be able to keep up. Also try to use your own words as much as possible.
- **Use pictures, abbreviations and your personal shorthand** to help you record important information. (Use + for "and", u for "you" and so on.)
- **Review your notes after class** and continue to review them from time to time. During your review, highlight or mark important facts and details.

*In Focus*

If you don't take complete notes, by the end of class, you may have forgotten as much as half of the information presented. After a few weeks, you may have forgotten 80 per cent or even more!

**Your Turn**

On a scale of 1, meaning "ineffective", to 10, meaning "very effective", rate your note-taking skills. Are your notes organised? Are they clear? Do they help you to complete assignments and study the material? Explain your rating in a brief paragraph.