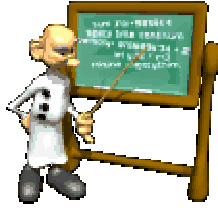


How to thrive during **Class Discussions** in Mrs. Angie's class



Mrs. Angie's class discussions are an important part of your learning. In order to make the most of the discussion time pay attention, engage in subjects, and take notes on important information. Students will be taught how to take [Cornell Note](#) taking style.

Students will discuss almost every subject at different times. In the beginning of the year, the discussions will be shorter and the class will work on taking notes together, but expectations for note taking and participation will increase throughout the year. Students will receive discussions in almost every subject at different times. In the beginning of the year, the discussions will be shorter and the class will work on taking notes together, but expectations for note taking and participation will increase throughout the year.

Beginning advice on taking notes:

1. Get yourself a good notebook and keep all your notes in it. A loose-leaf is best, because then you can add pages and rearrange them and punch holes in handouts and put them in, too.

2. Learn to listen. This isn't TV, where you sit and it happens to you. You have to be intellectually engaged, following through the argument to see where it is going, asking questions if you have lost your way.
3. Write down the date and subject
4. Draw a vertical line down the lined portion of the page, about one-third of the way over from the left margin.
5. Write down categories and questions on the left side of the line as the lecture proceeds - for instance, "What to do if you catch fire."
6. Put specifics and answers on the right side of the line - for instance, "1. Stop; 2. Drop; 3. Roll."
7. Use abbreviations to keep up with your teacher. Simple symbols include an up arrow for "increase" and a right arrow for "led to" or "resulted in."
8. Note anything you're unclear about at the top of the page, and ask about it during the question period.
9. Number lists for ease of structure and memory.
10. Review your lecture notes the evening of the day you took them. This will help the knowledge stick in your mind.
11. Study for tests and quizzes by covering the right side of your notes and using the left side as a "trigger" to help you recall details.
12. Check out this example of a good outline

After students are used to taking notes this way, we will work on taking notes in outline form.

Here are some more advanced tips:

1. Capture the organization of each lecture; this is particularly important when you review for essay questions (questions where you have to write a large paragraph). Get the title down promptly at the beginning, and arrange and mark your notes thereafter to remind you how things relate to one another.

2. Get down the key words used in the lecture--concepts defined, proper nouns mentioned repeatedly--the sort of things that you suspect would make good multiple-choice questions on tests and quizzes.

3. Be selective. If you write too much, you not only will be unable to listen well in class but also will be unable to study well later. If you have too many notes, then before you can study, you have to make notes from your notes. If you take too few notes, however, you will not be able to remember what you were writing about. So how do you know what to take down and what not to? Of course, you have to pick up the obvious cues-- when I say, "Write this down," for instance, or write a word or date on the board--but this is only part of the answer. What you have to be sure of is that you get down the organization (the order of information) of the lecture and the key words.

4. Listen for questions that your teacher raises because these questions focus on the most important points he or she will discuss. Then, listen carefully as your teacher develops the ideas so that you can follow his/her line of thought. Finally, **summarize** point he or she is trying to make. (Very often this will not appear until the end.)

5. Try to figure out the style of the lecture and the teacher. Does your teacher:

1) simply review the textbook page by page,

2) use the textbook as a basis for lecture but add a lot of information from other sources, or

3) assign you to read the textbook - expecting you to read it on your own- and lecture from other sources? It's possible that I will use a combination of these approaches during the year, but your awareness of where lecture material is coming from is your first step in taking good notes.

6. Study from your notes; don't just read them over. Right after class, spend 5-10 minutes editing your notes. Fill in missing information, clarify abbreviations, and expand details.