

Taking Notes in Math: A Few Helpful Hints

Everyone learns a little bit differently, so different people will find that different styles of note-taking works best for them – and it can take a little bit of trial-and-error to figure out what works best.

However, there are some general rules that help make taking notes easier for everyone.

- **Do** write down the date and the topic at the top of the page.
- **Don't** try to write down every word that the teacher says, or even what is listed on a PowerPoint or note sheet. Important things to write down include definitions, theorems, and formulas.
- **Do** write down *every single step* in the example problems the teacher shows you, *even if you think you'll remember what's happening*. You might want to include a word or two of explanation for some (or all) steps as well.
- **Do** draw pictures and graphs.
- **Do** make key points (like definitions and formulas) stand out on the page. This might be done by underlining, circling, or using different colors.
- **Do** leave space for additional notes or questions. Visual space is also a good reminder of where one example or type of problem ends and where another begins.
- **Do** review your notes a day or two later to discover if you have any questions – and make sure to *ask* those questions. It's okay to ask in class, but it's also okay to meet your teacher outside of class to ask questions. And remember, there are probably other scholars who have the same questions you do!

We will be using Cornell Notes in our notebooks this year – I'll be giving more instructions during our first lesson.

