

Making a PowerPoint Class Work for You

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Introduction:

More faculty are using PowerPoint presentations in their lectures, so students need to figure out the best way to adapt their notetaking strategies to PowerPoint lectures.

QUESTION #1: Do I need to take notes if my professor uses PowerPoint?

ANSWER: Yes! Absolutely!!

WHY???

Several reasons:

1. You should use the class time itself to begin learning and remembering new material. Taking notes is an excellent tool for getting down what you need to know and starting to learn it.
2. You are probably a visual learner, but that does not mean you learn by just looking! Very, very few students learn new material by just listening and looking.
3. You begin to learn when you interact with information. Visual learners need to write things down to start their learning process. [Later, when you review the material, you should also plan to organize it into a visual format such as a chart, outline, study guide, or map.]
4. It can be difficult to maintain your concentration for an entire class. Making decisions about what to write and then writing information down helps keep your mind focused.

QUESTION #2: Should I take notes the same way in classes that use PowerPoint and classes that don't?

ANSWER: Probably not. Mainly, you have choices to make.

Step 1

- If they are available, **print out** the PowerPoint slides before you come to class.
- Choose the number of slides per page - usually 1, 3, or 6.
The number you choose depends on the method you intend to follow for taking notes.

Step 2

- **Take notes** during class!

Method A:

- Take notes on the PowerPoint slides you have printed out.
- *Suggestion:*
For this method, print out 3 slides per page. Then you have room for notes.
- *Disadvantage of Method A:*
Depending on the way your professor lectures, it may be tricky to figure out spacing - sometimes you'll write very little; sometimes you'll need to write on the back of the page to avoid running into the next slide.

Method B:

- Take your notes on a separate piece of paper.
- *Suggestions:*
 - Date both the slides you have printed out and your class notes.
 - Depending on the amount of information on each slide, you may be able to print 6 slides per page.
- *Disadvantage of Method B:*
To make it easier to study later, you'll need to figure out a way to keep your notes and the slides together. Otherwise they are likely to become separated.