

Tips for Organizing Your Study Materials

There are at least three basic ways to organize your lecture notes and other class study materials. Any one or a combination of them will work. The cardinal principle for organizing class materials is to keep all materials for each course separate from each other so they are easy to locate.

Spiral Notebooks

Advantages

- Lecture notes for each course are bound permanently.
- At the end of the semester, notes can be easily filed away for future reference.

Disadvantages

- No convenient place to put handouts and other loose papers, unless you buy spiral notebooks with pockets.

Loose-leaf Notebooks with Dividers

Advantages

- All materials for all courses can be kept together.
- Loose materials can be punched and inserted next to the materials they are meant to accompany.
- Easy to insert notes which have been photocopied.

Disadvantages

- Often heavy and bulky.
- If you fold and stuff materials into the notebook it's easy to end up with a mess.
- Some pages tear loose and need to be repaired.

Folders with Double Pockets

Advantages

- Lecture notes may be kept along with blank paper for future note taking.
- Other materials such as handouts and returned papers and assignments can be kept in the folder.
- You can loan notes easily.
- No need to punch holes.
- Folders are ready to file away at the end of semester.
- Folders are inexpensive.

Disadvantages

- If you drop a folder on a windy day and the papers fall out, the results can be disastrous!
- Folders are best kept in your backpack or briefcase.
- Folders are also somewhat fragile. They may begin to fall apart before the end of the semester and need to be replaced.

Source: Wood, Nancy. College Reading and Study Skills 2nd ed. NY: Holt, Rinhart, & Winston. 1982. pp 14-15.