



OCTOBER

*A*ll of a sudden, it's October. This month marks the half-way point in the semester. In October, you'll likely have a midterm exam or a major project in every class. For many students, this part of the semester brings academic stress and anxiety. On top of that, many students experience social stresses and homesickness. These academic and personal pressures may sound scary, but these challenges also offer opportunities to get to know yourself and your campus resources. In this chapter, we'll cover both the stresses and the resources. You'll learn about Early Alert, midterms, and anxiety; you'll also encounter study plans and campus resources like the Counseling Center and Coe library that can help you develop skills and approaches to October's challenges. Hopefully this chapter will also help you think about what kind of learner you are. October is challenging, but you can do it!

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OCTOBER *2018*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			Review Early Alert Grades			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
					Midsemester	UW Homecoming
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
			Midsemester Grades available in WyoWeb			
28	29	30	31			
	Advising Week Begins					

LOGISTICS

In this section, we'll provide some information about items that will occur for all UW students in the month of October.

BEWARE OF EARLY ALERT

What is Early Alert, and why does it matter?

Early Alert is a program that allows faculty to provide academic feedback on student performance during the 4th week of classes, long before mid-term grades are assigned. The goal is to give you a glimpse of your early performance in each class. With Early Alert, you can see if you are passing or struggling in individual classes.

This alert encourages you to speak with your instructors and/or seek academic support services such as tutoring and Supplemental Instruction. If you have a D or F grade at Early Alert, you will receive points of contact from their advisors, and Residence Hall Assistants. If you receive an Early Alert in any of your classes, don't panic! Instead, see this as an opportunity to seek academic/personal help and discuss your options with your instructors and advisors.

Specific information about Early Alert will be provided at the start of each term. For questions about Early Alert, contact Lane Buchanan, Registrar (lane@uwyo.edu).

Faculty Voices: EARLY ALERT

“ This is a wonderful system to identify struggling students much earlier during the semester and offer advice/resources to improve their learning.”

“ I'm glad we have this system in place. It shapes the way I think about my students' grades in general, and that has changed some of the language I use about grades in class.”

“ I reached out to one of my advisees due to the Early Alert, and it turned out to be a very pivotal moment to do so.”

“ If the system helps one student to succeed in college, then it is worth my time as an instructor to use it.”

Information adapted from UW's website (http://www.uwyo.edu/learn/fac_resources_recognition/early_alert/)

PREPARING *for* MIDTERMS

Even though mid-term exam week is on the calendar all along, it can sneak up on students. Generally, each of your classes will have a major exam, paper, or project due at or around mid-term week. This can be stressful if it catches you off guard, so it's best to prepare for mid-term week in advance. Here, you'll find some strategies for approaching this week.

“ My hardest midterm was my first semester. I was just getting used to the college life and figuring out what I needed to do and how to study. I felt very overwhelmed and stressed to the max. I didn't have a large work load, but I had a lot of studying to do for the exams I had the following week. I focused on the things I needed the most help on.”

-Kassondra Giacchino, *UW Student*

“ My first midterm week was a real wake up call. No one prepared me for what it would be like. This is the first real college studying you have to do. I was a mess because I didn't know what to study, what was the best way to study for me, or if I was giving each class the right amount of my time. I was a mess. I studied for some classes super hard, and others not as much as I needed to. In one class, we did an early quiz and I did well on it. For the midterm, I totally bombed it. Now I know to deal with the stress by talking with my friends, taking time to go out to eat, and spacing out my studying so I didn't stress too hard.”

-Olivia Balanoff, *UW Student*

Seven Day **STUDY PLAN**

Since last-minute cramming usually doesn't work out well, keep the following 7-day study plan in mind (although some exams will need more than one week of preparation). Study a maximum of 2 hours at a time before taking a break, and attend any review sessions offered during the week.

DAY ONE	Organize all your notes, handouts, and materials you'll need to cover. Check to see if anything is missing. Prioritize what will be most important to study through what is least important to study. Divide your study materials into at least three sections (sometimes the teacher does this automatically through the course units—you might divide by date, topics, etc.). You can also break this down by “lecture notes” and “book notes.” <i>*Some students re-write or re-type their class notes at this point; others find this strategy unhelpful.</i>
DAY TWO	Study/review all the materials for the first section you identified, both in the course book(s) and in your own notes. (If you are breaking things down by lecture/book, study one or the other).
DAY THREE	Study all the material in the second section.
DAY FOUR	Study all the material in the third section (if relevant).
DAY FIVE	Meet with a partner or small group to compare notes, formulate possible test questions, and quiz each other. Review ALL material.
DAY SIX	Study/review your weakest sections.
DAY SEVEN	Study/review ALL material.

Tips: Think positively! Get a full night's sleep the night before an exam. Eat light, and eat healthy before the exam to keep the blood circulating to your brain. And, most importantly, spend 5-10 minutes after difficult classes reviewing your notes, and 30 minutes each week reviewing the whole week's notes. This will make a BIG difference in your ability to ace the material and study effectively.

Other Notes:

- Talk to the professor before a test that you're worried about. Request their advice for covering material and studying effectively. Ask them about pitfalls students in the past have made on the exam.
- If you are very anxious, study in the classroom where the exam will be held at least once. Visualize yourself taking the exam and knowing the answers. Use the same pen or pencil you used for studying to write the exam.
- Minimize group work if it is not helpful.
- Practice applying information to new scenarios. Ask for sample problems, if possible.

Seven Day **PLAN WORKSHEET**

Use the information from the chart above to create a seven day study plan for an upcoming exam or project. In a few sentences, briefly describe the exam or project, and then make a plan for what you'll do on each of your seven days. Be as specific as possible.

DAY ONE	
DAY TWO	
DAY THREE	
DAY FOUR	
DAY FIVE	
DAY SIX	
DAY SEVEN	



HELP *for* TEST ANXIETY

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF TEST ANXIETY?

Text anxiety rarely comes out of a vacuum. Sometimes the causes are real, like when one's grade is not where one wants it to be; other times, the anxiety is in our heads. It may be past experiences of blanking out on tests, or being unable to retrieve answers to questions. It could also be a lack of preparation for an exam, which is a real reason to be worried about your performance. In this case errors in time management, poor study habits, failure to properly organize material and cramming the night before the exam might increase anxiety. If you have adequately prepared for a test, your anxiety may result from negative thinking and worries. You might be focusing on past performances on exams, how friends and other classmates are doing, or the negative consequences you expect if you do poorly.

HOW CAN YOU REDUCE TEST ANXIETY?

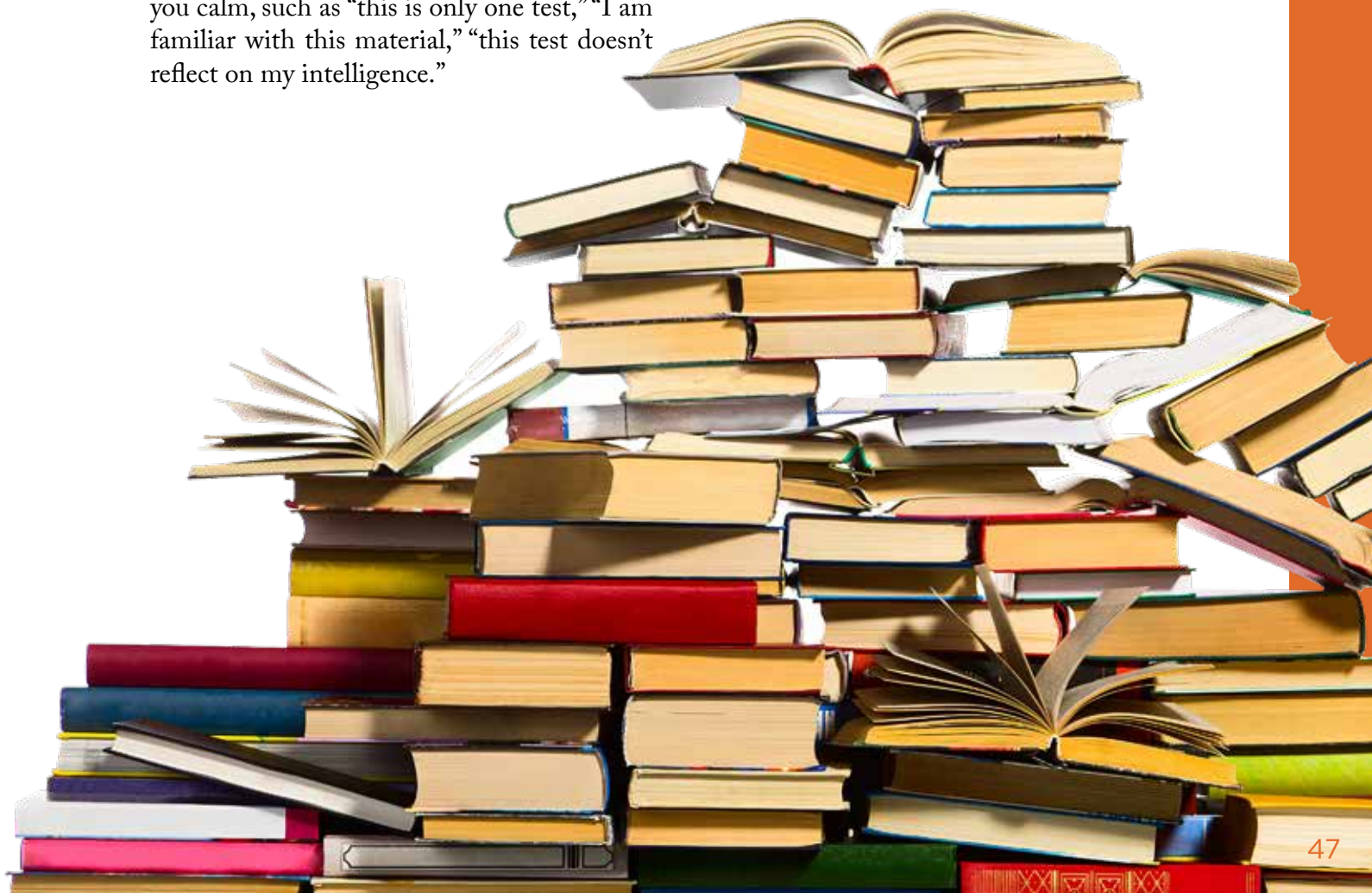
While studying: Allow yourself plenty of time to accomplish all the things you have to do before the test. Build up confidence by reviewing the material frequently. Set up your study goals and take one step at a time to not overwhelm yourself. If you are feeling anxiety building, there are several types of exercises which can help you relax.

1. Engage in deep breathing for 2-5 minutes. Close your eyes and concentrate on the air going in and out of your lungs. Take long, deep breaths, fill your lungs and abdomen, hold your breath, and then exhale.
2. Tense and relax different muscle groups. For example, if your shoulders are tense pull them back and hold them for a few seconds, then relax. This will help you relax problematic muscles.
3. Engage in guided imagery for a few minutes. Pick a scene that you find peaceful, beautiful, and natural. Think about what you see, what you hear, what you feel and what you smell while in this scene.
4. Try to describe the anxiety. Focus your attention on your anxiety and think about the feelings it causes: how large is it? Where is it located in your body? What is its color, its shape, and its texture? If you can completely experience a physical sensation it will often disappear.
5. Exercise will help you to release anxiety and excess energy and, as a result, reduce body tension.
6. Engage in positive self talk. This involves: (a) thinking about rational responses to counter negative thoughts (e.g., instead of saying "I'm going to fail this test" say "I have the ability to do this, I just need to get some help."); (b) thoughts that help you to cope with stress (e.g., "a little anxiety is helpful. I will just try my best."); and (c) thoughts

that keep you on task (e.g., “I can write this paper if I break it into smaller steps.”)

Prior to the test: Arrive early so you can sit where you are most comfortable, and avoid people who are anxious and might cause you to doubt your knowledge. When you receive the test look it over, read the directions twice, and then organize your time efficiently. Don't rush through the test, but work at a comfortable pace and don't worry about how far along classmates are on the test.

During the test: Try using deep breathing and muscle relaxation: take small breaks to work on relaxing. Other suggestions include: (a) get a drink of water and try to clear your mind, (b) move onto easier questions, (c) eat something or chew gum as an anxiety distraction, (d) ask the instructor a question, (e) think about post-exam rewards for a minute, (f) utilize positive self talk. Come up with positive statements which help to keep you calm, such as “this is only one test,” “I am familiar with this material,” “this test doesn't reflect on my intelligence.”



Get to KNOW COE

University of Wyoming Libraries is a center of discovery and learning where students conduct research to develop skills for life-long learning.

Librarians teach students how to locate, evaluate, and integrate information within their studies. UW Libraries are a key part of scholarly activities at the University and remain at the forefront of information technology as it applies to library collections.

In Coe Library you will find:

- 1.3 million books and growing
- hundreds of academic article databases
- more than 800,000 eBooks
- study rooms
- laptops and ipads to borrow
- wireless access
- music and movies
- food and drinks at the Book & Bean Cafe

“ I started going to the library my second semester to study because it was peaceful and relaxing. I could get more done with fewer distractions. I also went to the writing center on the third floor a few times to get help with papers.”

-Kassondra Giacchino, *UW Student*

“ Coe Library for me is helpful for studying and meeting with tutors. I use the computers and the study floors the most. It is very busy and there are a lot of people who go in and out. It's great for getting some quiet and getting things done. If you need help with books or anything, it is a wonderful place to go!”

-Olivia Balanoff, *UW Student*



Reflect

Spend a few minutes writing about a challenge you've faced and overcome. Describe the way that challenge felt. What habits or techniques allowed you to get past the anxiety of the challenge?

Explore the COUNSELING CENTER

From the UW website

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers individual counseling, group counseling, outreach programming, and graduate training programs. Counseling can be helpful for test anxiety, stress, and any issues you might be struggling to manage in your first semester. UCC is a Safe Zone for all students seeking services.

Students can make an appointment by dropping by **Knight Hall 341** during hours of operation:

Fall and Spring Drop-In Hours:

Drop-in times, for a brief initial meeting with a counselor, are:

Monday - Friday 10:00 am - 11:30 am & 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I FIRST ARRIVE?

You will be greeted by our front office staff and asked to fill out some forms. You will then have the opportunity to meet briefly (15-20 minutes) with the drop-in counselor to discuss your situation. At that time, the counselor will provide you with a future appointment at UCC and/or a referral to another agency to assist you with your needs.

This initial appointment is not a counseling appointment. It is an opportunity for the counselor to assess and discuss your needs.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CRISIS?

Crisis intervention services are also offered during regular clinic hours (8:00am - 5:00pm) for students with urgent problems. Please call or drop-in and inform our receptionist you have an urgent crisis. For after-hours crises, call 766-8989 and ask for the on-call counselor.

If you are experiencing an emergency, call 911.

University Counseling Center

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

341 Knight Hall

Phone: 307-766-2187

ADULTING *for* BEGINNERS

Discover what kind of learner you are.

Shared by Stetson University

LEARNING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The modality (learning channel preference) questionnaire reproduced here is by O'Brien (1985).

To complete, read each sentence carefully and consider if it applies to you. On the line in front of each statement, indicate how often the sentence applies to you, according to the chart below. Please respond to all questions.

1	2	3
Never applies to me.	Sometimes applies to me.	Often applies to me.

Section One:

1. ___ I enjoy doodling and even my notes have lots of pictures and arrows in them.
2. ___ I remember something better if I write it down.
3. ___ I get lost or am late if someone tells me how to get to a new place, and I don't write down the directions.
4. ___ When trying to remember someone's telephone number, or something new like that, it helps me to get a picture of it in my mind.
5. ___ If I am taking a test, I can "see" the textbook page and where the answer is located.
6. ___ It helps me to look at the person while listening; it keeps me focused.
7. ___ Using flashcards helps me to retain material for tests.
8. ___ It's hard for me to understand what a person is saying when there are people talking or music playing.
9. ___ It's hard for me to understand a joke when someone tells me.
10. ___ It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.

Total _____

Section Two:

1. ___ My written work doesn't look neat to me. My papers have crossed-out words and erasures.
2. ___ It helps to use my finger as a pointer when reading to keep my place.
3. ___ Papers with very small print, blotchy dittos or poor copies are tough on me.
4. ___ I understand how to do something if someone tells me, rather than having to read the same thing to myself.
5. ___ I remember things that I hear, rather than things that I see or read.
6. ___ Writing is tiring. I press down too hard with my pen or pencil.
7. ___ My eyes get tired fast, even though the eye doctor says that my eyes are ok.
8. ___ When I read, I mix up words that look alike, such as "them" and "then," "bad" and "dad."
9. ___ It's hard for me to read other people's handwriting.
10. ___ If I had the choice to learn new information through a lecture or textbook, I would choose to hear it rather than read it.

Total _____

Section Three:

1. ___ I don't like to read directions; I'd rather just start doing.
2. ___ I learn best when I am shown how to do something, and I have the opportunity to do it.
3. ___ Studying at a desk is not for me.
4. ___ I tend to solve problems through a more trial-and-error approach, rather than from a step-by-step method.
5. ___ Before I follow directions, it helps me to see someone else do it first.
6. ___ I find myself needing frequent breaks while studying.
7. ___ I am not skilled in giving verbal explanations or directions.
8. ___ I do not become easily lost, even in strange surroundings.
9. ___ I think better when I have the freedom to move around.
10. ___ When I can't think of a specific word, I'll use my hands a lot and call something a "what-cha-ma-call-it" or a "thing-a-ma-jig."

Total _____

Scoring:

Now, add up the scores for each of the three sections and record below. The maximum score in any section is 30 and the minimum score is 10. Note the preference next to each section.

Section One Score: (Visual)	
Section Two Score: (Auditory)	
Section Three Score: (Kinesthetic)	

Evaluating the Learning Style Questionnaire:

The modality type with the highest score indicates your preferred learning channel. The higher the score, the stronger the preference. If you have relatively high scores in two or more sections, you probably have more than one strength. If the scores in the sections are roughly equal, you probably do not have a preferred learning channel; you are a multi-sensory learner.

The following table summarizes the observable characteristic indicative of the three learning styles. It provides an informal means of assessing your preferred approach to learning.

MODALITY	VISUAL	AUDITORY	KINESTHETIC (Hands-on)
PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE	Learns by seeing or watching demonstrations	Learns through verbal instructions from self or others.	Learns by doing and direct involvement.
SPELLING	Recognizes words by sight; relies on configurations of words.	Uses a phonics approach has auditory word attack skills.	Often is a poor speller; writes words to determine if they “feel” right.
READING	Likes description; sometimes stops reading to stare into space and imagine scene; intense concentration.	Enjoys dialogue and plays; avoids lengthy descriptions; unaware of illustrations; moves lips or sub-vocalizes.	Prefers stories where action occurs early; fidgets while reading; not an avid reader.
HANDWRITING	Tends to be a good, particularly when young; spacing and size are good; appearance is important.	Has more difficulty learning in initial stages; tends to write lightly.	Good initially, but deteriorates when space becomes smaller; pushes harder on writing instrument.
MEMORY	Remember faces, but forgets names; writes things down; takes notes.	Remembers names, but forgets faces; remembers by auditory repetition.	Remembers best what was done, but not what was seen or talked about.
IMAGERY	Vivid imagination; thinks in pictures; visualizes in detail.	Sub-vocalizes; imagines things in sounds; details are less important.	Imagery not important; images that do occur are accompanied by movement.
DISTRACTABILITY	Unaware of sounds; distracted by movement.	Easily distracted by sounds.	Not attentive to visual or auditory presentation so may seem distracted.
PROBLEM SOLVING	Deliberate; plans in advance; organizes thoughts by writing them; lists problems.	Talks problems out; tries solutions verbally or sub-vocally; talks self through problems.	Attacks problem physically; impulsive; often selects solution involving greatest activity.
RESPONSE TO PERIODS OF INACTIVITY	Stares or doodles; finds something.	Hums, talks to self, or talks to others.	Fidgets or finds reasons to move.
RESPONSE TO NEW SITUATIONS	Looks around or examines structure.	Talks about situation; discusses pros and cons of what to do.	Tries things out; touches, feels or manipulates.

Reflect

Based on these two tools, what have you learned about your learning style? How could this impact the ways you prepare for your classes for the rest of the semester?

Improving NOTE-TAKING SKILLS

April Heaney and Jessica Willford, LeaRN Program (aprilb@uwyo.edu)

Students often say after a few semesters at UW, “I finally figured out how to take good notes!” These students also frequently say, “I wish I’d known this when I first came to college.” The tips below are meant to give you a jump in tailoring your own approach to note-taking, and come mostly from research on effective note-taking as well as tips from advanced students. Maybe the most important suggestion, though, is to think of note-taking NOT just as a “recording activity,” but rather as a method (tailored to your needs) for improving learning. Strong note-taking takes a willingness to try new strategies, practice, and flexibility for the demands of different courses.

Common Mistakes in Note-Taking:

- Trying to write down everything the instructors says
- Leaving no space for editing, adding, and reflecting on notes
- Failing to do the reading before class
- Re-copying notes (an efficient system should eliminate the need for re-copying)
- Stopping note-taking during class discussion (even if the instructor writes material on the board)

Best Practices:

- Use a three-ring binder rather than a spiral bound notebook (this gives flexibility to add, copy, or re-organize pages).
- Give a heading and date for each class period’s notes.
- Take notes while you read your textbook. Incorporate these notes into your lecture notes.
- Make copies of helpful tables or graphs from your textbook and tape them onto blank pages in your notes.
- Quickly develop a system for abbreviation in the first few weeks of class. If your instructor has his/her own system of abbreviation, make yourself a key so you remember what abbreviations mean.
- Develop a way to identify key points that the instructor hints (or directly says) are important (for example, highlighting or starring).
- Mark vocabulary words by highlighting, underlining, or bracketing/boxing.
- Keep notes as concise as possible.
- Use sticky tabs or post-its to mark important sections in your notes that you’ll need to come back to (for referencing in papers, studying for exams, memorizing information).
- Leave generous space in the margins and at the bottom of pages for adding and summarizing points.
- Review your notes for a few minutes before class, and a few minutes after class.
- Visit the instructor in the first month of class, share your note-taking and request suggestions.
- Be able (and ready) to change your note-taking style from course to course.
- Consider using the “Cornell Method” for organizing and remembering information (shown on the other side).

Student Voice:



It’s probably obvious advice, but the two biggest things that helped me were showing up for class and being confident that the material was worth learning...even in classes I didn’t love.

Student Difficulties:

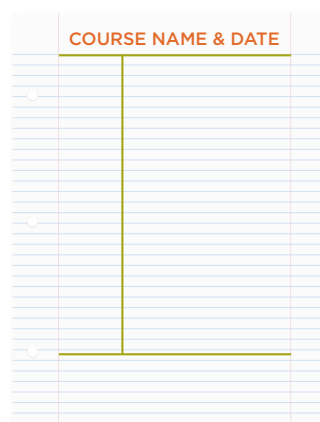
I can't write as fast as the instructor talks. Insert blank lines in your notes whenever you miss information—and then talk with friends or the instructor to fill in missing components. Try using a laptop to take notes if you have one available to you.

I try to listen harder when I'm confused and then I stop writing. Just keep writing, even if you don't understand something the instructor says. The more information you have in your notes, the more you will have to “work with” later when you're processing your notes.

I can't read my handwriting after I take notes. Read your notes out loud as you go back over them. Reading aloud helps to “trigger” memory and also aids in connecting concepts.

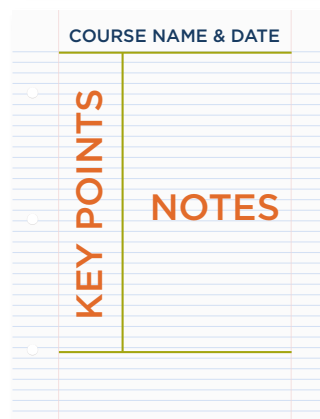
Divide the paper into three sections.

- Draw a dark horizontal line about 5 or 6 lines from the bottom. Use a heavy magic marker to draw the line so that it is clear.
- Draw a dark vertical line about 2 inches from the left side of the paper from the top to the horizontal line.
- Write course name, date, and topic at the top of each page.



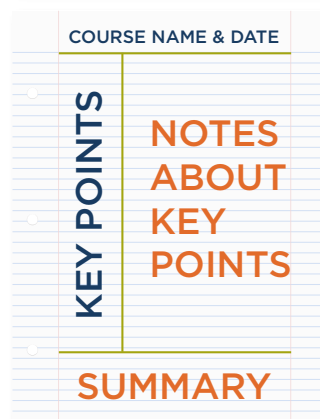
Write notes.

- The large box to the right is for writing notes.
- The box to the left is for capturing key ideas, concepts, and vocabulary during your review.
- Skip a line between ideas and topics.
- Review the notes as soon as possible after class.



Summarize.

- Write a summary of the main ideas in the bottom section (during your daily or weekly review time).
- Spend most of your time studying the ideas in the left column and the summary at the bottom. These are the most important ideas and will probably include most of the information that you will be tested on.



Student Voices: HOMESICKNESS

“

I got homesickness almost right away! For the first couple months, I went home almost every weekend. I really missed having people to give me hugs and I missed my family. It wasn't until later that I was able to find my place in Laramie. My current and favorite thing to remind myself is that everything is temporary. My loneliness didn't last forever. I found friends and learned that there are a lot of places to go to talk to someone. You can always come home, but instead, give yourself time for the transition.”

-Olivia Balanoff, *UW Student*

“

I made the mistake of going home every weekend my first semester. Making new relationships was not that difficult for me, but I wish I would have spend more time with my floor mates since I had a single room and did not have a roommate. There were times where I felt lonely and missed my dog and mom, but I knew that it would get better with time.”

-Kassondra Giacchino, *UW Student*

Reflect

In October, many students experience homesickness, increased academic work load, relationship issues, and anxiety. Spend a few minutes identifying your biggest challenges so far this semester. How will you work to overcome those challenges? What resources will help you to do this?



Faculty Voices:
**THE VALUE OF
OFFICE HOURS**

“ I don't think new students understand how accessible professors are, particularly at the University of Wyoming. People just don't take advantage of it. I've asked students: come and see me in my office. But it takes something that they needed help with, some specific thing that they need before they come in. They won't just do it because I ask them to.”

-Emily Hind, *Spanish*

“ It's OK to visit your professor at their office hours. It's actually expected. It's not like a visit to the principal's office. We're here to help you. We're part of your professional network.”

-Mark Mehn, *Chemistry*

“ When I write comments on papers like, 'please come see me,' it's great when students actually come for help. Because the ones that come see me are the ones who might turn it around and pass the class. The ones who don't come for help usually don't end up passing. Professors generally want to help, so students should take advantage of it.”

-Erin Campbell-Stone, *Geology*

ADVISING & REGISTERING *for Classes*

Registration for spring classes opens in mid-November and registration dates and times vary by student. However, before registering for spring, you will meet with your advisor (ideally during October) to plan your spring course schedule. The appointment may feel like a whirlwind, so it's important to come prepared. Before your appointment, put together some ideas for your spring schedule by perusing the University Studies Program (USP) requirements as well as your major requirements. Coming to your advising appointment with a preliminary schedule (or several ideas) saves time for discussing other issues and ensuring your schedule is as good as it can be.

COMPLETING ALCOHOL EDU AND HAVEN

Students must complete the second part of Alcohol Edu and Haven prior to registering for spring classes, ideally in October. You can find the links to Alcohol Edu and Haven on your checklist on WyoWeb. For more information about Alcohol Edu and Haven, visit the Aware website at <http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc/aware/alcholedu-and-haven.html>. If you have questions, please contact the Aware Program in the University Counseling Center at 307-766-2187.

FAQs FOR SPRING COURSE REGISTRATION

How does advising work?

- Your ACES advisor will be visiting your first-year seminar (UWYO 1101) class at least once before advising week to help you prepare for the appointment. You will need to set up a meeting to touch base with your ACES advisor in the first 4 to 6 weeks of the semester.
- Before advising week (Oct. 30 – Nov. 3) you will receive an email from your ACES advisor to set up an appointment specifically to plan your spring schedule. Make this appointment as soon as you see the email!
- In the meeting, your advisor will help you develop a schedule and give you your Personal Electronic Registration Code (PERC) number that you will enter to register for courses in WyoWeb. You can also ask for advice on course withdrawal, resources on campus, career and major choices, financial issues, and any other concerns – your advisor will help you with answers and also put you in touch with the right offices.

WHERE IS MY ADVISOR'S OFFICE?

Your advisor is located in the Advising, Career, and Exploratory Studies office:
Knight Hall 222, 307-766-2398.



Planning your **SPRING SCHEDULE**

You might be tempted to think “big” when you approach your spring classes and end up with a killer schedule (one that might make it hard for you to do well in your classes – and enjoy your semester!) It’s important to remember that you are still navigating college and new expectations during your first year. Keep your schedule sane, and remember that you are in charge of your college path. Keep these tips in mind as you get ready for your advising appointment:

- **Know the 4-year degree plan for any majors you are exploring or a member of:** The 4-year plans will help you see the sequence of courses you’ll need to graduate in the major you end up sticking with. If you have a declared major, the plan can help you choose courses and see the path ahead of you. If you are undeclared, checking out the degree plans for a couple majors you are exploring can help you get a “feel” for these degree programs and determine what to ask your advisor. You can find the 4-year degree plans on the Academic Affairs homepage under “4-year undergraduate degree plans.”
- **Know whether you need a full-time course load:** A full-time load means you are registered for at least 12 credit hours for the current semester. Being a full-time student is generally important if you want to continue to be covered by your parent’s health insurance; for determining how much financial aid you can receive in a semester; and if you want to have access to all the services covered by student fees (e.g. Half-Acre Gym, Student Health, free access to athletic events, etc.) Some scholarships have guidelines about how many credit hours you’ll need to maintain the scholarship. (If you are receiving a Hathaway Scholarship, talk with your advisor to make sure all of your classes will count toward your 12 hours.)

**A good rule of thumb is to aim for 15 credit hours. This will help avoid a heavy dose of unscheduled time and also help you stay on track for a 4-year graduation.*

- **Ask lots of questions about your major:** The advising appointment is a perfect opportunity to start asking questions about your major. The “Exploring UW Majors” page on the ACES website (uwyo.edu/aces) is a great resource. Go to “Undeclared & General Advising” on the homepage and scroll down to see more about majors and career advice.
- **If You Change Your Major:** The first step in the process is to meet with your current advisor. S/he will ask a few questions about what major you want to declare and walk you through the process of completing the Change of Major paperwork. You will then need to take the paperwork and your advising file to your new department to be signed in order to complete the process. Keep in mind that a number of Colleges and Departments do have GPA requirements in order to declare there. If you have questions about that, contact the department you are interested in declaring in to make sure you are eligible.

Tips from Students: **ADVISING & FINDING A MAJOR YOU LOVE**

“ Finding a major that works for you and that you will enjoy can be difficult. I started off majoring in Criminal Justice and switched to Education after my first semester. Remember to take a variety of classes and see what you enjoy. You never know, you may become very interested into something that you never would have thought about pursuing. Broaden your horizons!”

-Kassondra Giacchino, *UW Student*

“ Find something that you are passionate about even if it’s not easy -- the best things in life are not easy! The most important step is to ask yourself ‘is this what I really want to do?’ ‘Will I be happy?’”

-Sienna Trujillo, *UW Student*

“ Before I came to UW, I went to the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. I had a 0.28 GPA before the end of the semester. There was no goal; college was just the 13th grade, you know, it was the next thing to do. When I came to UW, I was focused. The biggest advice is to come in with focus. You don’t have to say, “I’m going to be the vice president of Staples Corporation” – just come in thinking what you want to learn, and know that having a degree is going to benefit you enormously”

- Nathan Coupal, *UW Student*

“ If you are looking for a major that you love try to look at what excites you, don’t major in something for your parents or someone else...do what you love. Look at up your advisor in the first few weeks of school and reach out.”

- Emilee Inez, *UW Student*

“ Using advising sessions is very helpful when finding a major for you. Advisors are there to help make the best out of your college experience and get you into a career that you will enjoy doing after college. They have a lot of experience in a variety of subjects, and are there to help.”

-Kassondra Giacchino, *UW Student*

