



Taking Minutes

The following is a guide for taking minutes:

- Ensure that all of the essential elements are noted, such as type of meeting, name of the organization, date and time, venue, name of the chair or facilitator, main topics and the time of adjournment. For formal and corporate meetings include approval of previous minutes and all resolutions.
- Prepare an outline based on the agenda ahead of time, and leave plenty of white space for notes. By having the topics already written down, you can jump right on to a new topic without pause.
- Prepare a list of expected attendees and check off the names as people enter the room. Or, you can pass around an attendance sheet for everyone to sign as the meeting starts.
- To be sure about who said what, make a map of the seating arrangement, and make sure to ask for introductions of unfamiliar people.
- Don't make the mistake of recording every single comment.
- Concentrate on getting the gist of the discussion and taking enough notes to summarize it later. Think in terms of issues discussed, major points raised and decisions taken.
- Use whatever recording method is comfortable for you, a notepad, a laptop computer, a tape recorder, a steno pad, or shorthand. It might be a good idea to make sound recordings of important meetings as a backup to your notes.
- If you are an active participant in the meeting, be prepared. Study the issues to be discussed and have your questions ready ahead of time. If you have to concentrate on grasping the issues while you are making your notes, they won't make any sense to you later.
- Don't wait too long to type up the minutes, especially while your memory is fresh. Be sure to have the minutes approved by the chair or facilitator before distributing them to the attendees.
- Don't be intimidated by the prospect of taking minutes. Concise and coherent minutes are the mark of a professional. The very process of recording minutes can give you a deeper understanding of the issues faced by your organization along with ability to focus on what's important.

Example of Minutes Form

Name of Organization:			
Purpose of Meeting:			
Date/Time:			
Chair			
Topic	Discussion	Action	Person Responsible
1.			
2.			
3			