

ABBREVIATIONS FOR NOTE-TAKING

Do not try to perfect a definite system of “shorthand.” Here we have simply brought together the various ideas we have picked up over the years. You may select one or any combination of those ideas that fit your needs.

1. Symbols. Symbols are especially helpful to students in engineering and mathematics.
≠ does not equal Δ change f frequency
2. Create a family of symbols.
O organism Q individual O individuals
3. Leave out the periods in standard abbreviations.
cr = confer (Latin for compare) eg = exempli gratia (Latin for example)
dept = department NYC = New York City
4. Use only the first syllable of a word.
pol = politics dem = democracy
lib = liberal cap = capitalism
5. Use the entire first syllable and only the first letter of the second syllable.
subj = subject cons = conservative
tot = totalitarianism ind = individual
6. Eliminate final letters. Use just enough of the beginning of a word to form easily recognizable unit.
assoc= associate, associated ach = achievement
biol = biological info = information
intro = introduction chem = chemistry
con = concentration max = maximum
rep = repetition
7. Omit vowels from the middle of words, and retain only enough constants to provide a recognizable skeleton of the word.
bkgd = background ppd = prepared
prblm = problem estmt = estimate
gvt = government
8. Use an apostrophe.
gov't = government am't = amount
con't = continued educat'l = educational
9. Form the plural of the symbol word or abbreviated word by adding “s”.
s = areas chaps = chapters
fs = frequencies Δs = changes

10. Use "g" to represent "ing" endings.
 decg = decreasing ckg = checking
 estg = establishing exptg = experimenting
11. Use a dot to represent rate. A dot placed over a symbol or a word indicates the word "rate".
 v̇ = vibration rate ḟ = frequency rate
12. Short words should generally be spelled out. Symbols, signs, or abbreviations for short words will make the notes too dense with "shorthand".
 In but at for to key
13. Leave out unimportant verbs.
 went came be
14. Leave out "a" and "the."
15. If a term, phrase, or name is initially written out in full during the lecture, initials can be substituted whenever the term, phrase, or name is used again.
 Initial writing:.....and the effect of the Modern Massachusets will be felt.....
 Subsequently: MM
16. Use symbols for commonly recurring connective or transitional words.
 & = and w/= with w/o= without vs= against