Note Taking Cheat Sheet

Here is a quick reference guide of what to write in your notes for different classes

📖 English (Reading and Writing)

- **Main ideas & key plot events** when reading
- **Characters** names, traits, and plot points
- **Setting & mood** (time, place, and atmosphere)
- **Important quotes** - especially ones that show theme or character change
- **Literary devices** (similes, metaphors, imagery, symbolism, tone, etc.)
- **Questions or confusions** for discussion or clarification
- **Grammar or writing rules** that come up often
- **New vocabulary** and definitions

💡 *Tip:* Use sticky notes if you can't write in your book to annotate a text.

➗ Math

- **Formulas and theorems** - box or highlight these
- **Step-by-step examples** - how to solve a type of problem
- **Definitions** - what new terms mean (e.g., "polynomial," "radius")
- **Shortcuts or patterns** the teacher shows
- **Common mistakes** to avoid
- **Practice problems** and their solutions

💡 *Tip:* Write down the "why" behind each step, not just the numbers.

🌎 History / Social Studies

- **Dates and events** and why they matter
- **People** - who they were and what they did
- **Causes and effects** - what led to events and what resulted
- **Key terms** and definitions
- **Main ideas** from lectures or readings
- **Connections and comparisons** between time periods, cultures, or issues
- **Themes or patterns** - like power, conflict, change, or human rights

💡 *Tip:* Ask "so what?" after each fact — how does it connect to the bigger picture?

🔬 Science

- **Vocabulary and key concepts**
- **Processes and cycles** - label diagrams
- **Formulas and units** - especially for physics or chemistry
- **Steps of experiments** - purpose, materials, data, conclusion
- **Cause and effect relationships**
- **Connections** between concepts (how one topic relates to another)

💡 *Tip:* Include small sketches or charts - visuals make science stick!

🗣️ Foreign Language

- **New vocabulary and phrases** (with translations)
- **Grammar rules** - verb conjugations, gender, tenses, etc.
- **Pronunciation notes** - stress marks, accent tips, phonetic spelling, etc.
- **Common expressions or idioms**
- **Examples of full sentences** (this helps you use the language in context)
- **Culture notes** - traditions, customs, history related to the language

💡 *Tip:* Color-code: one color for vocabulary, another for grammar.

🎨 Other Classes (Art, Music, PE, Tech, Electives)

- **Key terms or techniques** (e.g., "perspective," "tempo," "coding syntax")
- **Steps or procedures** for projects or skills
- **Safety rules** or equipment instructions
- **Creative ideas or inspirations**
- **Feedback and reflections** - what worked well, what to improve

💡 *Tip:* For hands-on classes, add sketches, screenshots, or photos to your notes.

Common Word Abbreviations for Note Taking

Word	Abbreviation	Example
About	abt	Story is abt identity.
Because	b/c or cuz	Character leaves b/c of fear.
Between	btwn	Conflict btwn friends.
Before	b4	She doubts herself b4 the contest.
Without	w/o	Life w/o friends feels empty.
With	w/	She argues w/ her mom.
Example	ex.	ex: uses simile to show mood
Important	imp	imp quote → shows change

Common Symbol Abbreviations for Note Taking

Symbol	Meaning	Example
→	leads to / causes	Fear → lies → guilt
←	caused by	Anger ← betrayal
↑	increases / goes up	↑ tension
↓	decreases / goes down	↓ hope
≈	similar to	Nevaeh ≈ Starr (from *The Hate U Give*)
=	means / equals	thm = power of voice
≠	not / different	identity ≠ appearance
+	and / adds to	kind + loyal
-	negative / opposite	-trust = isolation
*	important	*Quote shows theme*
↺	repeats / cycle	↺ of mistakes

📚 For Specific Subjects

- **English:** thm (theme), char (character), sym (symbol), lit dev (literary device), img (imagery), tone, mood
- **Math:** eq (equation), var (variable), ops (operations), ex (example)
- **Science:** exp (experiment), hypo (hypothesis), var (variable), obs (observation), conc (conclusion)
- **History:** govt (government), econ (economy), ppl (people), rev (revolution), ind (industry), pol (policy)

🧠 **Pro Tip:** Use a small “key” at the top of your notes or the first page of your notebook so you remember your symbols.