

## Class Minutes

**Purpose:** To compose reader-focused, accurate class minutes for your peers.

**Audience:** Your instructor, your peers, future potential employers.

Recording, writing up, and distributing concise and accurate meeting minutes is one of the more important skills you should develop before you enter the workforce. Developing this skill will help you pay attention to important information and revise it for clarity. Also, taking minutes helps the class form a coherent body of knowledge you may return to for studying. Since we will be holding traditional classes for eleven of the fourteen weeks of the semester, each of you will have the opportunity to take minutes for several sessions. I will hand out the sign up sheet on the first day of class. Please use the information below to help you take and revise your minutes. Once you have revised them following class, **email the minutes to me within 24 hours, and I will distribute them.**

The following is modified from a resource developed by Lynn Gaertner-Johnston, downloaded from:  
[http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business\\_writing/2006/01/tips\\_for\\_writin.html](http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2006/01/tips_for_writin.html):

**Do you want to be more efficient? Think about your meetings and the meeting notes that follow them:**

**When our meetings aren't effective,** we waste valuable time figuring out what we are trying to accomplish in them.

**When our meeting minutes aren't effective,** we waste the time we spent in meetings. Without good meeting notes or minutes, we may not remember or recognize:

- What we decided in the meeting
- What we accomplished in the meeting
- What we agreed to in terms of next steps (action items)

And when we can't remember the items above, we end up going in different directions and then meeting again for the same original purpose!

(Definition: Notes and minutes are the same thing. Minutes are more formal and are often required by organizational bylaws.)

**To avoid wasting your time spent in meetings,** be sure your notes and minutes answer these 10 questions:

1. When was the meeting?
2. Who attended?
3. Who did not attend? (Include this information if it matters.)
4. What topics were discussed?
5. What was decided?
6. What actions were agreed upon?
7. Who is to complete the actions, by when?
8. Were materials distributed at the meeting? If so, are copies or a link available?

9. Is there anything special the reader of the minutes should know or do?
10. Is a follow-up meeting scheduled? If so, when? where? why?

**Minutes need headings** so that readers can skim for the information they need. Your template may include these:

- Topics
- Decisions
- Actions Agreed Upon
  - Person responsible
  - Deadline
- Next Meeting (from course website)
  - Date and Time
  - Location
  - Agenda items

**Do's and Don'ts:**

**Do write minutes soon after the meeting**--preferably within 48 hours. That way, those who attended can be reminded of action items, and those who did not attend will promptly know what happened.

**Don't skip writing minutes just because everyone attended** the meeting and knows what happened. Meeting notes serve as a record of the meeting long after people forget what happened.

**Don't describe all the "he said, she said" details** unless those details are very important. Record topics discussed, decisions made, and action items.

**Don't include any information that will embarrass anyone** (for example, "Then Terry left the room in tears").

**Do use positive language.** Rather than describing the discussion as *heated* or *angry*, use *passionate*, *lively*, or *energetic*--all of which are just as true as the negative words.

**Do have a new year filled with productive meetings** captured efficiently in crisp, clear meeting notes!

At the end of the semester, we will collect the minutes and complete a minute binder for the class. The volunteer who completes this binder by our final exam day will receive 2 points of extra credit.