



Abbreviations for note-taking

Using abbreviations and symbols when note-taking can help you reduce the time you spend writing. Make sure you use abbreviations that you are familiar with and that you can interpret later. Sometimes there are common abbreviations that can be used but you may find a method of shortening words which you understand better. Make your note-taking work for you.

Common symbols and abbreviations

The following list provides some common symbols and abbreviations:

& or +	and, plus
–	minus, without
=	equals, the same as, results in
≠	does not equal, not the same as, does not result in
≈	approximately equal to, similar to
<	less than, smaller than
>	greater than, larger than
↑	increase, rise, growth
↑↑	rapid increase
↓	decrease, fall, shrinkage
↓↓	rapid decrease
⇒ or ∴	therefore, thus
→	leads on to, produces, causes
x	no, not, incorrect
xx	definitely not, disproved
?	not sure, possibly, unproven
✓	yes, correct
✓✓	definitely, certain, proven
# or no.	number
* or NB	special, important, notable (<i>when added to a word or phrase</i>)
/	per (e.g., \$50/day instead of 'fifty dollars per day')
c.	approximately, roughly, about (abbreviation for the Latin 'circa')
eg.	for example
ie.	that is, in other words (usually used when adding more detail or an explanation)
cf.	compared to, by comparison with
w/	with
w/o	without
v.	very
C	century (e.g. C19 for 'nineteenth century')
etc.	etcetera, and so on
K or k	a thousand (e.g. 500K for 'five hundred thousand')
m	a million (e.g. \$6m for 'six million dollars')
vs	against
∴	because
\$	dollars, money, cost
...	etc., missing words



et al.	and the other authors
♂ / ♀	male / female
p. / pp.	page / pages
1 / 1st / 2 etc.	one / first / two etc.
@	at
2	to / too
4	for
am	morning
pm	afternoon
viz	namely
asap	as soon as possible

Useful abbreviation techniques

You will find ways to abbreviate which make sense to use but there are some common techniques which may help you to do this:

- Use the first few letters of the word – just enough to remember what the abbreviation means:
 - imp for ‘important’
 - info for ‘information’
 - eval for ‘evaluation’
 - res for ‘research’
- Remove all (or most of) the vowels from the word and use just the key consonants to help you recognise the word:
 - mngmt for ‘management’
 - dvpt for ‘development’
 - nursg for ‘nursing’
 - ppl for ‘people’
 - pt for ‘patient’

Other helpful hints

- Make sure you understand your own symbols and actively look for and learn new ones.
- If you miss something in a lecture, use a dash (-) or space or another symbol (*) to remind you to come back and fill in the gaps.
- Develop or learn symbols which will help you identify important concepts referred to in your area of study. You will then be able to use these again throughout your courses.

References

Hampton, M 2010, *Helpful abbreviations for speedy note-taking*, University of Portsmouth, viewed 18 January 2012, <<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/studentssupport/ask/resources/handouts/referencingandcitation/filetodownload,75420,en.pdf>>.

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