

Taking minutes

At some point you may be asked you to take minutes at a meeting. Any person who attends a meeting may be asked to do this. Since the minutes will serve as an official record of what took place during the meeting, you must be very accurate. Here are some pointers to help you master this skill.

Before the Meeting

- Decide how you will take notes, i.e. pen and paper, laptop computer, or tape recorder.
- Make sure your tool of choice is in working order and have a backup just in case.
- Use the meeting agenda to formulate an outline of your minutes.

During the Meeting

- Pass around an attendance sheet.
- Get a list of committee members and make sure you know who is who.
- Note the time the meeting begins.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Write down motions, who made them, and the results of votes, if any; no need to write down who seconded a motion.
- Make note of any motions to be voted on at future meetings.
- Note the ending time of the meeting.

After the Meeting

- Type up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting, while everything is still fresh in your mind. Don't wait too long to type up the minutes, especially while your memory is fresh.
- Proofread the minutes before submitting them
- Be sure to have the minutes approved by the chair or facilitator before distributing them to the attendees.
- Include the name of organization, name of committee, type of meeting (daily, weekly, monthly, annual, or special), and purpose of meeting.
- Include the time the meeting began and ended.

Example of Minutes Form

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

Golden Rules

The main things to remember when you are taking minutes are:

- Don't try to write everything down.
- Concentrate on writing down *what* has been decided and *who* is going to do it.
- Write your rough notes up *soon* after the meeting.

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