

## Using Learning Logs

To get the most out of your classes, you should write about what you did, what you learned, and what questions you still have about the topic. This type of writing is an excellent way to prepare for exams and papers because you use writing to discover and clarify ideas, and you “uncover” what you don’t know as you try to articulate your learning.

For classes where you can’t take notes easily, complete a learning log as soon as possible after class. This will help you document what you got from class and how you are making sense of what you did in class.

### Focusing Your Learning Log—Selecting A Purpose

After a class activity, lecture, or event, make conscious decisions about the focus of your learning log. It is possible that you will need to select several focus areas to thoroughly write about a given class. Be sure to organize and label your log in a way that makes it an effective learning tool.

*If you want to **recap your learning**, try some of these prompts:*

- What did I learn in class today? How did I learn it?
- What was especially interesting about class today? Why?
- What do I now know about this topic that I didn’t know before class?
- An important activity I was involved in today was... and it affected my learning by...
- By taking today’s test, I learned...

*If you are feeling **confident** with the content, try some of these prompts:*

- What questions **did I have** that were answered today?
- How would I explain to someone else how to do what I learned to do today?
- What steps would I use to teach what I learned to a group of my peers?
- In what other ways can I demonstrate my understanding of this topic (pictures, diagrams, etc.)?
- What do I wonder about this topic now that I understand it better? How could I find out the answers?

*If you are feeling **confused or need clarification**, try some of these prompts:*

- What confuses me about this topic?
- What questions do I have about this topic? How will I find answers?
- Something I’m still confused about is... because...
- One thing I’d like to know (or think) more about is... because...
- I think my teacher had us do... because...

*If you are feeling **inspired** or want to **validate** your learning, try these prompts:*

- What surprised me about this material? Why?
- Why is it important that I know this information? How can I use it?
- What I learned today will help me because...
- The most important idea I got from the discussion was... and I can use it to...
- Today's learning changed my belief that... I now understand...
- Today's learning clarified my misconception that... My new knowledge reveals that...

*If you want to **extend or apply your learning**, try these prompts:*

- What do I want to learn more about? How will I do this?
- How does this material connect to ideas or information I already know?
- I can relate what I learned today and what I learned in another class by...
- The video I watched related to the course in the following way...

*If you want to **examine group and discussion interaction**, try these prompts:*

- In what ways did I participate in the discussion today? How can I improve for the next discussion?
- How can I encourage other students to participate more in our next discussion?
- How did I work with my group today? How can I improve next time?
- What was challenging about working in my group today? How can I deal with this challenge?

