

Whether you are studiously taking notes or sleeping on your desk, your presence in a classroom affects those around you. Our etiquette advice will get you good grades in manners -- and maybe even in your class, too!

### Surfing the Web can wait



Typing notes on your laptop can be very efficient, but it can also lead to the all-consuming distractions of Facebook or email. Keep in mind that even though your computer is in your personal space, other students can easily see your screen.

- Pictures from your weekend party or your favorite fashion blog can easily divert someone's attention from a lecture, especially in a dark classroom during a presentation.
- In addition, it is disheartening for a professor to find out that their work is being ignored for the Internet. Although your pictures or gossip sites may make you want to laugh out loud, snickering and whispering is another clear sign of disrespect to your professor.
- Our advice: ditch the computer entirely and go for the classic pen-and-paper approach to notetaking. If you prefer the convenience of technology, try turning off your wireless. It will take away the temptation of the web, and it will also help to preserve the battery life of your laptop.

### An able body is an able mind

Dragging yourself to an early class after a night of partying can take all your strength and determination. But if you're just going to pass out five minutes into class, is it really worth it? If a hangover hinders your ability to concentrate in class or even to stay awake, reconsider heading to campus at all -- and reevaluate how you spend your weeknights.

If you truly are sick but shudder at the thought of missing even a single lecture, consider how your classmates would feel with someone coughing or sneezing on their notes. For the sake of

your health and the health of others, staying at home may be the best option. If so, write an email to your professor apologizing for your absence before class begins. Ask a friend to take notes for you and offer to do the same when he or she is sick. And if you really can't forsake your perfect attendance record, arm yourself with tissues, cough drops or even a face mask.

### **Eat discreetly**

Taking lunch on-the-go is often unavoidable if you have a busy class schedule. Depending on the professor, eating in class is usually acceptable. But be aware of how your food choices contribute to the classroom setting. Crunchy snacks or loud, crinkly wrappers can disrupt a lecture. Likewise, foods with strong, pungent smells can turn the focus from the lesson onto your lunch. Instead of bringing an orange or a tuna sandwich, for example, try munching on something quiet and discreet, like a muffin or a turkey sandwich.

### **To ask, or not to ask? □ That is the question**

Asking questions is a great way to engage with the material and to make a connection with your professor. However, there are several things to consider before you shoot up your hand.

- Do you really need clarification, or are you simply trying to earn more participation points? Remember that time in the classroom is both valuable and limited.
- Would your question help the learning process of the rest of the class? If your question is more personal or specific to your needs, then wait until after class to ask the professor. Writing an email or attending office hours is another great way to connect with your professor.
- Formulate your question in your head (or even write it down) before you raise your hand. It's really easy to forget your question, and rambling on can only lead to more confusion.
- Try to stay on topic with your question. Professors generally like to stick to their lesson plans, so an off-topic question might consume so much time that important information may be left out of the lecture.

If your professor welcomes questions, discussions or debates, by all means, participate. Often it's best to judge to what is appropriate based on the context of the class.

