

## Common Notetaking Symbols and Shortcuts

Adapted from *Becoming a Master Student* by David Ellis  
and *How to Study in College* by Walter Pauk

1. Use symbols to group items, indicate importance, and flag sections for follow-up.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
[ ] ( )	information that belongs together
*	important
>	greater than
=	equal to
—>	leads to, becomes
?	huh? lost
f	frequency
**	extra important
<	less than
≠	does not equal
??	big trouble; clear this up; get help

2. Use symbols as connections or transitions.

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
+ or &	and
w/	with
w/o	without
vs	against
∴	therefore
wd	would
shd	should
cd	could

2. Use only the first syllable of a word or eliminate final letters.

assoc.	association
subj.	subject

3. Omit vowels from the middle of words and leave only a recognizable skeleton.

bkgd	background
gvt	government
mgt	mat

4. Use an apostrophe.

am't	amount
cont'd	continued
educat'l	educational

5. Form the plural of a symbol of abbreviation by adding s:

/s	ratios
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6. Use g to represent ing endings:

decr <sup>g</sup>	decreasing
ck <sup>g</sup>	checking

7. Use a dot over a symbol or word to indicate rate, such as vibration rate or frequency rate.
8. Leave out unimportant verbs.
9. Leave out *a*, *an*, and *the*.
10. After writing out a term once in full, use an abbreviation:  
Modan Massachusetts Party (MMP)