Make Notes Meaningful and Memorable

Try this note-taking skill from the Upgrade Series book *Quantum Note-Taker*.
Don’t Just Take Notes, Make Notes

Notes:TM is a quantum note-taking technique that helps you make sense of information, recall it longer, and understand it better. In Notes: TM, the “T” stands for taking and the “M” stands for making. Notes:TM is your go-to technique for taking notes in classes or presentations of any kind.

This quantum technique keeps your whole brain busy by combining the two actions of taking notes and making notes. The note-taking part keeps you focused on the content being presented, and the note-making part keeps you interested by writing down how your own thoughts and feelings connect to what you’re hearing.
By writing down what a speaker is saying and your own thoughts and feelings about what you’re learning, you’re focusing both your conscious and subconscious mind. Imagine yourself in this classroom situation and check out the way I record the notes to get a preview of how Notes:TM works. Then you can practice it on your own.

*Picture this:* You’re listening to your teacher describe different points of view on immigration. She uses names of politicians, activists, poets, educators and immigrants. She provides historical facts, dates, laws and statistics about immigrants over the past 100 years. You’re focusing on the teacher’s words and writing down factual data; that’s your conscious mind at work. The subconscious is where you make connections to that information. For example, you’re wondering why your grandparents came to the U.S. so you make a note with their names and a question mark. You’re
noting information that reminds you of your own experience like your visit to the Statue of Liberty, and you’re putting a little smiley face symbol by this note because it’s a happy memory. You’re writing questions like: What are my beliefs about immigration? Why did my grandparents change their name? And concerns like: What happens to people if they have to go back to their countries?

You can see from the notes that I can capture the facts the teacher mentions and follow my own thoughts at the same time. It’s writing down your deeper thoughts that makes you aware of how you feel, what you already know, and what kind of things you like to wonder about. This keeps your brain happy because you’re connecting and making meaning, the way your brain likes it. And, an added bonus: If your teacher suddenly turns to you and asks for your opinion on immigration, you’re ready to respond.