ABBREVIATIONS FOR NOTE-TAKING

Do not try to perfect a definite system of “shorthand.” Here we have simply brought together the various ideas we have picked up over the years. You may select one or any combination of those ideas that fit your needs.

1. Symbols. Symbols are especially helpful to students in engineering and mathematics.
   ≠ does not equal       ∆ change       f frequency

2. Create a family of symbols.
   0 organism           Q individual       O individuals

3. Leave out the periods in standard abbreviations.
   cr = confer (Latin for compare)   eg = exempli gratia (Latin for example)
   dept = department               NYC = New York City

4. Use only the first syllable of a word.
   pol = politics                  dem = democracy
   lib = liberal                   cap = capitalism

5. Use the entire first syllable and only the first letter of the second syllable.
   subj = subject                 cons = conservative
   tot = totalitarianism           ind = individual

6. Eliminate final letters. Use just enough of the beginning of a word to form easily recognizable unit.
   assoc= associate, associated   ach = achievement
   biol = biological              info = information
   intro = introduction           chem = chemistry
   con = concentration            max = maximum
   rep = repetition

7. Omit vowels from the middle of words, and retain only enough constants to provide a recognizable skeleton of the word.
   bkgd = background              ppd = prepared
   prblm = problem                estmt = estimate
   gvt = government

8. Use an apostrophe.
   gov’t = government             am’t = amount
   con’t = continued               educat’l = educational

9. Form the plural of the symbol word or abbreviated word by adding “s”.
   s = areas                      chaps = chapters
   fs = frequencies               ∆s = changes
10. Use “g” to represent “ing” endings.
    decg = decreasing   ckg = checking
    estg = establishing exptg = experimenting

11. Use a dot to represent rate. A dot placed over a symbol or a word indicates the word “rate”.
    v = vibration rate f = frequency rate

12. Short words should generally be spelled out. Symbols, signs, or abbreviations for short words will make the notes too dense with “shorthand”.
    in but at for to key

13. Leave out unimportant verbs.
    went came be

14. Leave out “a” and “the.”

15. If a term, phrase, or name is initially written out in full during the lecture, initials can be substituted whenever the term, phrase, or name is used again.
    Initial writing:......and the effect of the Modern Massachusetts will be felt.....
    Subsequently: MM

16. Use symbols for commonly recurring connective or transitional words.
    & = and   w/= with w/o= without vs= against