Note-taking Symbols and Abbreviations

Using symbols and abbreviations will help you to take notes quickly. You can make your own symbols and abbreviations, or use ones that are commonly understood. There are a number of common note-taking symbols in English. Some are mathematical symbols, such as: = (equals), > (greater than) and + (plus, in addition to).

Some abbreviations come from Latin. For example, etc. (and other things), e.g. (for example) and a.m. (morning).

1. Match the following symbols and abbreviations with the correct meanings. Add additional symbols to the list.

   1. ____ ∴ a. approximately, similar to
   2. ____ # b. and others (people)
   3. ____ @ c. per
   4. ____ K d. per cent
   5. ____ p.m. e. money
   6. ____ ≈ f. correct
   7. ____ < g. versus
   8. ____ vs. h. not the same as, does not equal
   9. ____ re: i. woman, female
   10. ____ i.e. j. rises, increases
   11. ____ ≠ k. causes, leads to
   12. ____ $ l. in other words
   13. ____ √ m. number
   14. ____ et al. n. man, male
   15. ____ / o. at, with
   16. ____ → p. afternoon and evening
   17. ____ % q. less than
   18. ____ ♂ r. therefore
   19. ____ ↑ s. concerning, with regard to
   20. ____ ♂ t. thousand
2 Abbreviate the following words. Compare your abbreviations with a partner and discuss differences.

- Canadian
- experience
- employment
- equipment
- not available
- university
- altitude
- language
- report
- difficult
- document
- information
- year, month, day
- millennium
- required
- minimum

3 Work with a partner to figure out what each abbreviation means. Add any additional abbreviations you know and share them with the class.

1. pp. ________________ 3. b/c ________________
   Q & A ________________ w/ ________________
   FYI ________________ w/o ________________

2. poss. ________________ 4. dept. ________________
   prob. ________________ impt. ________________
   gov. ________________ intl. ________________
   cont. ________________ avg. ________________
   approx. ________________ acct. ________________
   ea. ________________ wgt. ________________
   max. ________________ hgt. ________________
   cent. ________________ mgmt. ________________

4 With a partner, discuss how the abbreviations in sets 1 to 4, above, have been formed.

5 Search the Internet for lists of abbreviations that can be used while taking notes.

Possible search term: abbreviations for note-taking