

Note-taking

Why take notes?

Taking notes aids in your comprehension and retention. It helps you to remember information taught during the course and can be very useful for revision. Your notes provide a framework within which you can think about, organise and recall relevant points and ideas.

How do I take notes?

- Head page with the topic, subject, lecturer, date and page numbers.
- Leave lots of space so you can add information at a later stage.
- Write key words in full the first time and then use abbreviations (remember to be consistent).
- Write down phrases rather than whole sentences.

Different types of notes

Linear

- Organise your ideas in a linear fashion in order of importance.
- Differentiate your main topics from subtopics (different sub headings are useful for this).
- Give supporting details and/or examples.

Three-column method

- Divide your page up into three columns.
- Use the first column for headings and main points, the second column for examples and elaborations, and the third column for your personal responses (ideas, questions, criticism, comments etc.).

Mind mapping

- Involves you organising your ideas in a non-linear way.
- Helps you to make conceptual and visual connections.
- Is a useful way for showing connections between ideas, points and topics.
- Also, allows additional creativity through the use of colour, pictures and symbols.

What do I write down?

- Search for structure in the lecture
- Focus on outlines given at the start
- Try to determine which material the lecturer emphasises by focusing on their:
 - Vocal cues
 - Verbal cues
 - Pauses or postural cues

Good notes are:

- Easily read, clear and easily understood (by you, even in three months time)
- Brief
- Organised to suit the way you learn
- Relevant to your needs