TAKING NOTES FROM LECTURES

Listening to a lecture is one thing, remembering what was said at a later stage is another. Note taking can:

- assist understanding and later recall of content;
- act as a checklist for understanding;
- improve your organising ability;

- improve your active listening skills;
- provide a resource for future revision; and
- help sustain concentration.

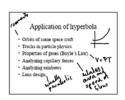
PRESENTATION, POWERPOINT AND LECTURE NOTES

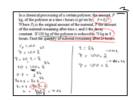
- Use plenty of A4 paper and space, to include your commentary and questions.
- Devise your own note style/script. Some students enter notes directly into a Laptop or record lectures.
- Avoid writing complete sentences, unless writing a definition. It can be too time consuming.
- Use abbreviations/symbols, such as, e.g, i.e., @, +, =, etc, \uparrow , \neq .
- Use underlining, headings, numbering/lettering, asterisks/dot points, highlighting, different coloured pens. There are various ways you can layout a page for note taking. Pick a style that suits you.

Lecturers present lectures in a variety of ways. If they make their PowerPoints available, the temptation is to take no notes. However notes are still important for the 6 reasons above. The following are ways to insert notes into PowerPoint printouts. Have spare paper available in case there is not enough room on the printout for your notes.











BEFORE THE LECTURE

- Preview relevant materials e.g. previous lecture notes, text books, readings, and PowerPoint slides.
- Ask yourself the following questions: What is the lecture's relevance? Where does it fit into the course and/or assessment? What is its likely purpose? What is it likely to cover?
- Have questions ready, and never be afraid to ask them after or perhaps during the lecture.

DURING THE LECTURE

- Note the lecture objectives.
- Do not try to take down every word. Anticipate what will be next; do a quick mental review/summary of what's been covered so far; consider other points for/against or additional points; form some judgements; or write questions.
- If you miss something leave space and follow up with the lecturer, fellow students, or through reading.
- Listen for the lecturer's cues, e.g., 'firstly', 'three steps/stages', 'on the other hand', 'similarly', 'always/not always/never', 'in particular', 'remember/note/look out for'.
- Listen and note key points and supporting details.
- Become familiar with the organisational pattern of the lecturer.
- Focus on understanding key ideas, which are usually outlined at the beginning of the lecture, and repeated and/or summarised at the end.

AFTER THE LECTURE

Review your notes and understanding within 24 hours of the lecture, when it is still fresh in your mind. Before the next lecture test yourself by doing a summary or mind map. Revise again prior to the relevant assessment.

NOTE-TAKING TECHNIQUES

Many different techniques are available. Choose the ones that best suit you. Here are three examples.

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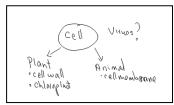
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Outline method

- One idea per line
- Indent details, less important ideas
- Some students use a numbering system

Mapping techniques

• Each main idea has related details branching from it



Divided page method

- Divide page into two columns
- Left Column main idea, key terms
- Right Column definitions, examples, supporting details

CHECKLIST FOR NOTETAKING

Answer the following questions about your notes. If most are yes, you are going well!

	YES	NO
Notes and note taking folders are well organised.		
Notes include date, course, title and lecture objectives.		
Notes are easy to read and comprehend.		
Main ideas are clear through use of headings, underlining and highlighting.		
Abbreviations are used and easily understood		
Diagrams are included where necessary to help understand ideas.		
Connections between concepts are clear.		
Examples are easily understood.		
Extra space is allowed for additional information or questions.		
Notes reflect the lecturer's emphasis.		
Areas for follow-up or questions are clearly marked.		
My notes have helped me to learn in the course.		

RESOURCES

- Other QUICK TIPS FOR STUDENTS http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/tips.htm
- Online resources: http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alsonline/lecttuts/notes.htm
- For list of abbreviations see: http://www.english-zone.com/study/symbols.html
- Talk with a tutor at The Learning Centre (tlc@usq.edu.au)

