

Notetaking for Lectures

Why is notetaking important?

Notes assist your understanding of information, guide your study for exams, and allow you to structure your study more effectively.

Guidelines for notetaking

- Download PowerPoint lecture notes if provided
- Use the PowerPoint notes as a basis for your own notes
- Keep notes from different subjects separate by making use of dividers and folders to organise your notes
- Note the date and title of the lecture and number the pages
- Leave extra space for additional ideas to add later.

Notetaking techniques

- 1 Follow the logical structure of the lecture by noting any summary of previous material, introduction, main points, examples, and conclusion. It is usually not possible or advisable to take down every word.
- 2 If the lecturer provides a handout or Powerpoint notes, focus on understanding the ideas. Do not rewrite the PowerPoint information.
- 3 In your notes show the relative importance of ideas and connections between ideas by using techniques like highlighting, numbering, circles, arrows and abbreviations.

A consistent format will make it easy to review your notes for exams.

Planning your notetaking

Notetaking is connected with study time both before and after the lecture.

Before the lecture

- 1 To gain some background knowledge, skim and scan the suggested textbook chapter. Read over the PowerPoint slides, if available.
- 2 If English is not your first language, list some of the new terms with definitions.
- 3 Ask yourself questions:
 - *What is the topic mainly about?*
 - *How does this connect with the previous topics?*
 - *What do I think the focus of the lecture will be about?*
- 4 Do not read intensively or make detailed summaries before the lecture.

During the lecture

- 1 Sit where you will maintain attention throughout the whole lecture
- 2 Use effective notetaking techniques
- 3 Watch for nonverbal cues, like facial expressions and hand gestures, used to emphasise important points.

After the lecture

The same week:

- 1 Revise lecture notes
- 2 Check understanding of ideas and add additional notes from the suggested reading materials
- 3 Compare notes with another student if this will help your understanding
- 4 Prepare tutorial material
- 5 Ask questions in tutorials
- 6 Find opportunities to talk about the subject with other students
- 7 See the tutor in consultation times if you need further clarification.

QUICK TIP - Taking control of your notes helps you to take control of your study.

For further information:

- Contact the Academic Skills Adviser on your campus
- Visit our web pages on myACU.

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