

Note Taking

At university, note taking is an essential skill that is used in lectures, tutorials and to study.

Note taking should be active and creative. Lecture notes cannot possibly be written out verbatim; instead, they should focus only on key ideas, details and definitions.

- Take notes in your own words as much as possible as it helps you to engage with the material.
- Make full use of the space on the page.
- Try to keep your handwriting clear, neat and simple. It needs to be legible when you look at it at a later date.
- Write full details of the lecture title, module, lecturer and date at the top of the page. This will help you keep your notes organised.
- Employ headings, subheadings, bullet points, underlines (for emphasis); numbered lists, arrows (to show relationships) and diagrams (such as grids, timelines, and spider diagrams).
- You may find you can write quicker using text-speak. Remember that this is not an appropriate medium to use in essays or official correspondence (including emails).
- Develop your own subject-specific shorthand such as 'p-mod' = post-modernism; sftwr = software; and chrn = chromosomes.
- Employ abbreviations to allow you to write more quickly. Here are some commonly used abbreviations:

> increase	bec. because
< decrease	ex. example
∴ therefore	w/o without
= equals	def. definition
≠ unequal	sig. significant
w/ with	imp. Important
i.e. that is	vs. versus
- Review the notes after the lecture when the important information is still fresh in your head. Check your notes for legibility, add any words or phrases to improve clarity, follow up on any references made to useful reading material, and/or contact your tutor if you are having any issues with the material. By reviewing your notes shortly after the lecture potential problems can be dealt with quickly.
- You may find the **Cornell note taking method** helpful: please turn over for a full explanation.



Cornell Note Taking Method

The Cornell Method is useful because it allows you to make the most of your lecture notes, checks understanding of the topics covered, and they can also be converted into effective study aids later.

Split the page into two, with the majority of space on the right to allow you to record the lecture. Then the extended margin on the left can be used for cues which briefly remind you of the main ideas covered, questions answered, key words, and any other prompts to recall the different sections of the lecture. In addition, you should include a summary at the end of the notes, outlining the main ideas, for quick reference. The cue and summary section can be completed after class, during a review of the main notes. These sections will be helpful when you come to study the notes as they outline what is covered and provide cues to help recall the main notes and ideas. Covering the main notes and using the cues can be used as an effective tool to check that you can recall the information.

* See the diagram below for further details (credit: lifehacker.com).

