



Taking notes is important for two main reasons: it helps you concentrate, and taking notes helps deepen your understanding. Also, taking good notes, together with correct citation of your work, helps remove plagiarism. To have good notes, and for them to be of long-term value, think of your taking notes as something that happens in three parts: initial note-taking, clarifying and expanding your notes and transforming your notes. It is the transforming stage that will help move new knowledge from your short-term memory to your long-term memory. So, note-taking starts from day one... you need to be organised and find a note-taking system/s that suits you, and you actively have to take notes before, during and after lectures, tutorials, discussions, presentations and meetings. For notes to be of real value, there are some basic things you can do.

Make a plan	What to do
1. To take good notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be sure to do any pre-reading in preparation for your lecture, tutorial, lab, etc.▪ Watch the speaker as much as you can.▪ Find a note-taking technique that works for you. Some note-taking methods are the Cornell, the note card or index card, the mind map and other mapping methods, the outline, and charting. Google can find these and others for you, and you can choose the one you think is best.▪ Use a large notebook. This leaves you with wide margins to add things to. Also, do not crowd your lines together.▪ Use a pen. Notes in pencil will smear and are hard to read.▪ Transform your notes in some way: find a tool (electronic or mechanical) that suits you and stick to it.
2. Know what to note	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Don't take too many notes—do more listening than writing (another reason to prepare before the lecture/tutorial/lab).▪ If points are repeated, underline them to show they were stressed—don't write them more than once.▪ Focus on what the author / speaker is talking about:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concentrate on the ideas/argument the speaker is developing.• Report the main idea.• Add as much detail as necessary to help explain the theory, concept, idea, practice or approach.• Show the relationship between the main ideas so that the overall meaning is clear and the information has the best possible chance of being retained.▪ Listen for the signals the lecturer sends out during the lecture. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'If there's one thing to take away from the lecture today...'• 'Now you can see why...'• 'Firstly...'• 'To summarise...'
3. Know how to note	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ To avoid confusion, logically organise your notes.



Make a plan

What to do

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| <p>4. Know when to note</p> <p>5. Regularly review</p> <p>6. Transform your notes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date your notes for reference when you are preparing for your assessments, quizzes, and exams. Note the subject, date or week and whether lecture, tutorial, or lab. For example:

AB2020_o8/o8/17_wk 3-lect 1-pt a ▪ Use symbols and abbreviations to help you get things down quickly and record the most information with the least effort. ▪ Don't wait until you have all the information on a topic or unit of work. Start taking notes as soon as possible. ▪ Review your notes as soon after class as you possibly can to fix the writing you can't read very well and clarify anything that was missed or only partially recorded or understood. ▪ Allocate time each day and week to work on expanding your notes, as well as building the relationships between ideas and consulting other material to develop or clarify the concepts. Concept maps are helpful. ▪ Re-read your notes as a way to help you remember the key theories, concepts, facts, practices, and approaches. ▪ Reconstruct your notes using another format (for example, from handwritten to electronic) for another opportunity to review. |
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Useful note-taking strategies:

- Use symbols.

Symbol	Meaning
:=	is defined as
=>	logical implication/implies
→	leads to, causes (showing result)
←	caused by, because of (showing reason)
↑	increase, more, incline, up
↓	decrease, less, decline, down
=	equal to, is, is the same as
≠	not equal to, is not, is the opposite of
≈	approximately
>	greater than
>>	much greater than
<	less than
<<	much less than
	or
∴	therefore, so, as a consequence
∵	because, since, for
""	ditto, same thing again
& or +	and
#	number
@	at
'	minutes, feet
"	seconds, inches



- Develop your own symbols. For example, taken from Japanese Kanji:

中	middle
川	water
人	people
田	rice field (or paddock, group, groupwork)
日	day

- Use abbreviations.

Abbreviation	Meaning
e.g.	for example
i.e.	that is, in other words
etc.	etcetera, and so on, so forth
n/a	not applicable, not available
approx.	approximate(ly) or \approx
diff	different, difficult
imp	important
max	maximum, maximise
min	minimum, minimise
res	research
c	circa, with, about
eqn	equation
poss	possible, possibly, possibility
no.	number (of)
prob	problem, problematic, probably
viz	namely
cf.	compare(d) to
part	participant(s)
NB	note well, remember
w/	with
w/- or w/o	without
et al.	and others

- Other ways to abbreviate.
 - Omit vowels (for example, bkgd = background).
 - Use the beginning of words with the final letter (for example, inter'l = international).
 - Use the beginning of words only (for example, subj = subject, meth = method(s), pro = process or professional, pol = pollution).
 - Shorten words ending in -ing (for example, chk'g = checking or choking).

Useful apps for note-taking:

- [Evernote](#)
- [Microsoft OneNote](#)
- [Google Keep](#)



- [Simplenote](#)
- [Zoho Notebook](#)
- [Apple Notes](#)
- [Quip](#)
- [Dropbox Paper](#)
- [Box notes](#)
- [Bear](#)

Best handwriting apps:

- [Paper](#)
- [Penultimate](#)
- [Squid](#)

Best companion apps for notes:

- [WordFlowy](#)
- [Jotbox](#)
- [Jot](#)

References:

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