

Note taking in a lecture

Hints for good note taking

Prepare beforehand

- If reading has been set, do it!
- Re-read your previous notes and remind yourself of its content.
- Ask yourself questions like “What do I know about the topic?”, “How does it relate to what was covered last week?” ... etc
- Think about the subject of the class and what you know about it.
- Arrive on time.
- Sit near the front and collect any handouts.

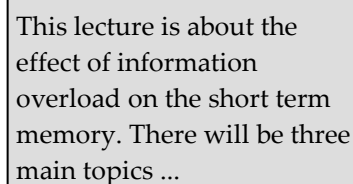
Features of a lecture

Lecturers use various strategies to indicate to students what is important.

Introductions and conclusions

Beginnings and endings are vital. The lecturer outlines the important points, connects them with the previous and next lectures as well as the framework of the whole subject.

It is important that you arrive on time!



This lecture is about the effect of information overload on the short term memory. There will be three main topics ...

Repetition and elaboration

Important points are repeated or illustrated with examples.

Linking expressions

Listen for words that direct you to new and important ideas:

Linking expressions direct listeners to new and important ideas:

- Contrast words – however, but, despite, on the other hand, conversely
- Concession words – although, even though, in the light of, given that
- Addition words – also, too, in addition, furthermore
- Emphasis words – importantly, specifically, especially, obviously
- Sequencing words – firstly, secondly, next, finally
- Summary words – in conclusion, to sum up, in summary
- Illustration words – for example, to illustrate, that is
- Reason and result words – consequently, because, therefore

Voice emphasis

Important ideas, words and phrases are emphasised. This is done by saying them **more slowly** and often more **loudly**. Gestures and movement may also be used for emphasis.

Abbreviations—time savers

>	causes / leads to	<	results from	+	and	%	percent
=	equals to	+	positive	-	negative	cf	compared
eg	for example	re	concerning/ about	NB	note well	vis	namely
et al	and others	g	ing	ca	about	etc	and so on
C ₁₈	eighteenth century	n	tion/sion (endings)	ie	that is	am	morning

Note taking in a lecture

Example

The following is a sample of a “lecture” on memory and learning.

Below the lecture notes is an example of a useful method of note taking—the Cornell method.

Long and short term memory

In order to develop **effective learning skills**, it is necessary to understand more about how the **memory is structured**, in particular the role of **short-term memory** and **long-term memory**. Short-term memory is the part known as the conscious mind and is used for *paying attention*. Long-term memory is where *information is stored*. There are many things that come into the short-term memory and are not transferred to the long-term memory (see diagram1). In fact the brain is designed to *forget between 50% and 75%* of the information that is not transferred to the long-term memory within 24 hours. Therefore, the *brain carefully selects what is stored* in the long-term memory.

(Havir, A. 2003, *Memory and Learning*, RMIT University, Australia)

Cornell system of note taking (one way to organise note taking)

Use two columns—one, a review or key words column on the left, the note taking or details column on the right—use point form.

Include topic and date of lecture.	
Structure of memory	useful to understand memory
Short term	short term=pay'g attention
Long term (occasionally you might copy useful quotes)	- imp info transferred to LT memory “In fact the brain is designed to forget between 50% and 75% of the information that is not transferred to the long term memory within 24 hours.”
Long term ST	- info stored > brain selects

Learning Links

Quick Tips/note taking in lectures

www.rmit.edu.au/studyandlearningcentre/

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