

Note-taking: During the Lecture

Description	<i>Develop a strategic approach to taking the right notes during class by focusing on prioritization of information, abbreviations and effective listening.</i>
Link	https://youtu.be/ibHjJRVbTel

Let's look at some tips for taking notes in lecture.

Tip 1: Format Your Notes

Labelling

When you're writing your notes in lecture, it's a great idea to label every note you make. In general, your lecture notes should include the class, lecture number, and date. This will help you to organize your notes so that you can identify what each note is for and this can help you when you're creating a study plan. You should also consider writing your names on your notes in case they get lost.

Colours

Some people are more visual than others. So you may want to use colours to highlight different things in your notes.

Using different colours can help you to create sections in your notes. For example, you might use blue to represent headings and the colour red for different examples. You can also use different colours to highlight information that's taken straight from the lecture and information that comes from the textbook.

Tip 2: Use Abbreviations

Shortening Words

During lecture, you can also use abbreviations. When using abbreviations, you're actually shortening words so that you spend less time writing and more time listening to the lecture. Instead of writing out an entire word, you can just write part of it. For example, you can write "Monday" as "M-o-n". This will help you to cut down the time it takes to write out the entire word.

This table shows you examples of other words that have been shortened.

Abbreviations

You can also use abbreviations when you're taking notes. Abbreviations are a shortened form of a word or a phrase. For instance, you can write "w/" to represent the word "with".

Here are some other common abbreviations.

You can use these abbreviations in your notes, but you may also want to make your own. Whether you choose to use these abbreviations or you make up your own kinds, make sure that you include a legend in your notes so that you can refer back to them.

Depending on the subject you are taking notes for, some abbreviations can mean different things.

Symbols

As well, you can also use symbols in your notes. In terms of note-taking, a symbol is a visual representation that can replace a word or a phrase. For example, you might draw a star or write an exclamation point in front of information that is very important.

Just like with the other abbreviations, make sure that you include a legend in your notes so that you can refer back to what these symbols mean.

Tip 3: Look for Cues

Lecturer Emphasis

A third strategy you can use involves paying attention to specific cues that the lecturers give.

Lectures are always designed with a purpose in mind. The lecturers may emphasize things that they like and things that they think are very important. This can give you hints about what the key ideas of the lecture are and what could be tested.

If you hear the same thing many times, or the same thing explained in multiple ways, the lecturer could be repeating this information for emphasis. They could also give you many examples on the same topic or skill. This could be because they want to show you what this concept looks like and how it's used.

In terms of skills, multiple examples may be shown to highlight different ways that the skill is used and how it needs to be modified in different situations. The lecturer may even ask questions as a way of evaluating how well the students understand a topic, which may be assessed in a later test or exam.

Overall, lecturers emphasize the importance of different topics or skills by spending more time on them.

Verbal Signposts

Also pay attention for verbal signposts. These are transitional words or phrases that are used to direct our thinking and emphasize key information. They could be using these phrases to tell us that we're reaching the end of our learning goal.

- For example, a lecturer may say "lo and behold" or "in summary" to show that we are reaching a conclusion.
- At other times, they may transition us into extra information that goes beyond the lecture. You might hear phrases like "as an aside" or "by the way".

- Sometimes they'll use phrases to show us that there's a process. These are called "ordinal phrases". The lecturer may say things like "first", "second", "third". Or they could be describing a process to us with "before", "during", and "after".
- They may also use words to show the importance of different ideas.
- And finally they might use terms to show that we are changing the direction of the lecture.

Tip 4: Prepare for Effective Listening

A fourth and final tip is to prepare for effective listening. Here are some steps you can take to make sure you're paying attention and you're focused in lecture:

- You can sit near the front of the lecture hall and in a location away from people who may be distracting to you.
- Try turning off the notifications on your electronic devices.
- You can reduce the temptation to browse the Internet by making notes on paper rather than taking notes on laptops or tablets.
- Make sure that you get a good night's sleep before going to lecture, especially when you have a morning class.
- Keep in mind that you should also be eating healthy meals, and try not to eat a very large meal immediately before class.

Our focus is generally affected by distractions and getting tired, so in order to maintain focus, you can use those different strategies to minimize distractions while staying mentally and physically alert.

If your lecturer speaks too fast:

- Consider going to the lecture again and pay closer attention to information that you missed. This is an option if a lecture is offered for multiple sections.
- Make a note of where you got lost in a lecture. You can do this by writing a question mark beside something that you're confused about that you can follow up with a professor later on.
- You can also leave spaces in your notes to fill in missing information after you've consulted with a textbook, a peer, or the course instructor.
- Try to prioritize what information you would pay attention to by focusing on key points, words, and summaries.
- Use office hours to ask questions and get clarification on anything that you've missed.
- Invest more time in before class activities so you can make decisions on what content to pay attention to. This means that you may be doing more practice questions or completing the class readings before the lecture occurs