

NOTE TAKING STRATEGIES

There are many note taking methods you can try. One method we strongly recommend is the Cornell Method, which is described below. Some general note taking tips include:

1. Create a mind map

- Use the tools you have available to help you outline what you will need to write before the lecture even begins. You can do this by ...
 - Printing off your lecture notes or lecture outline before class.
 - Bringing a list of key terms, theories and concepts, drawn from your readings, to class (as a guideline).
 - If your professor writes the lecture overview on the board, write it down and use it as a road-map while making notes. Doing this will help you determine what concepts are grouped together and what is important to write down.

2. When you are having trouble keeping up ...

- Consider bringing your laptop with you, but shut off your wifi access.
- Create a study group and compare notes after class (Note - Each of you should still take notes for each class).
- Find the balance between writing down everything and not writing enough. You should have enough content that you will be able to understand your notes a few weeks later, but should not try and write down everything your professor says.

3. If you're not sure what to write ...

- Determine the key points.
- Paraphrase the content and then write it down.
- Look for verbal and non verbal cues (further detailed in the 'active listening' section)

4. Keep your notes organised and concise

- Always include a lecture title, date and page numbers.
- If your notes are messy, re-write them.

5. Use highlighters and coloured pens for different types of material, but don't over highlight

- Example: Use blue for headings, red for definitions, and black for 'your own words.'

6. Use 'visual aids'

- Visual depictions of information can help aid your understanding. When done correctly, all visual aids are clearly labelled and can be easily described / explained to someone else. Some ways you can depict things more visually include:
 - *Flowcharts*: show the order in which things occur. They are often used as time lines or to depict the stages of a process.
 - *Graphs*: help visually depict data, and can sometimes help you grasp the overall significance of numerical data with more ease.
 - *Mind Maps*: help depict overall connections to various information. They are most useful when the 'overall picture' or key concept is in the middle and the various aspects of that concept spread out from there. You can most often break down a chapter or theory this way.
 - *Venn Diagrams*: are useful in helping you determine how two different items compare and contrast.
 - *Matrices*: provide a great structure in which you can compare and contrast. They are very useful when you are trying to determine the differences and similarities between two or more theories or concepts.

7. Use lists when possible

8. Use symbols

- \$: money, dollars, worth
- ↓: decrease, lower, loss
- =: equals, equivalent to, leads to
- >: greater than, bigger, more
- ~ : approximately, similar, about

9. Create abbreviations

- The easiest way to create an abbreviation is to remove all the vowels from a word
- Common abbreviations also include: 'ing & 'g and 'tion & 'n
- Stay consistent with abbreviations. Develop your own glossary if necessary