



LEAP Online

Learning Excellence Achievement Pathway Online Tutorial

Note Making

- **Why make notes?**

Making notes is a key skills that enables you to manage and use the enormous amount of information that you will receive via lectures, seminars, books, journals and other sources. You may also use when revising or brainstorming during groups work.

Note making engages you in the learning process – it changes you from a passive listener or reader to actively participating – this will help you focus and learn more!

Good note making will help you understand the key concepts in your modules; with exam revision; and with writing assignments

Is it note taking or note making?

The difference is generally accepted to be that note taking is the more passive process of copying or recording exactly what someone says; note making is a more active process of using your words, summarising and evaluating the information you are receiving, ie, you are actively thinking about the information not just recording it!

So how do you do it?

There is no right or wrong way – you need to find out what works best for you. What is your objective in making notes – is it a summary of the key points in a lecture; is the focus on a particular aspect that you wish to write about?

Look at the following tips for note making in lectures and from reading. These tips can be applied to other information sources such as the websites, videos, podcast etc. Then go on to Level two where the main note-making styles are described.

- **Tips for note-making in lectures**

The notes you make form your record of the lecture so label your notes with the date and lecturer's name

Don't try and record everything the lecturer is saying or is written on a presentation – a lecture is not dictation

Pick out the key words and concepts and any key authors you may wish to research for further information on topic.

Preparation - before the lecture read any handouts or notes given on Moodle about the topic, this familiarity will make it easier to make notes and give you the chance to ask any questions you may have.

Use your own words – this will help you understand and remember the points being made.

Jot down any of your own thoughts or questions you may have in the margin

Leave plenty of space as you make notes so that you can come back and add things.

If you have been given handouts, add your own notes

Technology: you may prefer to use a laptop or some of the notetaking apps available for smartphones or tablets - have a look in your device's app store.

But the same note making principles apply.

As you develop your note making skills you will probably find that you need to write less. The use of abbreviations will help you make-notes efficiently. There are some standard abbreviations, such as:

Some examples of abbreviating

Vowel deletion - but be careful to avoid ambiguity i.e. ct could be cat, cot, cut etc.

Endings or beginnings can be deleted - again avoid ambiguity i.e. underst could be understanding, understated etc.

Syllable deletion cuts out any part of the word that seems redundant i.e. purpose becomes purps.

Initial letters for technical terms, common phrases as well as for repeated authors and titles etc e.g. GCSE, TQM, WS (William Shakespeare) etc.

Symbols - either standard ones or of your own making.

Q - Question

C20 - 20th Century

but you can also develop your own shorthand.

I've made notes, what do I do with them?

Review your notes after a lecture – fill in any blanks and look up anything you don't understand. You may wish to rewrite them into a neater version.

Remember you will need to return to your notes after a gap of a few weeks or months for exam revision – you need to be able to make sense of them!

Store them safely and logically so that they can easily be retrieved

- **Tips for note taking from books/other written material**

Plan your research - be clear on your objective – focus on the relevant points and don't get side-tracked with interesting, but irrelevant information.

Highlighting can be useful – but only the key points and only if the book is your own!

Pick out the main points or examples that will help you form your own academic argument

Avoid copying out big chunks of text – this is a waste of your time – be really selective, pick out the key points or paraphrase.

Make a careful record of the book, journal or website you are reading – remember you must reference any information you use to avoid plagiarism, even if you are paraphrasing – re-writing in your own words. If you are taking quotes from the text you must make a note of the page number.

- **Summary**

Developing your note making skills will enable you to

Engage with the learning process

Record information efficiently

Aide your understanding of topics as you're using your own words

Provide you with revision material

Access LEAP Online at: www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline