



Good lecture notes are essential for recalling the main points made in a lecture. They help you to develop your understanding of the topic and provide a resource for writing assignments and for revision for exams. The process of note taking engages you with the topic, and helps recall. There are several ways in which you can ensure that your notes are complete and are useful in the future.

## COMMON PROBLEMS IN LECTURES

- Inability to keep up with the lecturer
- Inability to tell what is important and what is not
- Inability to understand the lecture content
- Inability to make sense of lecture notes later on.

## PREPARATION IS VITAL

Before the lecture:

- Look at the topic of the lecture
- Do pre-requisite reading indicated. If you are familiar with the topic, new vocabulary and terms, you will minimise confusion in the lecture when these terms are used. You also have a better chance of spelling new words and not losing valuable time in guessing how to write them down.

## BE ORGANISED

- Arrive early. If you have trouble hearing, sit where you can hear. If you are easily distracted, sit where you can concentrate.
- Be seated in time to hear the introduction, which should indicate what is going to be covered. This will give you an idea of the intended content and structure, helping you to decide how to organise your notes, and what the main headings and subheadings are.
- It may seem obvious but be prepared to take notes. Bring a proper notebook, spare pen, and a highlighter or coloured pen. If you prefer to take digital notes, make sure your tablet and accessories are fully charged.

## GET USED TO YOUR LECTURER'S STYLE

Each lecturer will have her/his individual style, which can take some time to get used to.

- Some provide detailed notes for you, some provide a dot point outline to which you can add information, and others expect you to take your own detailed notes.
- Some lecturers arrange for their lectures to be videoed and make copies available in the library. If so, you may not want to worry so much about detailed notes. However, good notes will save you viewing time.
- Some lecturers use a lot of examples to illustrate their points - these may be worth writing down to jog your memory.
- Some may provide a clear outline and a brief review at the end of the lecture. If so, pay close attention!

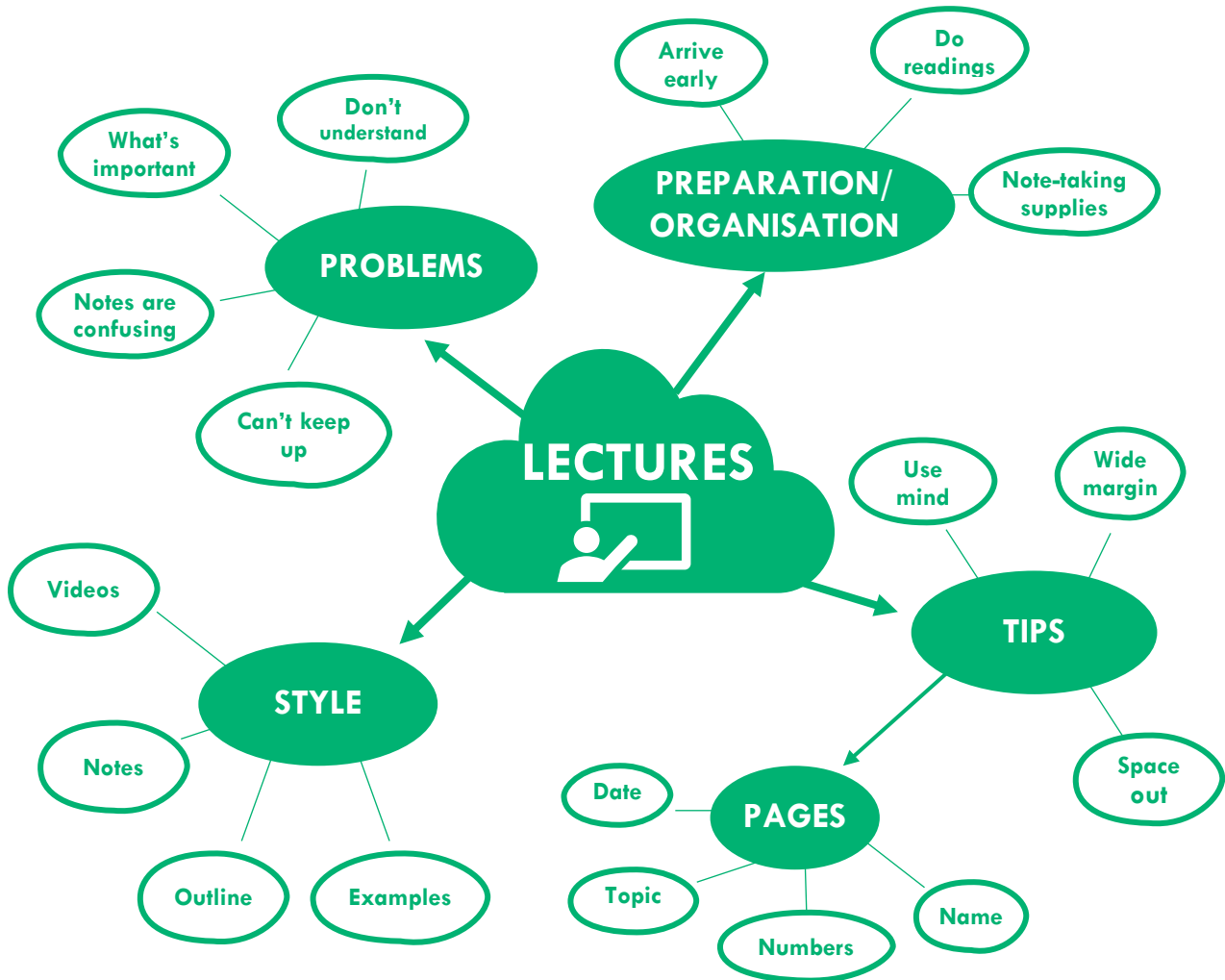
## BASIC NOTE-TAKING TIPS

- Head the page with the topic name, subject, lecturer and date. Number and date sequential pages for each lecture.



- Leave a **wide margin** in which you can write notes and symbols for later reference.
- Space out your notes so words can be added later if necessary.
- Some people find that they are naturally very linear in their organisation of ideas, whilst others find it more useful to make a more visual record of information and relationships, for example, by using Mind Maps.

### EXAMPLE OF MIND MAPPING



- Work out your **own method** of showing headings and subheadings, e.g. by highlighting, using upper case, underlining, etc.
- Use abbreviations wherever possible. Use standard ones or make up your own; it really doesn't matter, as long as you are consistent, and you can understand your notes.
- Do not write down incidental words like 'the', 'in', etc.
- Devise a code of symbols to mark very important things, e.g. good examples, references etc.



### EXAMPLE OF LINEAR STYLE NOTES

#### Body Image Anxiety

- Now affects both M & F
  - M - 40% want to lose weight
    - 45% " " gain (g possible steroid abuse)
  - F - most (? %%) want to lose (xtrme dieting, anorexia, bulimia)

(See Drewnoski & Yee, p. 46 for %%)

### AFTER THE LECTURE

As soon as possible after a lecture, go through your notes. Fill in any gaps where you missed information or could not spell a word and add any extra notes that help you make sense of the topic. This is where symbols and notes in the margins are useful to highlight what needs attention.

Make sure that you understand content and note anything you wish to clarify at your tutorials or by reading further. File your notes away with others for that topic for later use.

### FINAL TIPS

If you are having trouble following your lecturers, make sure you pre-read lecture material so that new words and terms are familiar to you. This gives you more confidence to make a quick guess at spelling and you can always look up correct spelling and improve your notes later.

Listen and watch carefully for body language and changes in tone, which often indicate where important content is being given. Lecturers often slow down, speak more loudly, repeat, pause and watch the audience when they think that students should be writing something down.

Check whether your lectures will be videoed and how you can access them if they are. If you wish to record a lecture to listen to again, it is polite to ask the lecturer's permission first.