



Activity 3.1 Your lecture notes

Colour the blocks found in your notes and identify what's not in your notes. Need to change anything?

Do your notes suit your:

subject area

learning style

Are they easy to:

manage

read

follow

navigate around

understand

learn from

Do they help you:

acquire new knowledge

engage with your subject

formulate ideas

make connections with your subject or assignment topic

write your assignments

revise for exams

Are they:

a useful record of information

part of your jigsaw of understanding and learning



Activity 3.2 Test your note-taking skills

1. Read the passage, highlight key points and bullet them.
2. Write a summary of the passage's main message.
3. Stuck? Then chat to a friend about the main points, the message and ask for feedback.

Most people are aware that as students they are expected to make notes of some sort. They are aware that these notes would form some sort of record of their studies, and that they will need this record to help them remember key points. Maybe they intend to use the information in the notes in their assignments and exams ...

However, we have noticed a change in student behaviour over the last few years. When we started teaching, students tended to take down too much information. They would write page after page of notes that tried to capture everything a lecturer was saying, or everything that was in the book. But recently we have seen students who sit through lectures making no notes at all. We have also seen those who think they can get a degree without doing any reading, let alone making notes of their reading. Now none of these strategies is going to prove particularly useful to you as a student:

- Making too many notes is too passive: you do not need to take down pages and pages of information when in lectures or when reading. But you do need to take down new information, preferably just in key words or phrases, to seed further thought.
- Making no notes – from lectures or reading – means that you are not really engaging with your learning at all. You might be there in body, but you have left your mind at the door (Burns and Sinfield, 2008, p.165).



Activity 3.3 Connections

Trace a line between the 'what to do' and 'what it gives you'. See Appendix 3 on the Companion Website for answers.

What to do	What it gives you
always read your notes immediately after the lecture	facilitates both a global understanding of the topic and deeper learning
type up or rewrite notes	promotes deeper thinking and learning and gives ideas for future note-taking techniques
compare notes with others	helps your reading and understanding, and is another way of revising. Also lets you complete details
annotate any thoughts, ideas and questions	aids your understanding of the lecture and is the start of your revision
link new information to what you already know	lets you fill in any gaps, giving a fuller set of notes
talk lectures over with others	makes it easier to retrieve information
file notes systematically as you make them	works as a point of reference for future research and discussion