

## **Taking Notes vs Listening: Which is More Important?**

Muniroh Hamat, Fadzilawani Astifar Alias, Siti Asmah Mohamed and Maisurah Shamsuddin  
*muniroh@uitm.edu.my, fadzilawani.astifar@uitm.edu.my, sitiasmah109@uitm.edu.my,  
maisurah025@uitm.edu.my*

Jabatan Sains Komputer & Matematik (JSKM), Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Malaysia

### **Introduction**

Lecture slides are usually a summary of the lecture content. In lectures, note taking supports to concentrate on what the lecturer is saying, and they guide how your note taking and help you recognize the key topics and concepts. Take note of what seems on them, but don't confine your notetaking to simply copying it. Taking your own notes will encourage a deeper understanding of the content of the lecture. You can also take notes from a written source which will help you in writing an essay. You can include notes showing your own thoughts about a written source or a lecture to determine how you are going to use the information in your essay.

The information is usually very limited compared to what the lecturer says, so it's more effective to listen to the lecture and take notes from that. Most lecturers make their slides accessible before class, so print them out and take additional notes in the lecture. You'll get most out of lectures if you do both, but don't focus on getting everything down to the extent that you miss what the lecturer is saying. But remember that actively listening and thinking are what is important.

Regarding the encoding function, two aspects of notetaking are probably most relevant: (a) what method students use to take notes and (b) whether students try to organize their notes as they take them. With respect to note-taking methods, students can take notes by longhand in a notebook or using an electronic device (e.g., a tablet or eWriter), or they can type notes on a laptop computer or tablet. In realistic research of which method is best, taking notes longhand has generally produced as good or better performance outcomes when studied in real-life progresses and in the laboratory (Carter, Greenberg, & Walker, 2017; Luo, Kiewra,

Flanigan, & Peteranetz, 2018; Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014; for one exception, see Bui, Myerson, & Hale, 2013).

### **Listening Note Taking Strategies**

Taking effective notes in lectures and tutorials is a necessary skill for university education. Good notetaking tolerates a permanent record of key information that you can join in with your own writing and use for exam revision. Attractive and precise notes also reduce the risk of plagiarising. It helps you discriminate where your ideas came from and how and what you think about those ideas.

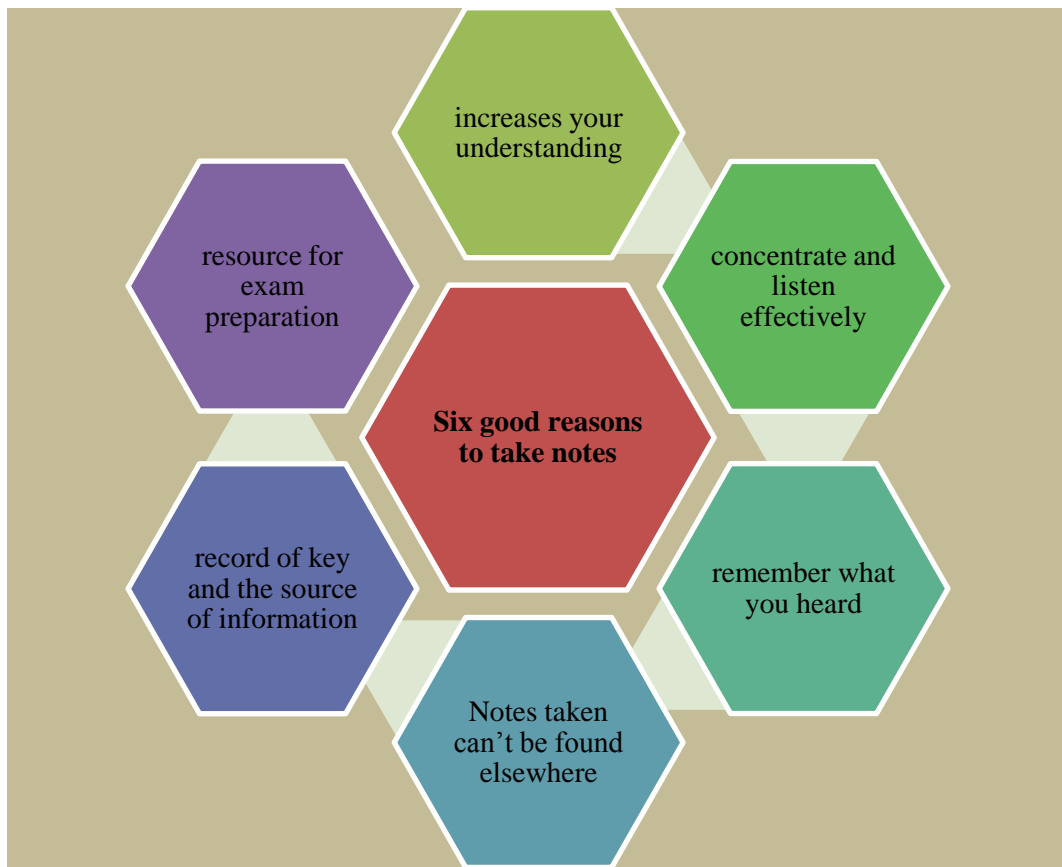


Figure 1: Six good reasons to take notes

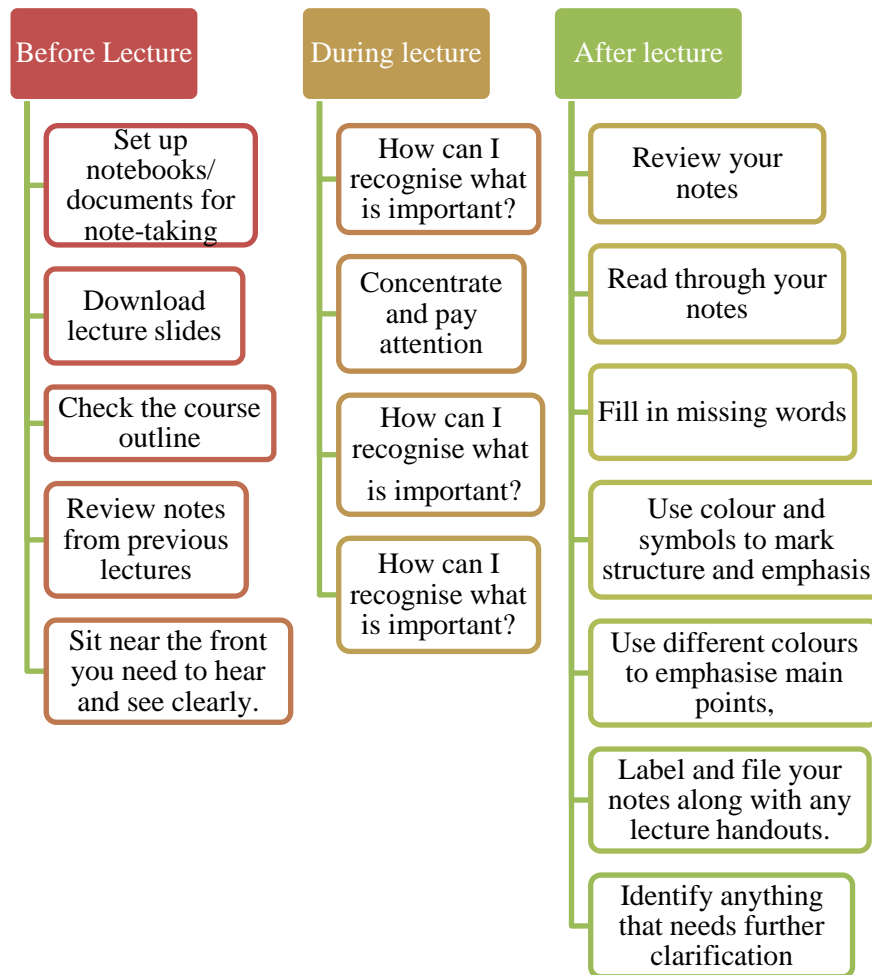


Figure 2: Action to do in lecture

### Techniques and Tips for Listening and Note Taking

1. **Write phrases, not full sentences** - record the key words- to get the idea of the point.
2. **Take notes in your own words** - Paraphrase what you hear - helps you to understand and remember what you hear.
3. **Structure your notes with headings, subheadings and numbered lists** - Use headings to indicate topic areas or to include bibliographic details of the sources of information.
4. **Code your notes** - use colour and symbols to mark structure and emphasis.

5. **Use colour** to highlight major sections, main points and diagrams. Do most of the highlighting and underlining when you're revising your notes later.
6. **Underline, circle, star, etc** - to identify key information, examples, definitions.
7. **If you miss something** - write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later. Leave a space on the page for your own notes and comments.

### Use Symbols and Abbreviations

When taking notes, you can reduce the amount of language by shortening words and sentences. It is important to remember that you will need to know what the abbreviations and symbols stand for when you review your notes later.

Table 1: Suggestion symbol for note taking

Symbol	Meaning
=	equals/is equal to/is the same as
≠	is not equal to/is not the same as
≡	is equivalent to
∴	therefore, thus, so
∵	because
>	more than, greater than
<	less than
→	gives, causes, produces, leads to, results in, is given by, is produced by, results from, comes from
↑	rises, increases by
↓	falls, decreases by

Table 2: Abbreviations and acronyms for note taking

<b>etc. (etcetera)</b>	<b>and the rest</b>
<b>e.g.</b>	for example
<b>i.e.</b>	that is
<b>pg.</b>	page
<b>ch</b>	chapter
<b>no.</b>	number
<b>ASAP</b>	As soon as possible
<b>bff</b>	Best friend forever
<b>UNICEF</b>	The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

### **Taking Notes from Your Reading**

To get the most, due to the time that you use reading, it is important to develop effective note-making skills. Jotting down notes on a reading in the limitations and/or highlighting important segments can help you to focus and better understand what you read. Though, as your reading becomes more extensive and purposeful, writing effective notes will save you valuable studying and writing time. Good note-making can help you to keep a record of what you read and record your thoughts about it while they are fresh. Good notes can help you to:

- organise your ideas
- keep focused while reading
- keep a record of what you read so you can detect it again
- keep a record of what you thought whereas you were reading
- think critically about what you read
- examine a text
- absorb more effectively with what you read
- draw links to other research
- draw conclusions highlight parts that you need to improve further

## Conclusion

Note-taking needs to be concise. You do not need to write down everything word for word. Using symbols and abbreviations when you take notes can allow you to take more accurate notes more quickly.

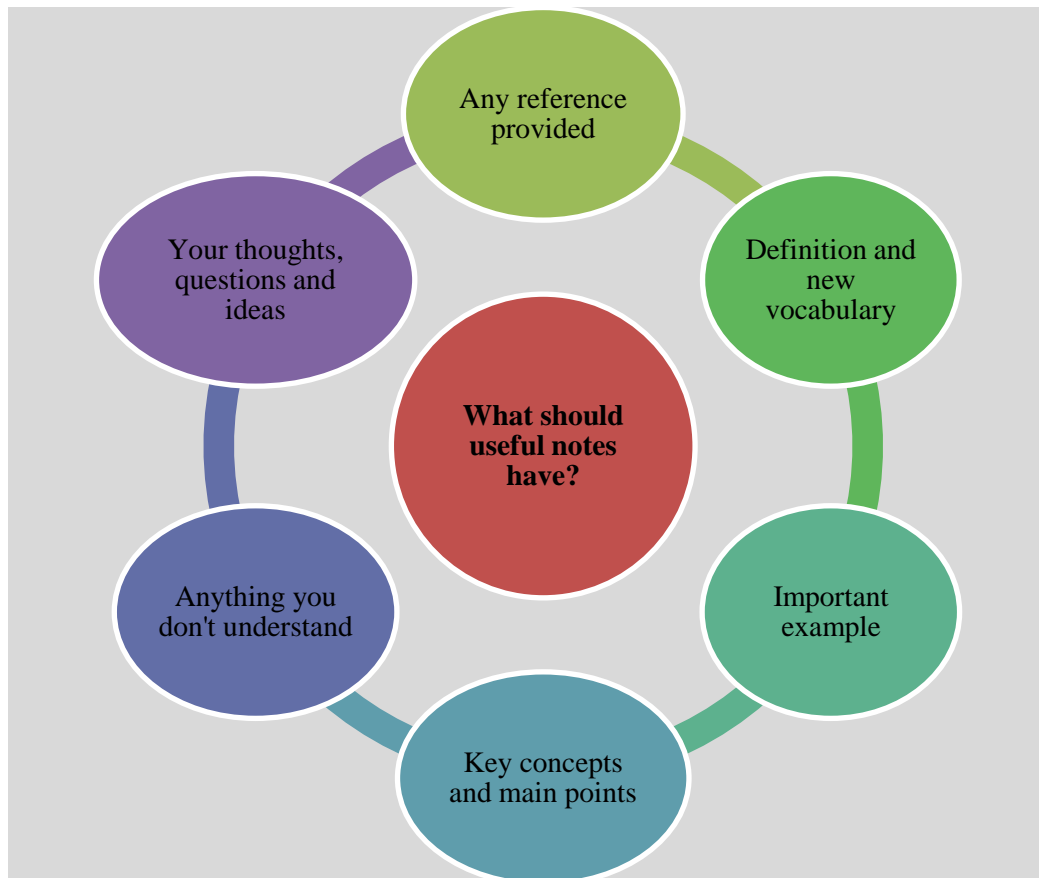


Figure 3 : Conclusion

## References:

- Carter, S. P., Greenberg, K., & Walker, M. S. (2017). The impact of computer usage on academic performance: Evidence from a randomized trial at the United States Military Academy. *Economics of Education Review*, 56, 118–132.
- Morehead, K., Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K.A., Blasiman, R., & Hollis, R.B., (2019): Note-taking habits of 21st Century college students: implications for student learning, memory, and achievement, ISSN: 0965-8211 (Print) 1464-0686 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/pmem20>

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/notetaking-tips>