

# Taking notes

Taking notes effectively during lectures and making notes from your textbook are powerful study tools that help you stay on track with your course work and get the most out of your studies. There are many different note taking methods, but we like the Cornell note taking system. It divides your note taking activities into things you can do before, during and after your lecture.

## Before your lecture

Prepare for class by reading through the notes you made in the previous lecture and divide a clean sheet of paper into rows and columns the way that we have divided this page.

## After your lecture

### Cue column

Within a day of the lecture, review your notes and add important information from the textbook. Use the smaller column on the left to write down key words and write down questions you think the professor may ask during a test or exam.

### Top tip:

*Invest in a file for each of your subjects. File your notes as you review them each day to make sure everything stays together. If you've missed a lecture you should leave a space and find a good set of notes or make notes from your text book as soon as possible.*

## During your lecture

### Note taking column

- Use this column to take notes as the lecturer speaks, but don't try to write down every word. Lecturers will often give you clues as to which sections of the work they think is important, so watch closely and listen carefully:
  - Listen for **discourse markers**
  - Study the lecturer's body language
  - Listen for change in tone and intonation
  - Listen for arguments being repeated or rephrased
- It will help save time if you can develop your own system of symbols or short hand that you can use consistently throughout your notes.
- Be sure to include diagrams, problems and solutions, questions and answers and anything else the lecturer emphasises.
- Immediately after the lecture, stay in your seat and read over your notes to make sure everything is clear. Use the opportunity to ask your lecturer about anything you didn't understand.

*Discourse markers are connecting words that help us organise our thoughts and show the relationship between ideas. They include words that show sequence (firstly, secondly, etc.), emphasis (importantly, significantly, etc.), or cause and effect (because, therefore, etc.).*

## After your lecture

### Summary

Summarise your notes at the bottom of the page. This will not only force you to think critically about the work, but also help you retain the information if you are able to summarise it in just a few sentences. Summaries can include examples, diagrams and illustrations.