

Note Taking

Nick Hillman

case@lsbm.ac.uk

<http://www.lsbm.ac.uk/case>

Session Aims

- Review of last week and link to this week
- Different opinions on making notes
- Why making notes is important
- Your experience
- The process of making notes
- Linear notes
- Pattern notes
- Split page notes
- Abbreviations

Different opinions on making notes

[London Met Notemaker](#) (this slide and the next)

I make notes so that I can remember the key points from a lecture – or from what I am reading. I always follow up the ideas in my notes with further research because if you just give back what the lecturer gave you, you only get an average grade!

If we do not make notes from a lecture – and REVISE those notes – we forget 98% of the information in just three weeks (Buzan 1999). If we do not do additional reading we will only get a low grade. University is about following ideas up for yourself.

I find that I have to make notes to even understand what I am studying. No notes means that I have not thought about the material for myself – I don't understand it and I cannot use it.

It is easier to remember and learn that which we understand; however, if we never think about ideas for ourselves it is hard to really understand them. Making notes is a really useful way of rearranging information in a way that you can put it back together for yourself. This helps you to understand material and 'make it your own'.

Different opinions slide 2

I find that I don't have to make any notes at all, especially in lectures. For one thing I cannot write very fast, so I'm better off listening. Fortunately I have a really good memory and I know that I'll remember everything that I need.

Alongside making notes, Buzan recommends that we use a revision cycle to commit important information to our long term memory. Ten minutes after reading or going to a lecture make a shorter, more dynamic & memorable set of notes. A day later spend two minutes actively recalling the notes. A week, a month and every six months – spend two minutes recalling those notes. Without some form of revision cycle you will forget and have to start from scratch before your exams.

I like to make notes because it keeps me active and awake! Also I use a visual note taking system and put in colour and cartoons to make my notes distinctive; I find this helps me recall information for my essays and for my exams.

All the evidence suggests that if we are passive learners, not engaged or interested in our studies, we do not learn very much at all. If we are active learners (interested, engaged, motivated, critical, questioning and challenging) we learn more. Be an active note taker: use key words, colour, highlighting & funny or bizarre illustrations to make your notes short, dynamic & memorable.

Why good note-taking is important

- Need for reliable mechanisms for recording and retrieving all the information you are exposed to.
- Note-taking is a learning process in itself, helping you to process and understand the information you receive.
- Helps avoid unintentional plagiarism (paraphrasing, summarising)
- Helps you focus on what is important in your reading/lectures.
- Aids memory and making connections between texts/theories.
- Your notes then become your assignment.

However:

- Note-taking can be difficult and can ironically distract you from listening to lectures.
- You can end up with so many notes and spend much time going through them again to find out the important points!

Taken from: [University of Reading Study Advice: Study Resources - Effective Note-Taking](#)

What is your experience of lecturing styles?

University of Sussex student's experience

Lecturer A may spend a lot of time on definitions and explanations, often speaking very slowly so you can take down exactly what she's saying.

The emphasis here seems to be on mastery of subject matter; you may have to learn some things by rote in order to build later understanding.

Lecturer B may spend a lot of time linking theory to everyday examples.

Seeing precisely how the examples relate to the theory is likely to be important. You will probably need to pick out and think about your own examples.

Lecturer C may spend a lot of time asking questions, pausing, and outlining different viewpoints.

This could be a subject where the questions are seen as more important than the answers, where the way the question is asked is crucial.

Taken from: [Language and Learning Online Website](#)

Preparing for lectures

- See how this lecture fits within the whole series.
- Key readings - read (or at least skim) the key readings before the lecture.
- If you are really pressed for time, get an overview: title, headings, topic sentences. This will give you an idea of the likely content and key issues of the lecture.
- Formulate any questions you have about the readings.
- Re-read old notes before the lecture.
- Check key vocabulary (meaning, pron, association)

Be meticulous and accurate

- Always record the necessary details for any source you use **as soon as you start** taking notes. Don't wait till you've finished reading - you may forget, or misplace the text.
- Have a clear system so you know which notes are [1] paraphrases of someone else's ideas [2] direct quotes [3] your own ideas.
- When photocopying, ensure you have page numbers.
- When making notes from a website, note URL and date of access

Be an 'active' note taker

- Think about what you want to get out before you start
- Look for answers to any questions you may have about the topic
- Look for connections within the topic and to other topics/courses
- Write notes mostly in your own words - your own explanations
- Limit direct quotes to when how they say something is as significant as what they say.

[University of Reading Study Advice: Study Resources - Effective Note-Taking](#)

*“There is no one **correct** way to take notes. Very different approaches can be equally effective, depending on the context. The key thing is to ensure that you remain actively engaged with the material whilst note-taking. If all you do is copy down what you hear or read, then you won't actually be learning anything at all.”*

[University of Manchester Skills Website](#)

Effective note taking requires:

- recognising the main ideas
- identifying what information is relevant to your task
- having a system of note taking that works for you
- summarising and being concise
- reducing the information to note and diagram format
- where possible, putting the information in your own words
- recording the source of the information
- being neat and leaving spaces for amendments/additions
- use headings, numbered points and abbreviations

Standard/linear notes

- written 'down the page' in a linear format, bit like an essay plan
- use headings for main points
- use subheadings for points 'within points'
- space them out well for revision/addition/amendment.
- try to keep to one point per line
- underline key words
- use numbering where appropriate
- use abbreviations
- no need for full sentences

Advantages

- can be very clear, with highlighting
- can easily be added to
- 'easy' to take when there is a clear structure

Disadvantages

- can be boring to look at and hard to read
- they do not indicate connections between different parts of the argument

Standard/linear notes example

London Met Notemaker: Linear notes example

Hemispheric dominance

inclusiveness - increasingly important - Stds. process information in different ways - r/L hemisph.

Prashnig - right - fantasy / random / intuitive / holistic
- left - logical / sequential / analytical / objective

Study environment (Prashnig) - right = easily distracted
left = traditional / well lit room.

Integration = important element - makes it easier to adjust

NLP - we use both sides of the brain instinctively in language processing, e.g syntactic ambiguity.

Tests for hemispheric dominance
→ dominance inventory
→ visual / optical tests
→ chevrons in shape

Implications: (a) Traditional methods do not suit all children.
(b) Need more use of computers, fantasy and

[University of Warwick: Learning English Online](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/learningenglishonline)

Pattern/spidergram notes - Probably better suitable for taking notes from readings

Advantages

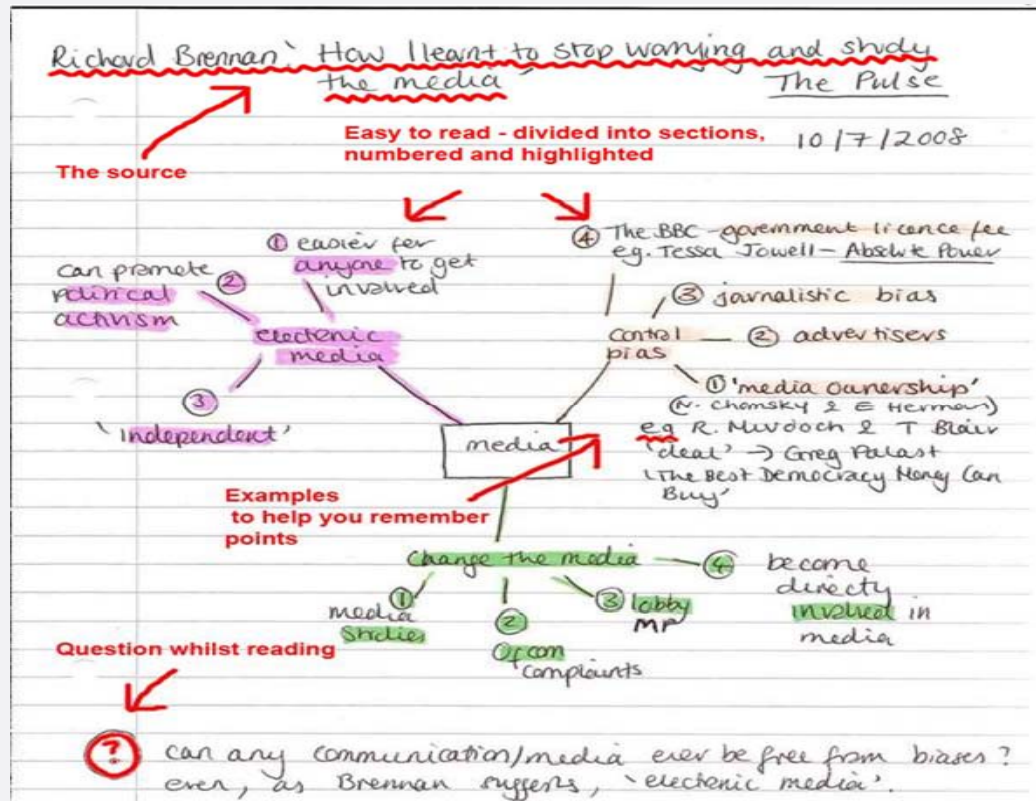
- Easy and quick to make and add to
- Visual impression can be very easy to understand and remember
- Not fixed in any order
- Links are made obvious
- Less likely to write too much
- Interesting to look at
- Link new and existing knowledge

Disadvantages

- May be hard to decide what order they are in
- What if you run out of space?
- Hard to expand once space is filled

[University of Sussex Study Resources](#)

Standard/linear notes example



[University of Sussex Study Resources](#)

[London Met Notemaker: Pattern notes example](#)

Cornell/split page notes - good for lectures

Involves dividing up the page into 3 sections with your own comments/questions/links to other aspects of the topic/course on the left, standard notes on the right and a summary at the end.

- Good for taking notes in lectures
- Results in organised notes
- Helps you to actively engage with the material, and aids recall
- Useful when it comes to preparing and revising for exams
- Once you have noted something in the right hand column, you can include notes/links on the left that address questions such as:
 - How does this relate to my course as a whole?
 - How does this relate to my assignment?
 - Who would agree/disagree with this argument?
 - What should I read now?

[Cornell pdf](#)

Cornell/split page notes example

How I LEARN TO STOP WORRYING AND STUDY RICHARD BRENNAN, THE PULSE

The source → Media Studies - bad reputation - but ...
 Everyone uses "the media" - perhaps unaware of its biases

Who is Edward Herman? → KINDS OF MEDIA BIASES

① From ownership / financing // KEY CONCEPT according to Noam Chomsky, Edward Herman
 e.g. Rupert Murdoch owns { - the Sun
 - the Times
 - NOTW
 * made deal with Tony Blair
 → see PARAST, THE BEST DEMOCRACY MONEY CAN BUY

Questions in margin →

Claims that will not run stories conflicting w/ advertisers (e.g. Shell, global warming).
 Is this really true? Exceptions?

② Advertising - conflict of interest between paid sponsorship of companies and stories critical of these companies

③ Personal bias - columnists - membership of political parties

[University of Sussex Study Resources](http://www.unsussex.ac.uk/studyresources)

Abbreviations

[University of Manchester Study Skills Website](#)

- **bc** because
- **cd** could
- **Ch.** Chapter
- **devt** development
- **e.g.** for example
- **i.e.** that is to say, that means
- **NB** important
- **para.** paragraph
- **prob.** problem
- **w/** with
- **w/o** without
- **&** and
- **>** better/more than **<** less than/smaller
- **c. or ca.** circa, about c.1800
- **cf.** compare this with...
- **ct.** contrast
- **edn** edition
- **esp.** especially
- **impt** important
- **p.** page
- **poss.** possible / possibly
- **vs** versus, against
- **wd** would
- **** therefore
- **+** plus, in addition to
- **=** is the same as

[University of Portsmouth Abbreviations for Speedy Note Taking pdf](#)

Summary

- Different opinions on making notes
- Why making notes is important
- Your experience
- The process of making notes
- Linear notes
- Pattern notes
- Split page notes
- Abbreviations

Good notes = good assignments = good revision =
good exam results = a good final grade

References

Buzan, T. (1999) *The Mind Map Book*. London: BBC publications.

Language and Learning Online

<http://www.monash.edu.au/lis/lionline/listening/stages/3.xml>

London Metropolitan University note maker:

<http://learning.londonmet.ac.uk/TLTC/learnhigher/notemaker/>

Manchester University note taking

<http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/essentials/note-taking/index.html>

Sussex University note taking

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=22\]](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/s3/?id=22)

University of Reading effective note-taking

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/StudyResources/Reading/sta-effective.aspx>