

Note Taking: Seminar Materials

Activity 1: Using abbreviations

Listen to the paragraph on population changes in the United Kingdom and then try to re-construct the paragraph from the following notes:

end (20 UK pop c60m ≈ I. BUT I. ↓ due BR < DR – cf. UK ↑ slow ie 0.09% 95–2K

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

Activity 2: Lecture note taking practice

[University of Sussex Resource](#)

Activity 3: Reading note taking practice

Read the extract and make notes in preparation for an essay entitled ‘What factors can be seen to affect health?’

Whose health is it anyway?

Health seems to play an increasing role in our everyday lives. It is difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the television or radio, or visit a bookshop without being confronted with information on health or exhortations to avoid certain foods, take certain vitamins or minerals, take regular exercise and a host of other things. It seems that everyone is concerned with health – not just doctors and health-care professionals, but the government, the media and indeed all of us who each year make resolutions to eat more healthily, drink or smoke less and take regular exercise. A lot of this information and advice seems to suggest that we can influence the extent to which we enjoy good health through the food we eat, the exercise we take (or don't take), the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ habits we have. In other words, we each seem to be responsible for whether or not we enjoy full, active, healthy lives.

However, despite this rhetoric of responsibility for oneself and one's health, a close look at the same sources tells us that atmospheric pollution is a major problem of the era and that it is largely responsible for breathing difficulties such as asthma in our cities. In the twenty-first century we are also witnessing widespread concerns about the health effects of genetically engineered food and heated debates about just how ‘natural’ the fruit and vegetables in our shops and supermarkets are. Increasingly, too, we hear about the medical discoveries of genes which play a part in the development of diseases such as cancer, whilst drug companies constantly seem to produce new treatments for many forms of disease. Many sources also suggest that feelings of being uneasy with ourselves and the stresses and strains of everyday life cause many illnesses.

These arguments seem to suggest that there are many causes of illness which are not within the individual's control. As individuals we are concerned with maximizing our own health. However, these issues are also important for society as a whole. Apart from moral reasons for maximizing the health of the nation, provision of health services places a considerable financial burden on taxpayers. In Britain, around 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (an indicator of the nation's income) is spent on health care services, whilst working time lost through illness places pressure on business and other organizations.

Self-assessment

- ② How easy was that for you?
- ② Do you think you have identified and made efficient notes of the key points?
- ② Work with someone sitting next to you and discuss any problems that you had and rate the task for difficulty on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being extremely difficult.

Which of the following three sets of notes on the text is the best? Why?

Notes 1

Health plays increasing role in our everyday lives: difficult to pick up a newspaper or magazine, listen to the television or radio, or visit a bookshop without being confronted with information on health or exhortations to avoid certain foods, take certain vitamins or minerals, take regular exercise. Everyone is concerned with health: we each seem to be responsible for whether or not we enjoy full, active, healthy lives.

Despite rhetoric of responsibility for oneself and one's health, a close look at the same sources tells us that atmospheric pollution is a major problem of the era and that it is largely responsible for breathing difficulties such as asthma in our cities. In the twenty-first century we are also witnessing widespread concerns about the health effects of genetically engineered food. The stresses and strains of everyday life cause many illnesses.

As individuals we are concerned to maximize our own health. However, these issues are also important for society as a whole. In Britain, around 7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (an indicator of the nation's income) is spent on health care services.

Notes 2

Health: plays key role, wealth of information from media including advice on food, vitamins and exercise. Doctors, health care professionals and media interested: we can influence aspects of our health by improving lifestyle and changing habits. There are dangers to health such as atmospheric pollution, genetically engineered foods, stress in everyday living. Health is an important issue: 7% of Gross Domestic Income spent on health care issues. If people off sick working time lost: loss to businesses and economy.

Notes 3

Health: seen as more and more important by health professionals, government, media, individuals.

Advice widely available on changing individuals' life styles e.g. re food eaten, vitamins taken, exercise → implies that **individuals are responsible for own health**.

But: also information (from same sources) on **factors not within our control:** e.g. pollution, food (natural?), genetic causes of disease, stress.

Responsibility for health difficult to assess – complex factors – but importance clear for individuals and society: moral and economic reasons for keeping people as healthy as possible.

Taken from *The Open University (OU) Skills for Study*,
<http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/>