Note taking

Effective note taking will:

- Help you to organise your thinking in written form
- Structure your thoughts/form opinions
- Save you time and effort later on
- Improve your learning

Three steps to effective note taking

Be concise:

- Keep it to the point, use abbreviations when appropriate
- Use bullet points rather than full sentences to act as prompts
- Try to minimise irrelevant and unimportant information – to avoid confusion later!

Keep it readable

- Will it be readable later today? Tomorrow? Next week?
- Think about your handwriting
- Space material out on the page

Be organised

- Don't copy whole paragraphs/slides, try to paraphrase
- Include references cited/suggested by your lecturers
- Make sure the structure is easy to follow
- Don't rely on handouts – add to them with your own notes

Using abbreviations

- Use the first few letters of the word, e.g.
  imp for 'important'
  info for 'information'

- Remove all or most vowels from the word and use key consonants, e.g.
  mngmt for 'management'
  mkt for 'market' (and mkting for 'marketing')

What to do with your notes

Note taking does not finish at the end of a class or set of reading. To consolidate your notes, you will need to:

- Complete missing information/data
- Clarify any points raised
- Check definitions
- Elaborate on the key points
- Check key references and further reading
- Keep your notes somewhere logical and safe!

Note taking techniques

**Cornell note taking system – see resource on p.4**

1. Divide page into two columns, as shown on handout.

2. During the lecture, take notes in the right-hand column (note taking column).

3. *After* the lecture/seminar, pick out key words or summarise the information in the left-hand column (cue column) using prompt questions. These could be the heading of lecture slides, seminar questions or your own keywords/questions about the content.

4. Cover the note-taking column with a piece of paper. Using the key words and questions, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions or the information you have covered.

5. Reflect. Could you remember everything? Does the information make sense? Is the anything you missed out or need clarification on? This can help signal how well you know the information, and identifies any gaps in your knowledge.

6. Review and revise as necessary.

Smart Wisdom

- Listen for key words and place them in a chain. Drop unimportant words. E.g.
  "Is it suitable for my way of thinking and my day-to-day job?"
  = suitable way thinking day day job?
- You then put the words in a chain - use joins to replace the dropped words

Mind-Mapping or Concept Map

- This takes advantage of how the human brain processes information – not in a linear way, but in a network
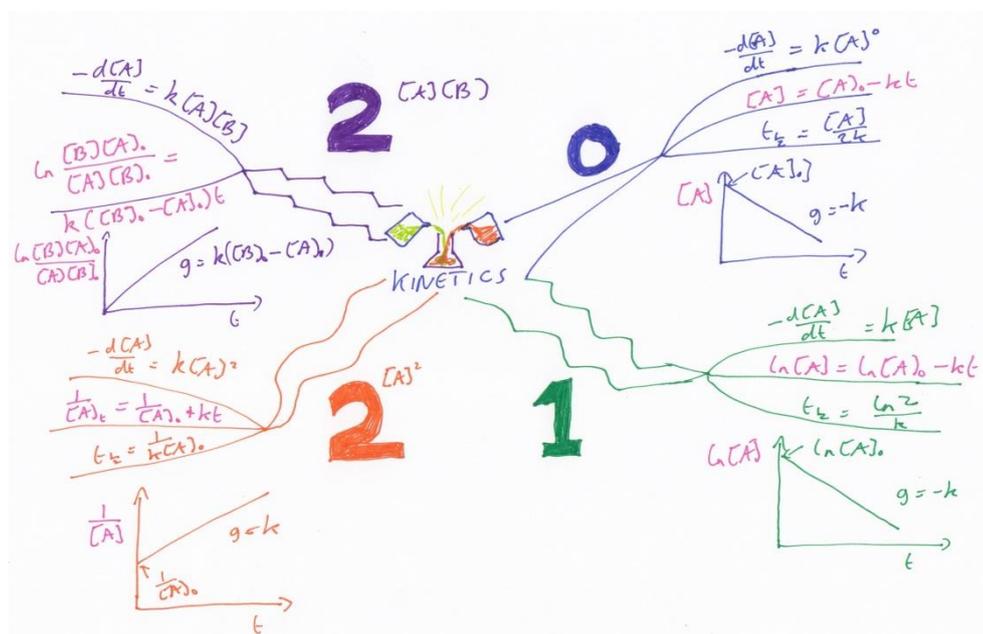
Colour Coding

- Using e.g. red for main points, blue for secondary points, green for examples
- This will help you find things easily when revising.
- Studies suggest using warm colours for all your note-taking improves concentration & memory

Relevant 301 Academic Skills Workshops

- Reading for Memory
- Speed Reading
- Performing in Seminars
- Mind Mapping
- Academic Writing

Sign up online here: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/services/studyskills

301 1:1 Study Skills Tutorials

Sign up online for a 30 minute session with one of our specialist study skills tutors: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/services/studyskills

Cornell note taking system resource

Cues	Notetaking Column

Summary
After class, use this space at the bottom of each page to summarise the notes on that page.