



NOTE TAKING OR NOTE MAKING?

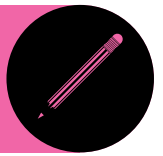
“Note-taking is a process that involves writing or recording what you hear or read in a descriptive way. This is often the first stage of the process of producing effective notes.

Note-making is an advanced process that involves reviewing, synthesizing, connecting ideas from the lecture or reading and presenting the information in a readable, creative way that will stick in your mind” (Neville, 2006).

If you tend to:

- write down everything you hear or read;
- only write down a few keywords;
- not take notes at all;

have a look at some of these tips and techniques.



THE THREE STAGES - FOR READING

Adapt strategies that work for you, to help you take and then make effective notes.
There are 3 stages to note-making:

BEFORE

- Think about the purpose for reading
- What do you need to know?

DURING

- Skim for the gist
- Scan for key points
- Read in more detail - annotate?
- Write keyword notes, adding your own thoughts

AFTER

- Organise - include bibliographical details
- Review your notes



TECHNIQUES: BEFORE YOU START

WHAT SHOULD ALL GOOD NOTES CONTAIN?

- Source: e.g. title of lecture/book/article, date, etc.
- Headings: capturing key topics
- Keywords: key points, examples, illustrations, names, new ideas
- Mnemonic triggers: things that make your notes memorable such as cartoons, colour etc.
- Further reading: people or articles to read, noted and highlighted

Adapted from: Burns, T. and Sinfield, S. 2008. Essential study skills: the complete guide to success at university. Los Angeles: Sage

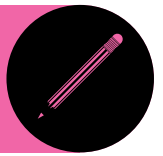
USE ABBREVIATIONS

Develop a system of abbreviations. This will speed up your note taking and help you to avoid writing everything you hear or read.

PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

Sometimes poor note taking can lead to unintentional plagiarism. To help avoid this:

- distinguish quotes/summaries/your ideas in your notes
- set up a system to record complete bibliographic details:
 - lecturer/author/editor name and initials or originator (e.g. organisation WHO)
 - date of lecture/date published and/or date accessed for websites
 - title of lecture/source
 - other bibliographic details that you would need for a reference
 - page numbers where applicable.



TECHNIQUES: LINEAR NOTES

This is the most conventional method but can encourage a more passive approach to taking notes. Take a look at this example of effective linear notes:

Ch.1 "The work of Rep"
1.4 "Theories of Rep"

Stuart Hall
"Representation: cultural reps
and signifying practices"
Sage, London, 1997. P.24->

3 - Reflective

- Intentional
- Constructionist/ivist

Q: "Where do meanings come from and how can we tell it's a 'true' meaning of a word or image?"
(P.24)

Reflective

- meaning in an 'object, person, idea or event'
- language = a mirror imitation
but e.g. picture is 2D or 3D
picture --- sign ≠ the 'real thing'.

[Plato's images on the cave wall?]

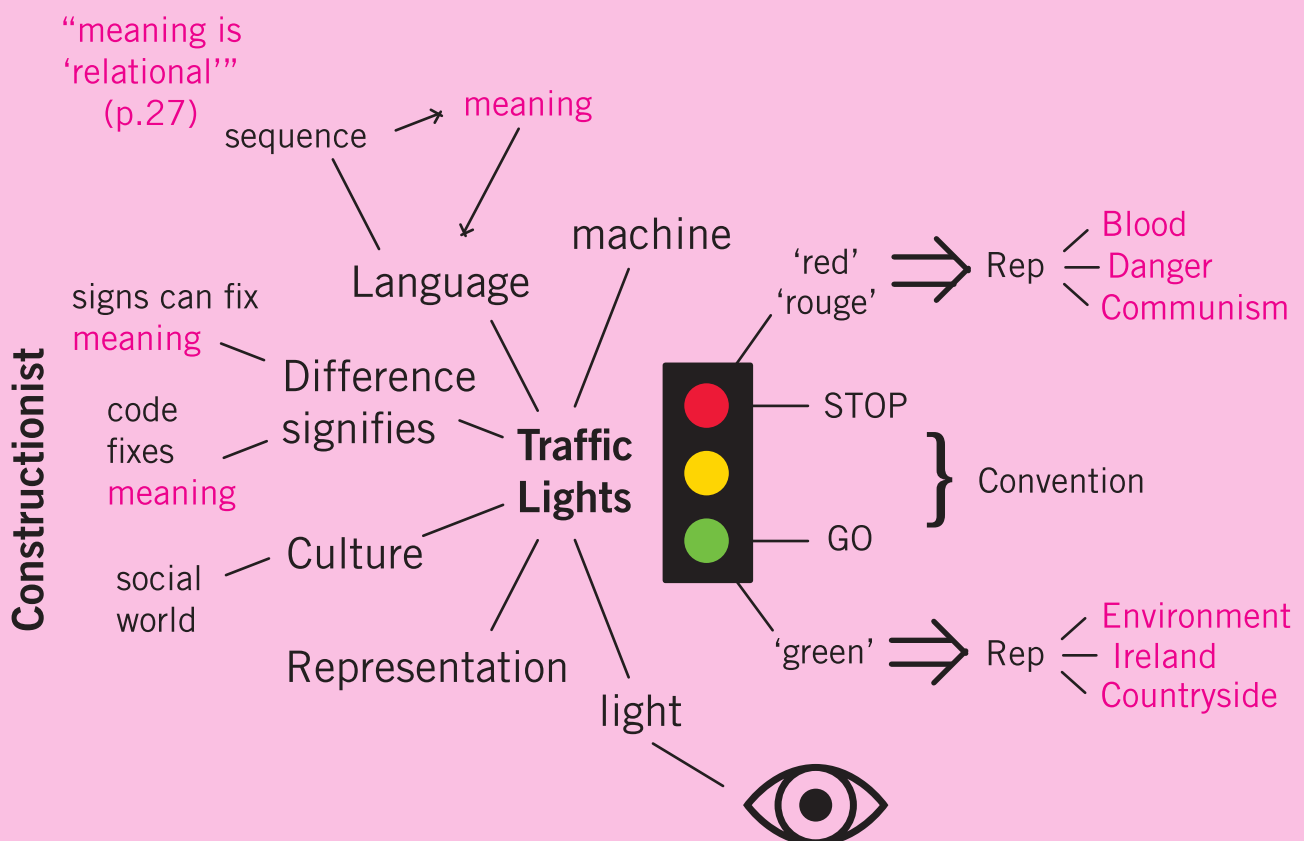
MAKE YOUR NOTES EFFECTIVE

- Use headings, underlining and capitals to organise the notes on the page
- Use symbols/abbreviations for brevity
- Use bullets or numbering
- Leave good margins so you can add additional notes, thoughts or questions
- Use "quotation marks" to show direct quotes from your lectures or the source you are using
- Identify where you have noted your own ideas e.g. use [square brackets]

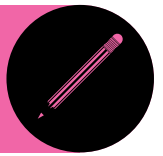


TECHNIQUES: PATTERN NOTES

This is a visual approach, organising keywords and concepts across a page so that you can remember them in the exam. In this example note that the source and quotes are still clearly recorded. The notemaker has added their own connections in pink to focus on meaning.



HALL, S. 2013.
Representation.
p.26



TECHNIQUES: THE THREE COLUMN APPROACH

This is a good approach to taking and making notes because:

- You can use any note taking technique e.g. linear, mind mapping, visual notes
- It encourages critical thinking, questioning and reviewing of your notes
- It gives you a usable summary of a lecture or a reading

For this approach you can simply divide a plain sheet of paper into three sections to create your own template.

LEFT SECTION

Use this area to highlight key terms, questions and references.

RIGHT SECTION

Use this area to take notes using any note taking technique.

LOWER SECTION

Use this area to write a summary in your own words of the lecture or reading.



EXAMPLE - THE THREE COLUMN APPROACH

Saussure Semiotics	Hall, Rep p.30 Saussure - "Father of modern linguistics" - "semiotic approach"
Signifiers and Signified	Language as "system of signs" p.31 Sign - from word, image, photo - signifier Sign - idea/concept in your head - signified
Difference	~fixed meaning "System of differences" P.32 e.g. Mother, Daughter
Change	Defined by relations, opposites
Language Culture History	Meaning shifts - e.g. black Diff. 4 diff - langs - cultures } new meanings - history }
Interpretation	Meaning is read (speaker/writer/listener/reader) reader<--->writer - neither is privileged "Signs which hr~bn intelligibly rec'd & P.33 interpreted R~, in any useful sense, 'meaningful'"

Saussure introduced the idea of the difference between the signifier (form) and the signified (idea). Signs are arbitrary, defined by context and subject to change. The reader and the writer are equally important as meaning is subject to interpretation.



REVIEWING AND ORGANISING YOUR NOTES

After you have made your notes you need to ensure that you do something with them. You should:

- label and file your notes (physically or online)
- cross reference them with any handouts
- read through your notes and fill in any details from your additional reading or research
- link new information to what you already know
- discuss with others, compare, fill in gaps.

TECHNOLOGY TO HELP YOU MAKE NOTES

Many people still like to take notes by hand but whether you write linear notes or prefer a more visual method there are now many applications that you can use to help you take and organise your notes. Make sure you read the reviews so you can decide what will work best for you before you purchase any apps or pieces of software; for example, some to consider are:

EVERNOTE

Available on all devices. Photograph hand written notes. Notes, ideas and webpages can be synced.

UPAD

Available on iPad. Use a stylus to create visual, eye-catching notes. Open and annotate PDFs.

NOTABILITY

App available on iPad, iPhone and iPod touch. Import a wide range of documents.