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# Listening to lectures

## Language of the Lecture and Lecture Hints

When you are listening to a lecture, it is impossible to write down all the information presented. You therefore have to make judgments about what information is important and whether to note it down.

Think about the following points in regard to your note-taking:

### 1. Your position in the lecture theatre

Don't be frightened of the lecturer. Sit close to the front, and look interested. You will hear and see better, and are more likely to find yourself in the company of committed students.

### 2. The lecturer's use of voice/body language

The lecturer's use of repetition, a change of tone, meaningful pausing or an upraised finger, etc., may indicate important content. Listen and watch for these signals.

### 3. Lecture Language

A lecture is **not** a dictation exercise. You need to listen and **make your own judgements** about what you should write down. The following hints however, may help you.

**Argument structure**:

Words such as *first, second, also, furthermore, moreover, therefore* and *finally* indicate stages in the lecturer's argument.

*But* and *however* indicate a qualification, *because* a reason, and *on the one hand* and *on the other hand* indicate a contrast.

**"Signalling" words** (used to indicate parts of the lecture):

Introducing the lecture:

"I want to start by ..."

Rephrasing the main point

"The point I am making ..."

Moving on to another main point:

"I'd like to move on and look at .."

Summing up main points:

"To recapitulate ..."

Introduction of a main point:

"The next point is crucial ..."

Introducing an example:

"Take the case of ..."

A digression:

"That reminds me of ..."


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# Abbreviations in Note-Taking

## Reducing the Language - Common Abbreviations

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Arrows | | $\overline{c}$ | with |
| ↑ | an increase | $\overline{w}$ | which |
| ↓ | a decrease | eg | for example |
| → | causes/leads to/results in | re | concerning |
| ← | is caused by/is the result of | ca | about |
| ↔ | is related to | A.M. | morning |
| Mathematical symbols | | P.M. | afternoon |
| ∴ | therefore | etc. | and so on |
| Θ | because | N.B. | note well |
| = | is the same as | 18 | 18th Century |
| ≠ | is not the same as | b/f | before |
| > | is greater than | cf | compared |
| < | is less than | viz | namely |
| % | percent | q.v. | refer to, see (often used as a cross reference) |
| + | and | i.e. | that is |
| R | right | pa | per annum, each year |
| L | left | et al. | and others |

## Emphasise / shorten suffixes

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Underline<br>Capitalize<br>Highlight | to show what is important | n<br>g | tion/sion<br>ing |

**Other useful references**


Burdess, N 1998, *Handbook of student skills,* 2nd edn, Prentice Hall, Sydney, NSW (Chapter 2 Lectures)

Clerehan, R 1994, *The study skills handbook for tertiary students,* Monash University, Caulfield East, Vic (Chapter 2 Making the Most of Class Time)

Cooper, G 2003, *The intelligent student's guide to learning at university,* Common Ground, Altona, Vic. (Chapter 3 Learning from Classwork)

Cottrell, S 1999, *The study skills handbook,* Palgrave, Basingstoke (pp. 126-127).

LLOnline Listening: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/listening/

Listening and Notetaking in Lectures, Academic Skills Deakin University http://www.deakin.edu.au/studentlife/academic-skills/undergraduate/handouts/notetaking.php

Listening, Language & Academic Skills, La Trobe University http://www.latrobe.edu.au/lasu/eslresour/listening.html



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