

# Tips on note-taking

Agata Derkowska  
Outreach Department  
UM Library



L-Università  
ta' Malta



# Note-taking

When to take notes?

- Listening to a lecture
- Conducting an interview
- Reading text-books and articles
- Daily life situations

# Note-taking

Writing or typing?

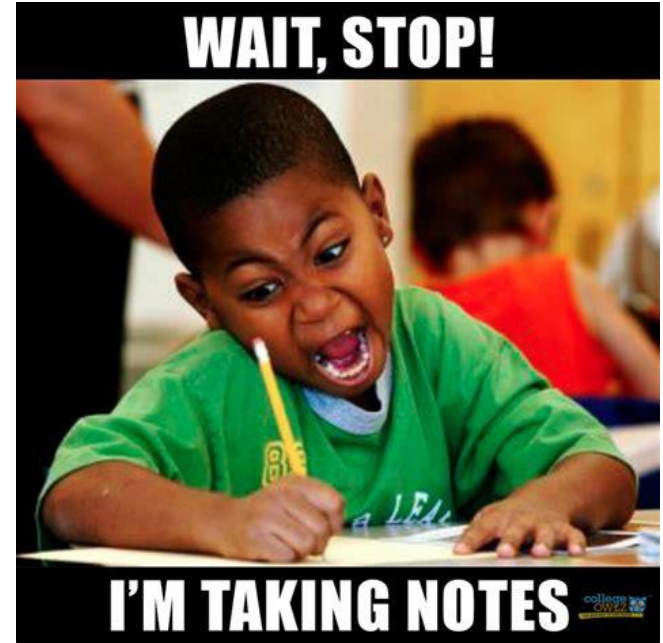
# Note-taking: Writing

Studies show that writing things down may improve learning and retention of information.

Manual note-taking is more engaging and selective, which may cause more efficient studying.

Manual note-taking forces students to creatively generate content: paraphrasing, summarizing, mind-mapping etc...

It is slow.



# Note-taking: Typing

Allows to write more.

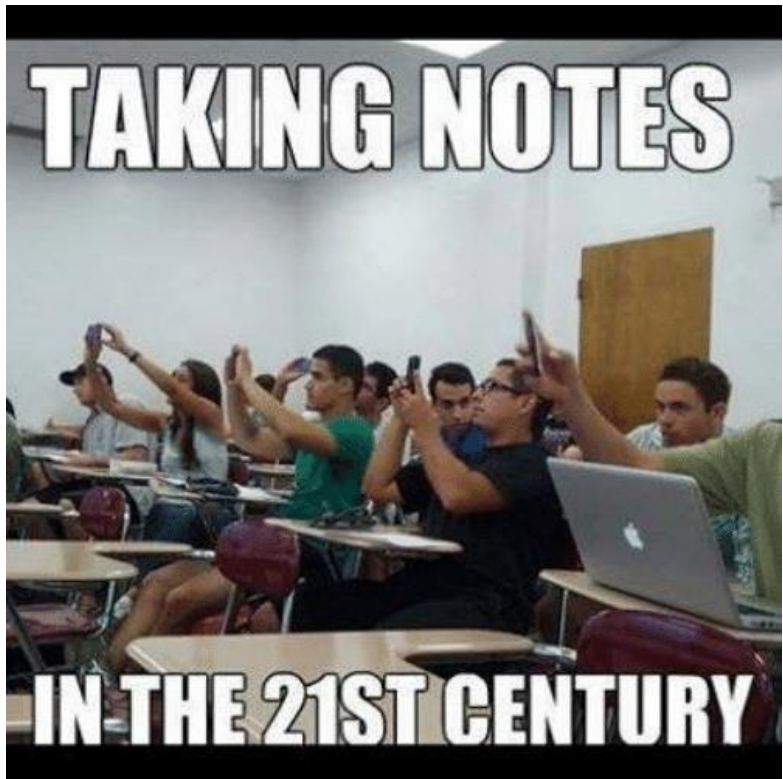
Improves multitasking.

Using a laptop may be a distraction.

Notes taken by typing are often word for word, without processing and understanding (students write down everything that lecturer says).

Mindless transcribing the content can lead to poor performance during exams.





# Note-taking

- Good notes help you learn!
- Each discipline may require different notes.
- There are various note-taking methods that you can adapt to create your own style!

# Note-taking: Outlining method

Prioritizing and writing information down in points.

Moving from main topic, to sub-topic/key-concept to details/descriptions/definitions /examples.

This method clearly structures notes.

It is easy to review.

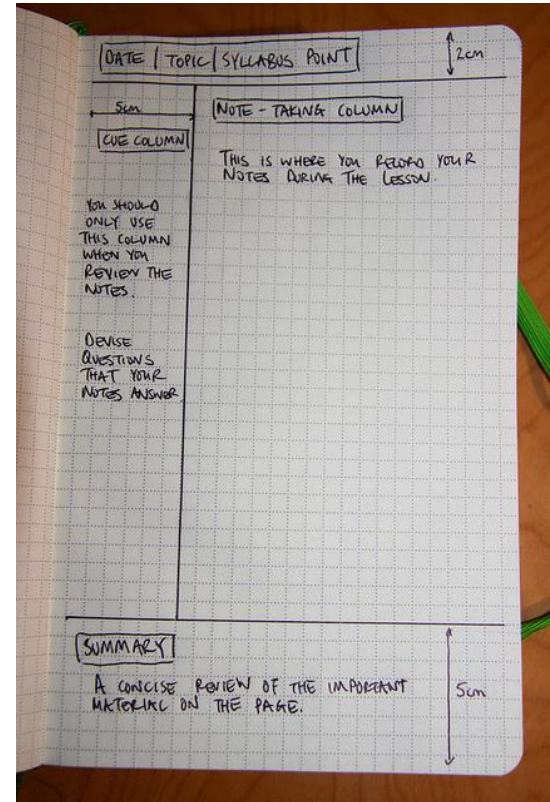
I. Title	
1. Subject	
a. Item 1: Description	
b. Item 2: Description	
c. Item 3: ...	
2. Subject 2	
II. Title 2	
...	





# Note-taking: Cornell Method

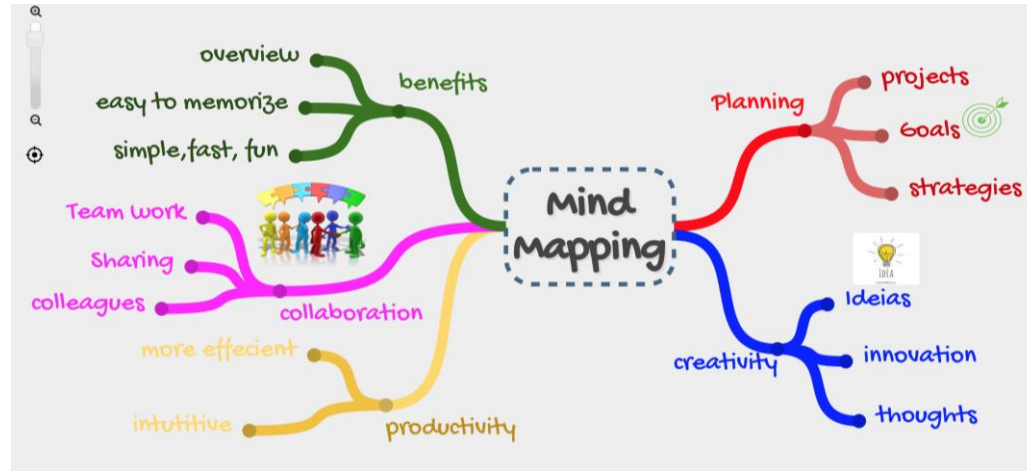
1. During the lecture write down your notes in Notes column.
2. During the lecture, write down the main topic/question on top of the page.
3. At the end of the lecture, write down the summary at the bottom of the page.
4. After the lecture, review your notes and add keywords/headlines in Cue column.



# Note-taking: Mind maps

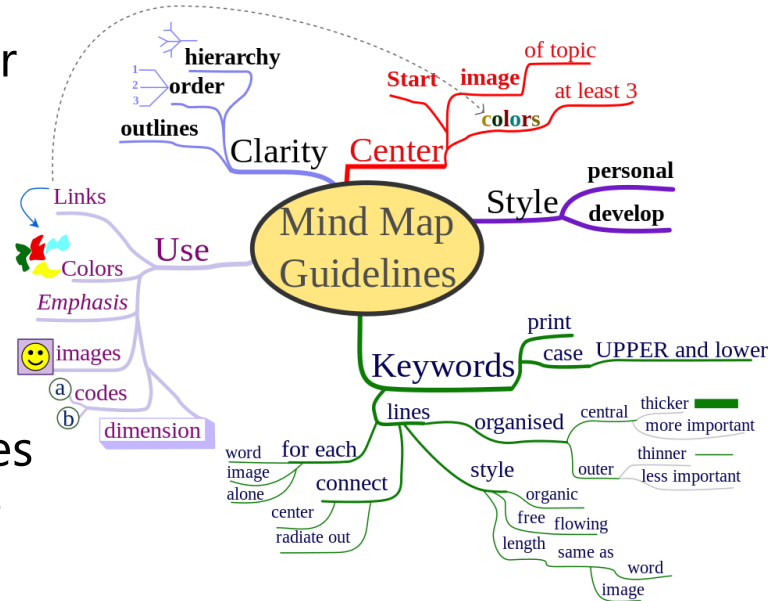
Mind maps are visual diagrams that help to organise information.

Mind maps are usually developed around a single concept with further ideas branching out.



# Note-taking: Mind maps

1. Write down main keyword/topic in the center of the page.
2. Create branches for other key concepts or ideas related to main topic.
3. Create subsequent branches to create hierarchical levels of information.



# Note-taking: Tips

- Colour-code your notes!

Use different colours to highlight definitions, key-concepts and important information.

Mark each module with a different colour so you can easily identify them!

# Note-taking: Tips

- Use abbreviations!

To note faster, use abbreviations. You can develop your own glossary, write it down in your note-book and always have it with you!

# Note-taking: Tips

- Record it!

If your lecturer talks too fast or you are worried that you might miss something important, consider recording the class or a presentation and take notes at home!

# Note-taking: Tips

- Rewrite your notes!

If your notes are chaotic, you may want to rewrite them. This will not only allow you to produce clean notes but also memorize the content.



# Note-taking: Tips

- Review your notes!

Always review your notes!

Take time to read through your notes shortly after the lecture and before the next one. This will help you remember new information!

# Note-taking: References

Bristol, J. (2016). Cornell notes. Retrieved from <http://jennybristol.com/2016/08/olio-16-cornell-notes/>

GoodNotes. (2019). The best note-taking methods. Retrieved from <https://medium.goodnotes.com/the-best-note-taking-methods-for-college-students-451f412e264e>

Lundin, E. (2019). How to take better notes: The 6 best note-taking systems. Retrieved from <https://collegeinfo geek.com/how-to-take-notes-in-college/>

Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159-1168. doi:10.1177/0956797614524581

Sanders, C. (2018). 17 note-taking tips that will transform how you retain info. Retrieved from <https://www.lifehack.org/794683/note-taking-tips>

Schenkelberg, F. (2019). Mind mapping for non-linear thinking. Retrieved from <https://accendoreliability.com/mind-mapping-non-linear-thinking/>



Thank you for your attention!

For further information you are welcome to  
contact us by calling on **2340 2541**  
or by e-mail **[library@um.edu.mt](mailto:library@um.edu.mt)**