Effective Note Taking
Customizing your notes for class

Identifying your professor’s lecture style could help you take more effective notes.

**Topic Style**
Topics are followed by associated subtopics.
KEY WORDS: One, Second, Next, Finally
Many lectures are structured this way.
FORMAT: Topic- many subtopics- many more explanatory samples/materials. Try to focus on the main points and find the connections that way. Pay attention to verbal cues for assistance.

**Compare-Contrast Style**
Two things identified that will be compared and contrasted.
KEY WORDS (suggest similarity): correspondingly, counterpart, equal to, resemble, just as.
KEY WORDS (suggest differences): however, antithesis of, disparity, on the contrary

**Series of Events Style**
Topic is followed by an initial step/stage/event related to the topic. Additional steps are then introduced and explained.
KEY WORDS: Initially, Followed By, Then, Later, After, Culminating, Last, Intermediate

**Cause-Effect Style**
A cause begins the conversation, which is followed by one or more effects that are related to that cause. Details may be included for some of the subsequent effects.
KEY WORDS: Since, Thus, Therefore, Consequently, On Account Of, As a Result

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The Outline:
I. Elephants (topic)
   A. African species (sub-topic)
   B. Asian species (sub-topic)

The Venn Diagram:
- Similari=es
- Differences

The T Chart:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>apples</th>
<th>oranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The bulleted list:
1.
2.
3.

The timeline:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Excess CO2
↓
Global Warming
↓
Hurricane Katrina
↓
Extreme Winters

Adapted from www.how-to-study.com and www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk, 2010
What Kind of Learner Are You?

Some Study Techniques are more effective depending on how you learn best.

**Visual Learners: Mind-Mapping**
- Involves finding patterns vs. listing ideas
- Can be useful for making notes and planning essay answers
- Topic in middle of page with major points branching out from the middle
- Connect ideas/points from different branches

**Auditory Learners: Cornell System**
- Allows you to capture general ideas
- Use your own abbreviations to save time. After lecture, write down key words in summary column (left margin)

**General Note Taking Suggestions**

**Before Lecture:**
- The closer to the front of the class you sit, the fewer the distractions.
- Use a large notebook, not a tiny pad.

**During Lecture:**
- Think before you write.
- Leave spaces blank between topics/points so that you can fill in information when you review/do homework or study.
- It is impossible to write everything the professor says. Not everything is of equal importance.
- Listen for inflections, listing of ideas/points, pauses, repetition of ideas/points, “You may see this on the midterm” and other verbal cues which indicate what the professor this is noteworthy.
- Jot down important facts, dates, formulas, etc. in the margin for easy reference later.

**After Lecture:**
- Recopying notes should be the process of re-reading notes and thinking about them. Ideally, you will find new ways of looking at the subject matter by reviewing your notes this way.
- Review the notes you just took 10-15 min after class. You will be more likely to retain the information which will help at exam time.
- Many tests require you to think critically about the material. Be sure to write down more than just the facts. Find connections between lectures and readings.

Adapted from [www.how-to-study.com](http://www.how-to-study.com) and [www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk](http://www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk), 2010