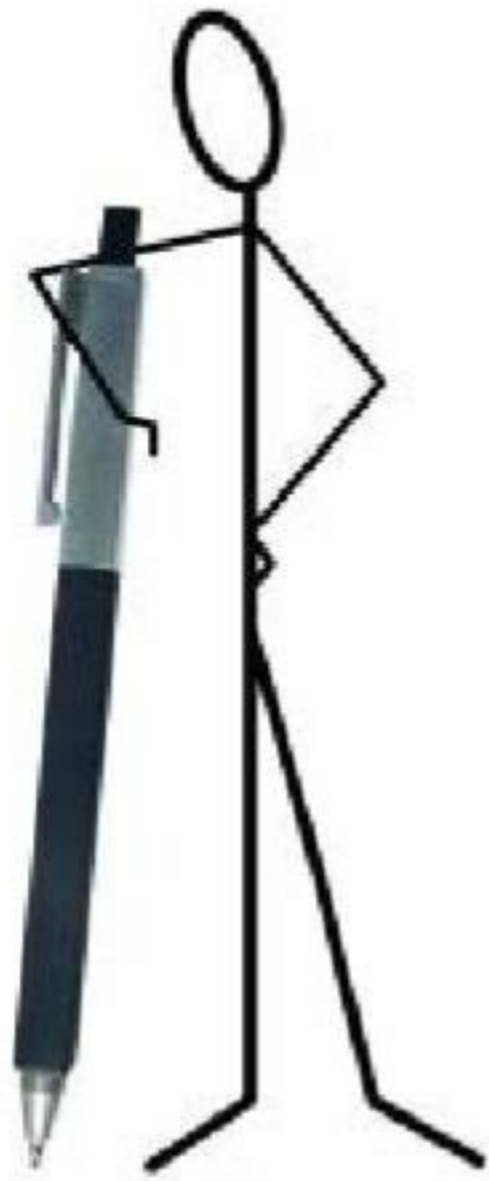


How to take good notes for lectures and readings?





Test Yourself




YES or NO



 I find it hard to take good notes for lectures.
(for solutions, go to part 1)

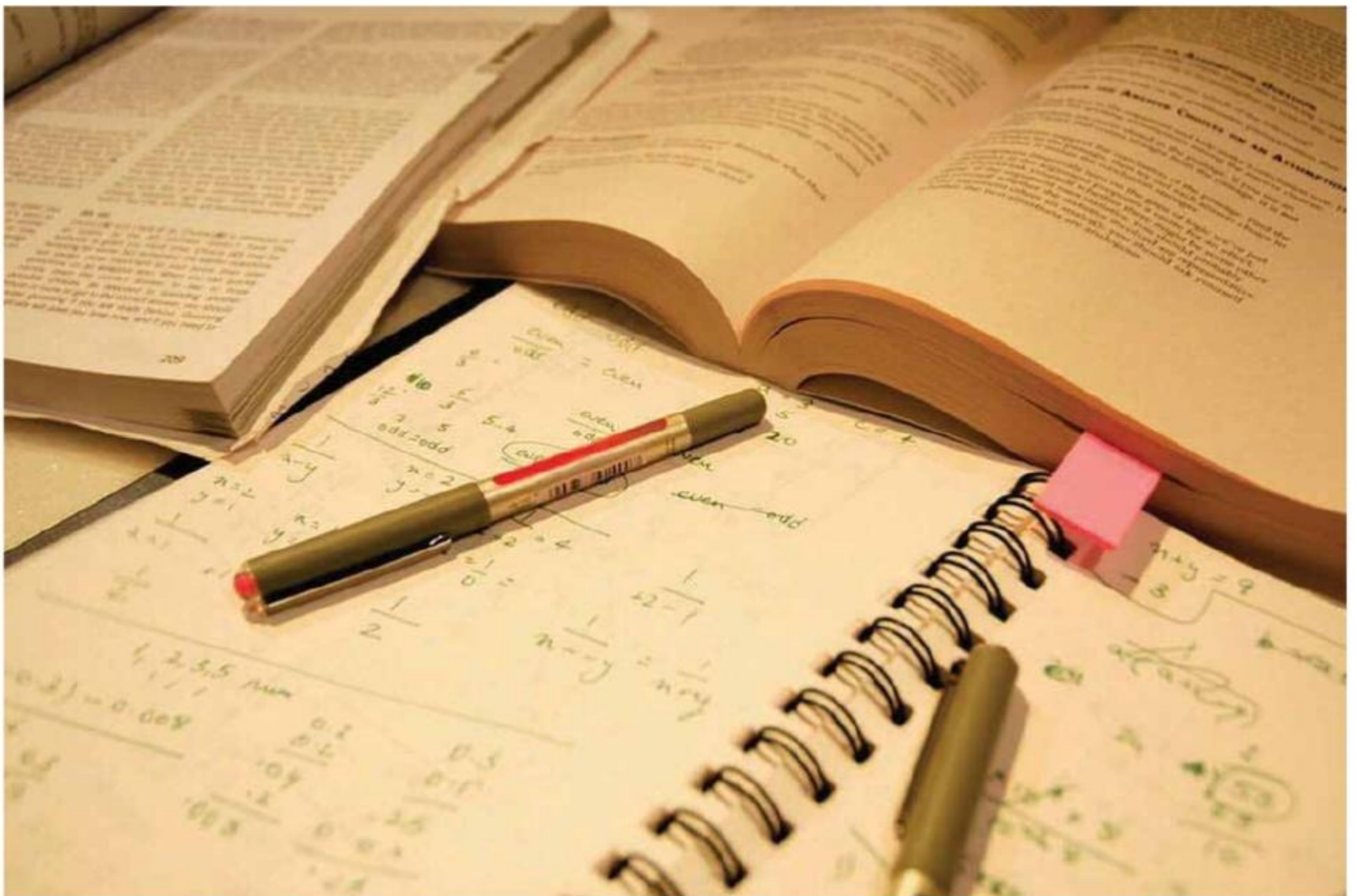
 I find it hard to take good notes for readings.
(for solutions, go to part 2)


 I find it hard to organize my notes.
(for solutions, go to part 3)


1. Taking Good Notes for Lectures


After you understand the key ideas in lectures, it is important to jot them down and keep a good record so that you can come back to them as you revise at a later time.

What are the good practices for making better notes for lectures?






-  **Make an accurate record of the background information:** Include the *course code*, the *topic*, as well as the *date of the lecture* on the top of your note for easy organization and retrieval.

-  **Use questions and headers:** Make use of the questions you prepared for lectures to help you organize your notes. Create new headers and categorize points you take in lectures under relevant headers.

-  **Use bullet points:** Note-taking is not the same as dictation. Don't record every word that the lecturers have mentioned in class. Jot down the important words to help you remember the key ideas afterwards. Bullet points are sufficient to serve the purposes.



-  **Use abbreviations:** Make good use of abbreviations to speed up your note-taking process. Invent your own abbreviations for words that are commonly used (Note: However, make sure that you won't forget what those abbreviations are as you read your notes again!)
-  **Leave margins and spaces:** You may not be able to cover all the key points as you take your notes at the very first instance. Leave margins at the side of your notes and leave adequate spaces between points (e.g. double-line spacing) for revising your notes at a later time.
-  **Use colours, highlights, and underline:** It may be boring to read notes that are plain and monotonous. Add in some “personal touch” to make them more “user-friendly” to you. Make good use of **colours**, **highlights**, and underline to illustrate points that are of different levels of importance to you.

Checkpoint 1

Using abbreviations in note-taking

Do you have some abbreviations of your own that help you take notes in a more efficient manner?

i.e. & <
=
+
> e.g. vs

2. Taking Good Notes for Readings

The aforementioned strategies for taking lecture notes are also useful for taking reading notes. On top of these strategies, here are some additional advices that can help you record your reading notes in a neat and organized manner.

Outline the text materials: Use headings, sub-headings, and numerical numbers to help you indicate the main points:

- I. Main section of the chapter
 - (A) Topic
 - (1) Main issue
 - (a) Details, points, and arguments
 - (b) Details, points, and arguments
 - (2) Main issue
 - (a) Details, points, and arguments
 - (b) Details, points, and arguments
 - (B) Topic
 - (1) Main issue
 - (a) Details, points, and arguments
 - (b) Details, points, and arguments
 - (2) Main issue
 - (a) Details, points, and arguments
 - (b) Details, points, and arguments
- II. Main section of the chapter

Use Block Method to help you organize the points:

Indent about one-half inch and list all related points under each heading.

Three Major Types of Schizophrenia

Paranoid Type

- prominent delusions or auditory hallucinations
- delusions are typically persecutory or grandiose
- delusion are organized around a central theme

Disorganized Type

- disorganized speech
- disorganized behavior
- flat or inappropriate affect

Catatonic Type

- motoric immobility
- excessive motor activity
- extreme negativism (e.g. maintenance of rigid posture; motiveless resistance to instructions)
- peculiarities of voluntary movement
- echolalia (senseless repetition of word) or exhopraxia (repetition of movement of others)

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed., Text Rev.). Washington, DC.

Create Concept Maps: It helps you to organize key information in an easy-to-read and easy-to-remember pictures or diagrams. It is also a useful tool for consolidating your understanding of the materials you have read.



For more examples, you can refer to “How to take charge of your readings and textbooks” (p.11-13).

Create Charts: A graphic display of information can show the similarities and differences of closely related information. It helps you to develop categories for comparison and contrast.

A Comparison of the Two Theories of Conditioning

Theory	Researcher	Concepts	Research evidence	Applications
Classical Conditioning	Pavlov	Association of a neutral stimulus with an unconditioned one to produce a conditioned response	Focused on careful observations and measurements of salivation of dogs	Treatment of phobia
Operant conditioning	Skinner	Outcomes of one's behavior plays a crucial role in determining future behavior	Focused on careful scientific study of behaviors of animals in controlled environment (Skinner Box)	Learning new things, especially in children

3. Getting My Notes Organized

After you take your notes, it does not mean that you have already learned everything in your lectures and readings. To maximize your learning, it is important for you to consolidate what you jot down and get organized.

What are the good practices for organizing your notes and learning materials?



Review your notes:

Attending to lecture is an on-going process that requires high levels of concentration and cognitive capacity. As a result, there may be some empty spaces and missing links among the points you take. It is important for you to fill in these gaps **right after the lecture**. You may forget the key messages if you only read your notes again right before the examinations.

Make your notes complete by **adding in your thoughts and reflections** towards the learning topics. **Refer to your textbooks and assigned readings** to fill in the missing gaps in your notes with information in the texts.



Organize your notes with folders, binders, and/or separate compartment:

Besides the contents of your notes, it is important that you can retrieve whole pieces of notes as soon as you need them. For **hand-written notes**, you can use folders, binders, and/or separate compartment to categorize and organize notes of different topics and courses. For **electronic notes**, you can also separate them with different electronic folders.





Use indexes and identifiers to help you search for particular topics in your notes quickly and readily.

Make an index page and list out all the topics that are included in a particular folder and/or a binder. **Add identifiers** on the top or the bottom of your notes to speed up the search. Usually, identifiers are the key words of the particular topic of your notes.

Checkpoint 3

Creating identifiers

Select one sample copy of your note and read through it.

What are the key concepts in this piece of note?

Use not more than 3 key words to summarize each of the key concepts you listed.

These key words can act as identifiers of your note.

Recap



Taking Good Notes for Lectures

- Make an accurate record of the background information of the lecture
- Use questions and headers
- Use bullet points
- Use abbreviations
- Leave margins and spaces
- Use colours, highlights, and underline



Taking Good Notes for Readings

- Outline the text materials
- Use block method to help you organize points
- Create concept maps
- Create charts



Getting My Notes Organized

- Review your notes
- Organize your notes with folders, binders, and/or separate compartment
- Use indexes and identifiers