

How to get the most out of lectures?



Test Yourself

YES or NO ?



I find it hard to concentrate during lectures.
For solutions, go to part 1.



I find it hard to follow through with the lectures.
For solutions, go to part 2.



I find it hard to identify key points in lectures.
For solutions, go to part 3.

1. Getting Rid of the Distractions

What are the common

distractions
distractions
distractions
distractions
distractions

in lecture rooms?

Noise: Chatty neighbours and mobile phone rings are some common sources of distractions. Some students may feel uncomfortable about the noises generated by the apparatuses in the lecture room, e.g. air vent of the air-conditioner.

Lights: Some students are sensitive to the lighting and they may feel uncomfortable about the flickering of the fluorescent lights in lecture rooms.

Temperature: As the air-conditioning is centralized in most of the lecture rooms, it is sometimes difficult to keep a comfortable temperature that is suitable for every student.

Checkpoint 1

**What are the
sources of
distractions
that are
unique to
you
?**



Dealing with the distractions in lecture rooms

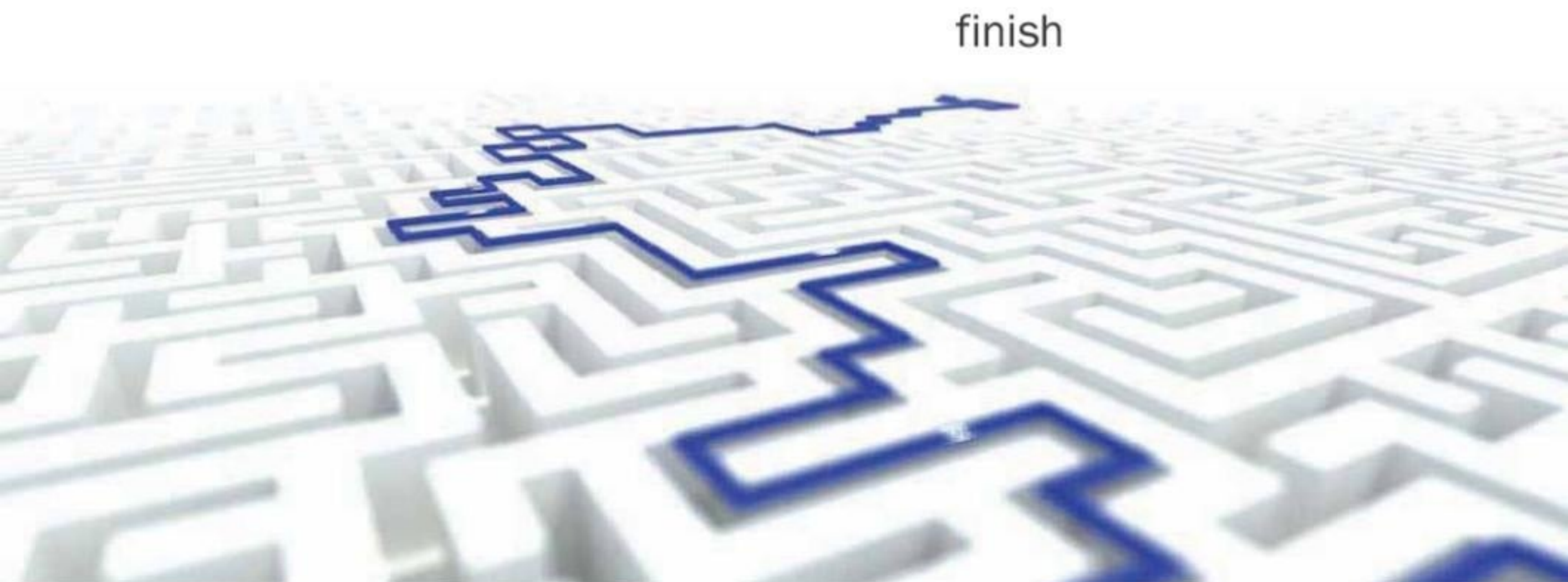
Noise: Stay away from chatty neighbours whenever possible. If you are very sensitive to noises, stay away from apparatuses that would generate noises, like the air vent.

Lights: If you are very sensitive to flickering of lights, avoid sitting right below the fluorescent lights. Usually, seats in the middle-front are better choices for you as the lighting above those seats are usually turned off during lectures with PowerPoint presentations.

Temperature: Arrive at the lecture room early to get accommodated to the temperature. Bring along extra clothing just in case you may feel cold in the middle of the lectures.

2. Preparing Yourself for Lectures

How can you follow through the lecture?



finish

start

Some students may find it difficult to follow through the lectures as there are loads of information and learning materials covered. In order to maximize your learning, do preparatory works before your lectures.

Here are some ways that can help you prepare for class:

REVIEW the learning materials that are covered in the previous lectures to make sure that you have grasped the key concepts in class.

PREVIEW the assigned readings given by lecturers before lectures.



Anticipate using questions

When you read the assigned readings, do not simply have a quick glance on them. Prepare yourself by anticipating what you should know from the readings and also from the lectures. Setting up a list of questions can help you stay focused and capture the key points in class.



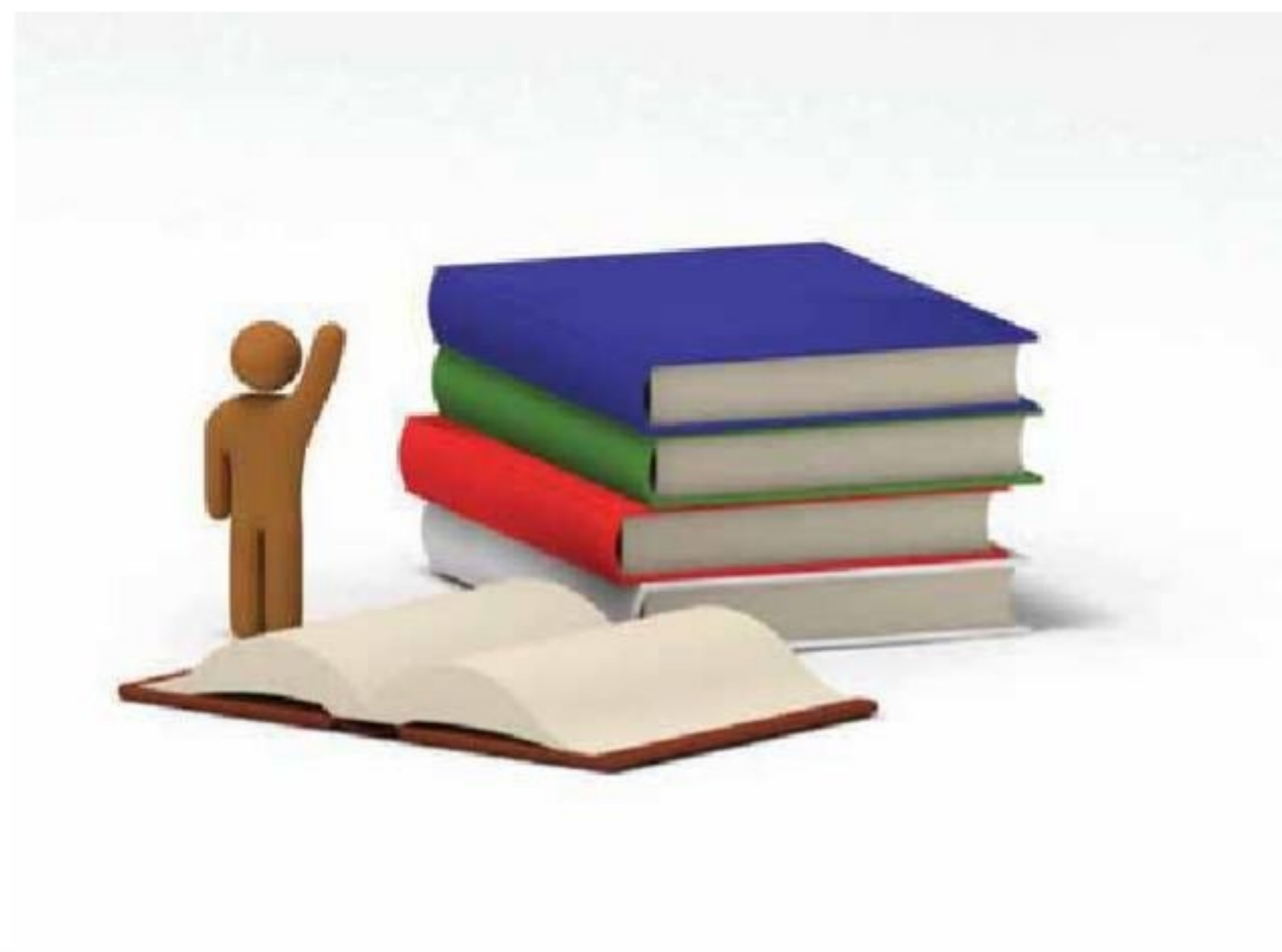
Checkpoint 2

Try to prepare for a lecture using the following list of questions:

What are the important concepts identified in the reading?

What are the questions in your mind as you read? (e.g. what do you want to know more and do you find anything that you are not sure about?)

What should I look for in lectures so that I can answer my questions?



3. Capturing Key Ideas during Lectures



Very often, lectures are filled with loads of information. Therefore, students find it hard to follow through and capture the key ideas. If you have ever conducted a presentation, you may have made attempts to ensure that the audiences can receive and capture the key ideas that you would like to convey. Experienced lecturers would also do so.

Checkpoint 3



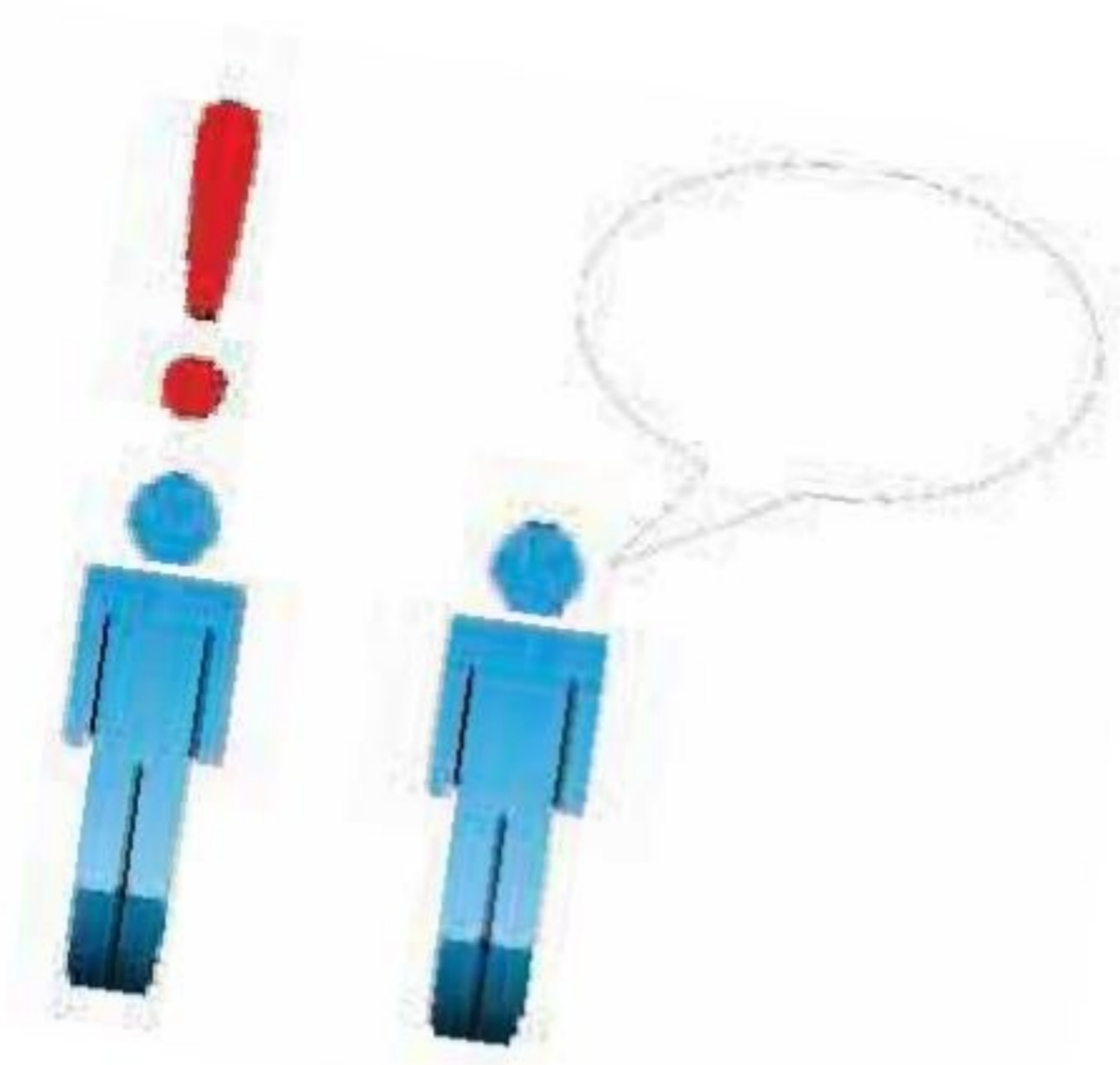
When you do a presentation, what would you do to ensure the audiences understand and retain your key messages (e.g. tone, voices, wordings, visual aids, etc.)?

How to look for common cues for key ideas?

Experienced lecturers would probably make use of the strategies that you have thought about too. They would help students capture key ideas by giving cues about what is/are important.

Tone and voices: Lecturers may stress and/or raise their voices when they try to convey key messages in class. Look for the changes in their tone and voices.

Wordings: Lecturers may also highlight key messages by emphasizing them repeatedly. Look for repeated emphasis.





Visual aids: Lecturers may put key messages in their visual aids, e.g. PowerPoint files. The words and bullet points in their presentation are often important indicators to help you find out what the key ideas are.

Besides, the questions you prepared before the lectures (as discussed in the previous section) can also help you capture the key ideas that you want to know. Bring along the questions with you to lectures can help you learn more effectively.

**Bring along
the questions
to lectures!**

Recap



Getting Rid of the Distractions

- Identify your own distractions (e.g. **noises**, **lights**, and **temperature**) and seek ways to deal with them before they haunt you



Preparing Yourself for Lectures

- **Review** the learning materials of the previous lectures
- **Preview** by reading the assigned readings before lectures and **preparing questions**



Capturing Key Ideas during Lectures

- The **tone and voices**, **wordings**, and the **visual aids** of the lecturers are often good cues for key ideas
- Make use of the **questions you prepared** before lectures to help you identify the key ideas