Thanks for tuning in to ‘taking lecture notes’. This video gives you some tips on how to take good lecture notes.

Lectures are an important part of learning at university. You should never finish a lecture without having taken some lecture notes. These notes will need to be expanded and reviewed after the lecture. Good notes allow you to make summaries of course material which you can use for assessment and exam study. Some lecturers let you download the slides before the lecture.

Method One: One method of taking notes is to print out the lecture slides and write notes on them. Remember to print these out large enough to write your own explanations and add examples. This will help you recall the information long after the lecture. Also highlight things you don’t understand and circle words on the slides so that you can look up these ideas afterwards or ask about them in tutorials.

Method Two. Another method is to take notes on your own paper. It’s a good idea to put the date, course code and title of the lecture at the top of the page. Next split your page into three sections as shown in this example. The right hand column is for notes you’ll take during the lecture. During the lecture take short, sharp notes, organising information under headings and using dot points. Highlight important information and circle things you’re unsure of. The left hand column is for key themes. At the end of the lecture, or straight after it, write down what you understand to be the key themes or big ideas from the lecture. You might like to talk about this with another student. The bottom section is the summary of the lecture in your own words. Writing down a summary in your own words allows you to identify what you understood and what extra information you need. Write down any follow-up questions here. You can ask these in tutorials or email the lecturer. When you have the answer, go back to your lecture notes and write it down.

Tables: If a lecture has a lot of facts and figures try organising these in a table. You can put the table in the summary section of your lecture notes.

Abbreviations and symbols: Trying to get everything down on paper can be a problem. A tip is to try using abbreviations and symbols instead of writing full words. ‘For example’ can be written as ‘e.g.’, or an arrow symbol can show how one thing led to another. And because these notes are for you, you can even create some of your own.

Review. Finally don’t just pack your lecture notes away till exam time. Remember to review your lecture notes before going to tutorials, and look back over them weekly. This will prompt you to ask questions in tutorials and remember what was in lectures across the whole course. You should reflect on the connections between the topics covered in different lectures. You might even like to draw a diagram or mind-map of these connections.

Resources: For more handy hints on studying at uni, check out the other videos in our ‘tune-in’ series.