


Listening & Note-taking Strategies



Which strategies do you use while listening to a lecture and taking notes?

1. Using the Introduction to Predict Lecture Content

- Like an essay, a lecture usually has 3 parts: the introduction, the body and the conclusion.
- You should listen to the introduction very carefully because it will usually have 2 important pieces of information.
 - The topic of the lecture
 - A brief summary or list of the main ideas the speaker will talk about

2. Transitions (Connecting Words)

- There are usually transitions between major sections of a talk.
- In addition, we also use transitions to connect details within each main section. If you listen for transitions, you can tell when a new idea or topic is starting.
- Example:

“Tonight, I would like to give you some simple suggestions to make your homes and cars safer. Ok? So **first of all**, let’s talk about lights.”

“**Next**, let’s talk about lights inside the house.”

3. Using Key Words

- When you take notes, do not write every word. It is time-consuming so you can write only the most important or “key” words.

4. Using Abbreviations & Symbols

- You can save time if you abbreviate (shorten) words and use symbols as much as possible.
- Here is a list of symbols but you can also create your own abbreviations & symbols.

= is like, equals, mean

≠ is unlike, not the same as

number

> is larger than

< is smaller than

+ plus, in addition, and

& and

% percent

? question & something not clear

\$ dollar

~ approximately

@ at

↑ increase, do up

↓ decrease, go down

e.g. for example

wk. Week

km kilometer

pp. Pages

etc. and so on

vs versus

ch. chapter

no number

5. Expressions that Signal a Definition

- Speakers often use some expressions to signal a definition for unknown information / ideas.
 - That is...
 - In other words,
 - X, meaning
 - By X, I mean...
 - What do I mean by X? Well, I mean...
 - Let me define that...
 - The definition of that is

6. Recognizing Paraphrases

- To paraphrase means to say something again with different words. Speakers paraphrase often in order to make sure their listeners understand what they are saying or to emphasize something important.
- When you are taking notes, you need to recognize paraphrases so that you do not write the same idea twice in your notes.
- The following phrases signal paraphrases
 - In other words
 - That is
 - That is to say
 - I mean
 - To put it another way

7. Taking Notes on Examples

- In English there are many expressions to signal examples. Here are a few:
 - For example, ...
 - For instance, ...
 - ... such as ..., ...
 - To give (one) example, ...

BEFORE THE LECTURE:

- Listen to the lecture carefully.
- Do not worry and try to be positive.

DURING THE LECTURE:

- Listen to the introduction carefully.
- Note down the main ideas.
- Do not try to note down full sentences.
- Note down the keywords (reasons, results, effects, solutions, names, dates, numbers....).
- Use abbreviations to take notes quickly.
- Listen to the signal words carefully (transitions).
- Do not panic because of a point that you miss because it will be repeated.

AFTER THE LECTURE:

- Go over your notes.
- Read and Answer the questions carefully.