

2. Note Making

What do we want the students to learn and why?

- That good note-making habits are an asset to A – Level study.
- How to use the Cornell system to make effective notes.
- What distinguishes good note making from poor.

Because note making is a fundamental academic skill but we often forget to teach it. Some of our student arrive equipped with good note-making skills, and some work out how to do it on their own but there is a subset whose note-making skills are poor and whose academic attainment may be depressed as a consequence.

What other things need to be done?

There is a videoclip (optional; you can do without it if you want) linked to the slideshow. Check that it works on the equipment you will be using.

What resources are needed?

Laptop, projector and speakers
Short text – “What research tells us about note-making” (this is formatted to be copied 2-up to an A4)
One per student.
Flipchart and pens
Spare notepaper for those who did not bring any.

Activities

Timing	What to do	Additional notes
0-5	Welcome the group. Review the learning intentions.	
5-10	Question: Why do notes matter so much at A – Level (and beyond)? Invite discussion, pull out relevant ideas. Stress the multiple functions of good notes. Review the main ones on the slide.	It may be worth pointing out in particular that habitual note making allows students to capture things like class discussions, which frequently go unrecorded because they didn't come from the teacher. Similarly, students often focus on the recording function of notes (“I'll make my notes, then I'll learn them”) but don't realise that note making can be an effective learning strategy if approached in the right way.
IF TIME	Question: note-taking or note making? Which should it be? Invite discussion and draw out views. Stress that active, constructive note making is far superior to passive copying.	This is an extension of the point above.

10-20	<p>Link: good notes need a good system. Making notes at A – Level standard may require changes from GCSE.</p> <p>Introduce the Cornell system. You can then either play the video or give a verbal explanation. Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title • Right panel for detailed notes. • Left panel for key points, questions and things to follow up. • Bottom panel for an overall summary. 	<p>This is added AFTER the detailed notes have been made.</p> <p>This needs to be an actual summary (i.e. it must condense the content, rather than merely describing what the notes contain).</p>
20-35	<p>Invite students to practice by making notes on the text about note-making.</p> <p>Ideally, model the note-making process by showing what you would do – divide up a flipchart sheet and turn the first paragraph into notes, talking through what you're doing and how you're making decisions about what to put in and how.</p> <p>Then turn it over to them, circulate and coach where appropriate.</p>	
	Review learning intentions and close.	