

MATHS OR STATS LECTURE NOTES

Lectures involving maths or stats often “tell a story” written in algebraic language, so a lot of lecture content *is written out on the screen by your lecturer*.

This means that it’s very easy to switch your brain off and just copy stuff down (especially if you don’t understand what’s going on!).

However, if that’s all you do, you will get very bored, get lost more often and your notes will be much less useful than they could be when it comes time to read them again.

Listen to what your lecturer says

Sounds easy, right? Well, actually, it’s hard to listen and write at the same time. Besides, it’s easy to think the whole story is contained in those lines of algebra on the board. It isn’t. Train yourself to listen for phrases such as

- *I’ve done this step because I need to get x out of the denominator.*
- *I’ve left out a few steps here which you can fill in later.*
- *If this method isn’t suitable you’ll have to do . . . instead.*
- *This works because . . .*
- *After trying a few other methods, this one worked.*
- *Now, this is the clever bit . . .*

Jot down summary notes alongside what appears on the screen so you know *why* a step was taken, where several steps have been left out, etc.



By using **active listening** you will get a better set of notes, get lost less often and be able to concentrate for longer.

Written notes and textbooks often create the impression that solving problems involves blindly following a rigid set of “perfect” steps. In lectures your lecturer’s *voice* constantly reminds you that it actually involves **educated guessing, logical reasoning** and there are often **multiple pathways to the same solution**.

No-one can concentrate for more than about 20 minutes at a time (especially if this is your third lecture in a row!) and some concepts are going to be difficult to pick up first time.

Don’t panic when you get lost

In maths lectures it’s important to keep writing and listening when you get lost. With a good set of notes you can pick up the thread later.

Tip: Many lectures are recorded as videos. If you miss something or get lost, note down the time and fast-forward to that part of the video later.

Quick notes for maths or stats lectures

- ✓ Get to know your neighbour. They might pick something up that you miss. Sometimes it's just nice to hear someone say "yeah, I'm lost too!"
- ✓ Sit close to the front if you can. There are less distractions and you'll see and hear the lecture better.
- ✓ Try reading ahead in the notes before going to the lecture. Even if you find it difficult, the lecture will make more sense.
- ✓ ***The skills you use in lectures for essay-based units are different.***



Like this Survival Guide? Why not check out...

Survival Guides: *Keeping up with maths or stats, Being stuck on maths problems, Studying for maths or stats exams, A maths or stats service course, Myths about maths at uni, Get the most from lectures, Note-taking.*

Want to know more about STUDYSmarter?

Find out about all our services and resources at: www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au

Any suggestions?

We'd love to hear from you. Email us at study.smarter@uwa.edu.au

This resource was developed by the STUDYSmarter team for UWA students. When using our resources, please retain them in their original form with both the STUDYSmarter heading and the UWA logo.

