

## Listening to lectures and taking notes

**EXERCISE 1** Many students struggle with taking effective notes during lectures. What do you think: Why is that so?

Ex. *"Some professors talk really fast; maybe the students find it hard to write fast enough to keep up."*

**EXERCISE 2** What can you do before, during and after a lecture to take better study notes? With a partner, complete the table below with useful tips. Then compare your results in class.

<b>Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>
- Download / print the PowerPoint slides provided by the professor	- Use abbreviations to write faster	- File your notes right after class

**EXERCISE 3a** Read the following text about note-taking methods and match the methods (1-4) and the pictures on the next page (A-D).

*When it's time to study for finals, they are indispensable: study notes. But note-takers also benefit during the semester: They find it easier to focus on the content of the lecture and remember more than fellow students who don't take notes. However, many students find note-taking challenging – and some can't even make sense of their own notes after class. The following methods can help you take better notes and ace that final!*

### 1 The Charting Method

Organize the content of the lecture into columns for each topic. Use bullet points to add details to the columns.

### 2 The Cornell Method

Divide your note sheet into three sections: a main section, a margin on the right or left side, and a footer. During the lecture, use the main section to take notes. Afterwards, write down additional comments, definitions and questions in the margin and add a summary of the most important points in the footer.

### 3 The Outlining Method

Break the content of the lecture up into topics, subtopics and notes. Start with the main topic and add the subtopics and details below, indenting them to the right. If you want to add more information about a subtopic, move the line a little further to the right.

### 4 The Mapping Method

Place the topic of the lecture in the center of your notepad and draw a circle around it. Then draw branches radiating from the center for the subtopics and arrange the details around them. Color-coding the branches can make your mind map more visual.

**3b** Discuss in groups: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the four methods? Which one(s) do you like best?

- *What I (don't) like about the [outlining method] is that ...*
- *I think the [charting method] has the added benefit that ...*
- *On the one hand, the [mapping method] is very easy to use, but on the other hand ...*
- *... is probably useful for ..., but I don't think this method would work for ...*
- *A drawback of the [Cornell method] could be that ...*

Marine Biology 101  
Session 2: Coral reefs  
01 March 2020

topic 1

- bullet point
- bullet point
- bullet point
- ...

topic 2

- bullet point
- bullet point
- bullet point

topic 3

- bullet point
- bullet point
- bullet point

A

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B

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- bullet point 1
- bullet point 2
- bullet point 3
- ...

Summary

...

...

...

C

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questions

key words

definitions

- topic 1
  - sub-topic 1.1
    - detail about sub-topic 1
    - detail about sub-topic 1
    - ....
  - sub-topic 2.1
    - detail about sub-topic 2
  - ....
- topic 2
  - sub-topic 2.1

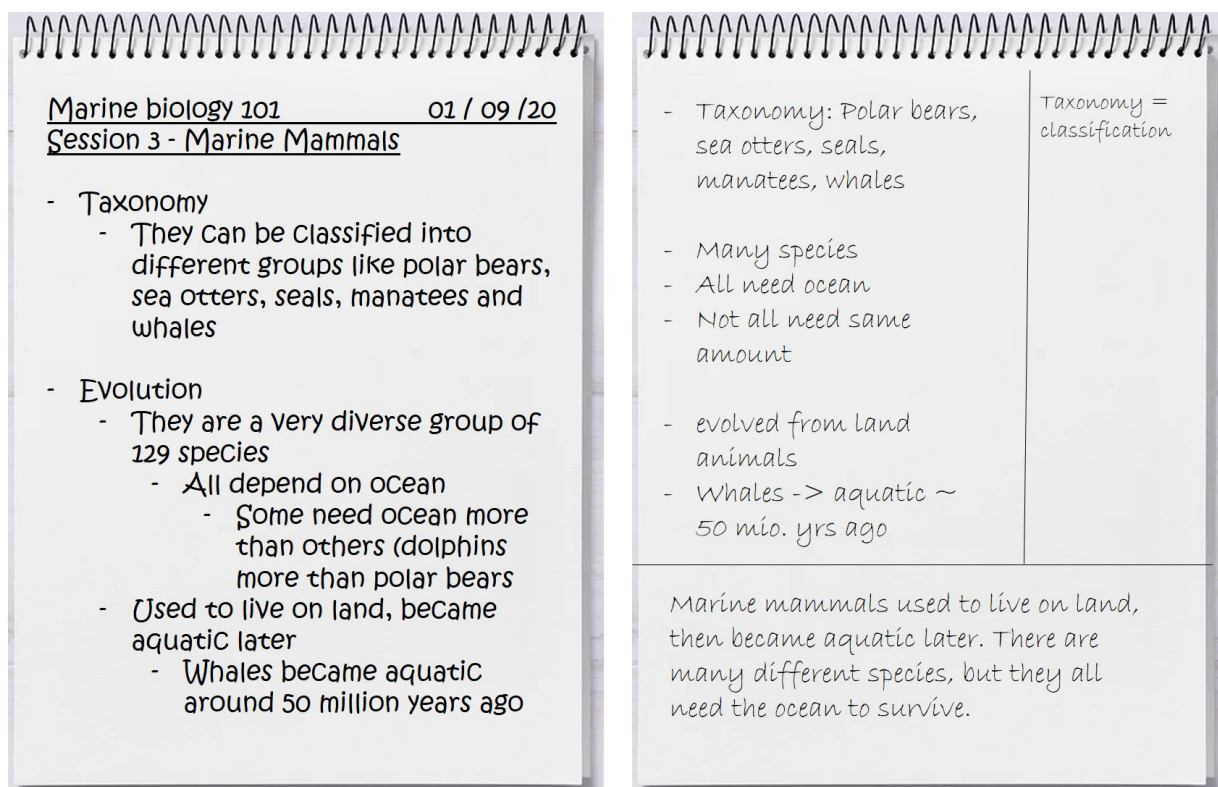
D

**EXERCISE 4** The most common abbreviations for note-taking. Match the abbreviations and their meanings.

money (a) – consequence of; becomes (b) – something (c) – biggest / smallest amount (d) – and so on (e) – because (f) – definition (g) – for example (h) – especially (i) – good / bad (j) – that is / that means / in other words (k) – important (l) – before (m) – unclear, question (n) – compare (o) – is the same / different / roughly the same (p) – regarding (q) – similar (r) – with (s) – without (t) – against (u) – year (v) – about/roughly (w) – gets bigger / smaller (x)

b/c		etc.		sth.	
b/4		i.e.		w/	
cf.		max. / min.		w/o	
def.		re.		vs.	
e.g.		sim.		yr.	
esp.					
<b>SIGNS</b>					
~		↗ ↘		= / ≠ / ≈	
→		+ / -		?	
\$		!			

**EXERCISE 5** Now take a look at the two examples of lecture notes below. What do you like about them? How could the students improve their note-taking?



Notepad picture by DarkmoonArt\_de, <https://pixabay.com/de/photos/notizblock-tisch-dekoration-notizen-3297994/>

**EXERCISE 6** A good lecturer will use verbal cues to help you recognize the structure of his/her lecture. Read the following extract from a lecture and describe what the phrases in bold are used for.

moving on to the next topic (1) ▪ giving examples (2) ▪ rephrasing (3) ▪ contrasting information (4) ▪ referring back to previously covered content (5) ▪ adding more information (6)

“... **So now that we’ve** defined what a mammal is, **the next question is:** Which mammals classify as ‘marine’? **Well**, marine mammals are mammals that somehow depend on the ocean – **in other words**, animals that spend all or a lot of time in it and find their food there. This is a very large group that comprises 129 species of animals with very different characteristics, **including** whales, sea otters, manatees, seals and polar bears.

**Now, as you all know**, every group has its ‘odd’ members. I bet some of you are already wondering: **Why polar bears?** **After all**, they actually spend very little time in the water and might even drown. Nevertheless, they depend on the ocean for food. **Another thing to keep in mind** is that polar bears spend most of their life on sea ice, which is part of the marine environment. **Two other examples** of marine animals that don’t quite fit the definition are river dolphins and seals living in lakes. They, **too**, are classified as marine animals even though they don’t actually live in the ocean. They are, **however**, closely related to dolphins and seals that do, and it would make little sense to place them in a different group.

All marine animals have, to different degrees, adapted to a life in the water. **Take dolphins, for instance**. They have developed fins and flukes. Also, their muscles and spleen have evolved to store a lot of oxygen, allowing them to dive for extended periods of time.

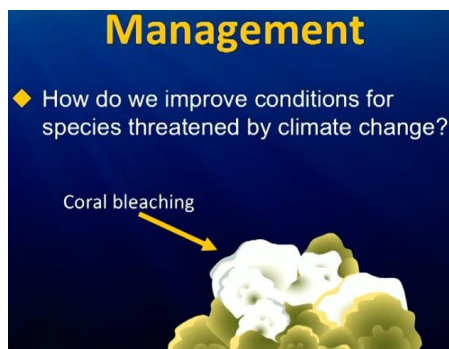
Now, **before we move on to** the evolutionary history of marine mammals, **let me sum up** what we’ve covered so far: We’ve seen that marine mammals ...”

**EXERCISE 7** You will now watch a short lecture with the title “Management of Climate Change Impacts on Marine Ecosystems”<sup>1</sup>.

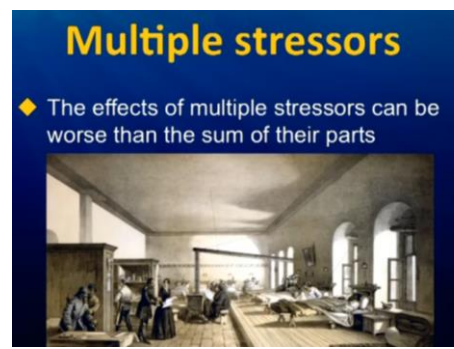
- a) Before watching the video, take a look at the PowerPoint slides below and prepare for the lecture by
- describing what you can see on the slides,
  - anticipating what the professor might say, and
  - looking up unknown words.



Slide 1



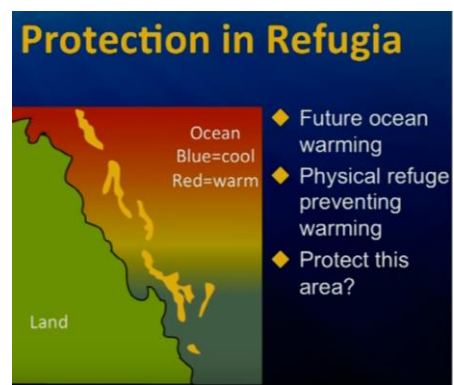
Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4



Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7



Slide 8

- b) Watch the lecture and take notes. Use one of the **note-taking methods** from page 1 and follow the instructions on the **checklist** on the next page.
- c) Review your notes: Correct mistakes and add additional explanations and definitions where necessary.
- d) Exchange your notes with a partner and give each other feedback. Again, use the checklist for reference.

<sup>1</sup> The University of Queensland, Australia / edX. UQx Tropic101x6.4.3: “Management of Climate Change Impacts on Marine Ecosystems” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc\\_VWMRx3t8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc_VWMRx3t8)). Last accessed on 01 April 2021. Please see page 6 for full citations.

**Checklist for lecture notes:****CONTENT**

- ☐ sums up the central aspects of the lecture
- ☐ is understandable even to somebody who has not attended the lecture
- ☐ does not contain a large number of mistakes (content, spelling of important terms)

**FORM**

- ☐ has date, name and title of the lecture on it
- ☐ has a visible structure (e.g. using sub-headings, columns, highlighting and/or indents)

**PRACTICAL**

- ☐ uses meaningful, clear abbreviations
- ☐ leaves out unnecessary words (articles, repetitions)

**Vocabulary****Note-taking**

abbreviation  
anticipate (v)  
branch  
challenging  
characteristic  
classify (v)  
color-code (v)  
column  
condition  
divide (v) sth. into sth.  
drawback  
file (v)  
footer  
habitat  
highlight (v)  
indent (v)  
margin  
meaningful  
radiate  
section  
session  
slide  
visual

**Biology and Environment**

adapt (v)  
affect (v)  
aquatic  
at a local / global scale  
coral  
disease  
ecology  
ecosystem  
environment  
evolution  
generation  
habitat  
impact (n, v)  
infrastructure  
maintain (v), maintenance (n)  
mammal  
marine  
nutrient  
occur (v)  
oxygen  
persist (v)  
predict (v)  
protect (v), protection (n)  
provide (v)  
reef  
refuge  
resilient  
restrain (v)  
retain (v)  
sea level  
sediment  
shore  
species  
stressor  
taxonomy  
threaten (v)



## Image Sources:

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Image 3	Children in boat	CC-BY-SA		Alice Rogers	a.rogers2@uq.edu.au
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## Answer key

**EXERCISE 1** Not knowing vocabulary / technical terms; problems understanding the content of the lecture; being easily distracted; being unable to concentrate

<b>EXERCISE 2 Before</b>	<b>During</b>	<b>After</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Download / print the PowerPoint slides provided by the professor</li> <li>- Prepare for the lecture by looking at the slides beforehand and looking up unknown words</li> <li>- Be fit: sleep enough, bring something to drink</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use abbreviations to write faster</li> <li>- Avoid distractions (phone, laptop, other students ...)</li> <li>- Write clearly</li> <li>- add a date and headline</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- File your notes right after class</li> <li>- Re-read the notes, correct mistakes, write an individual summary and mark points that are still unclear</li> <li>- ...</li> </ul>

**EXERCISE 3a** 1A, 2C, 3D, 4B; **3b** Individual solution

**EXERCISE 4**

<b>b/c</b>	f	<b>etc.</b>	e	<b>sth.</b>	c
<b>b/4</b>	m	<b>i.e.</b>	k	<b>w/</b>	s
<b>cf.</b>	o	<b>max. / min.</b>	d	<b>w/o</b>	t
<b>def.</b>	g	<b>re.</b>	q	<b>vs.</b>	u
<b>e.g.</b>	h	<b>sim.</b>	r	<b>yr.</b>	v
<b>esp.</b>	i				
<b>~</b>	w	<b>↗ ↘</b>	x	<b>= / ≠ / ≈</b>	p
<b>→</b>	b	<b>+ / -</b>	j	<b>?</b>	n
<b>\$</b>	a	<b>!</b>	l		

**EXERCISE 5 Left:** uses outlining method; well-organized (includes class, title, date) and mostly easy to understand, but the students uses no abbreviations and even repeats words that could be left out, which will slow him/her down

**Right:** Cornell method; makes good use of abbreviations, but sometimes unclear ("all need same amount?"), title and date are missing

**EXERCISE 6** "... So now that we've (1) defined what a mammal is, the next question is: Which mammals classify as 'marine'? (1) Well (1), marine mammals are mammals that somehow depend on the ocean – in other words (3), animals that spend all or a lot of time in it and find their food there. This is a very large group that comprises 129 species of animals with very different characteristics, including (2) whales, sea otters, manatees, seals and polar bears.

Now, as you all know, every group has its 'odd' members. I bet some of you are already wondering: Why polar bears? After all (4), they actually spend very little time in the water and might even drown. Nevertheless (4), they depend on the ocean for food.

Another thing to keep in mind (6) is that polar bears spend most of their life on sea ice, which is part of the marine environment.

Two other examples (2, 6) of marine animals that don't quite fit the definition are river dolphins and seals living in lakes. They, too (6), are classified as marine animals even though they don't actually live in the ocean. They are, however (4), closely related to dolphins and seals that do, and it would make little sense to place them in a different group.

All marine animals have, to different degrees, adapted to a life in the water. Take dolphins, for instance. (2) They have developed fins and flukes. Also, their muscles and spleen have evolved to store a lot of oxygen, allowing them to dive for extended periods of time.

Now, before we move on to (1) the evolutionary history of marine mammals, let me sum up (5) what we've covered so far: We've seen that marine mammals ..."

**EXERCISE 7** Individual solution