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1 Taking Notes

INTRODUCTION

If you're not used to taking lecture notes, you're likely to try to fall back on what you did at school. This generally means writing at great speed in order to try to take down almost everything a speaker says. This is better than nothing, of course, but it's not going to serve you very well. You won't be able to learn as much from the lecture as you would if you spent less time writing and more time thinking about what's being said; and your notes won't be easy to use for writing essays and revising. Changing old habits isn't easy at first. But the benefits of using a good system are invaluable. So it's well worth persevering to make changes. It will pay dividends.

Note-taking from written materials involves a different procedure because you're likely to be doing it as preparation for writing an assignment. You'll be focusing on specific aspects of a text (a piece of writing), aiming to draw out of it just those things that will serve your purpose. So you'll be starting to analyse what's been written. There's a section on analysis in this chapter. Reading and writing skills go together. The better you become at understanding how a text functions, the better you'll become at both discussing it on paper and at constructing your own essays.

NOTE-TAKING IN LECTURES AND CLASS SESSIONS

Your first problem is likely to be knowing how much to write down. You will probably find that some of the other students end up with writer's cramp because they write all the time, and some seem to sit through a whole session and write down practically nothing.

Neither of these methods is likely to be much help to you in the long run. In any class or lecture session, you need to spend some time

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considering what's being said, so if you spend all your time writing, you will have missed out on mulling over ideas as they come up and on taking part in any discussions. If, on the other hand, you write down very little, you will have to rely heavily on your memory, and few of us have memories capable of retaining a lot of new facts and ideas in one go.

What you need are notes that give you outline information in a very readable format. So notes written in sentences are not going to make things easy for you. Not only do they take too long to write, but they take too long to read as well. It makes sense, therefore, to develop a method that's going to save you time while still recording what you need.

Watch, first of all, for the way a class session or lecture is structured. Some tutors start with an introduction in which they tell you what will be covered; so if you know there will be three sections, mark them out as you go along. This will help you to feel in control of the situation. Your **syllabus** may also give you some clues as to which are the important areas to concentrate on, so check the relevant section of it before the lecture and listen out for key topics. You may be given a handout that shows the main areas of the day's lecture. This is an invaluable guide. There may even be spaces for you to fill things in as you go along.

Quite often, the way a person speaks can give a clue to important points: a tutor's voice may rise, he or she might stress certain words very strongly, might pause before an important point, or might even repeat a phrase or two. Aim to jot down names, dates, technical terms and other key words. You might like to underline or ring key words as you go. Alternatively, you could do this after the lecture. You'll probably want to leave out extras such as descriptions and full details of examples.

It's possible to use your page rather like a drawing board, ignoring the printed lines if you find that easier. Spreading your notes out and leaving space on each page is especially important. After the lecture, or even weeks later or when you're revising, you might come across something else you need to add. It's infuriating if there's no space. Not only that – a cramped page can be a scary prospect when you come to revise. If every line is filled with full sentences, revision can become overwhelming because there's so much to read.

Look now at the following transcript of the opening to a lecture given by Professor Anthony Giddens in 1999 for the Reith lecture series broadcast on Radio 4 on the subject of globalisation:

A friend of mine studies village life in central Africa. A few years ago, she paid her first visit to a remote area where she was to

carry out her fieldwork. The evening she got there, she was invited to a local home for an evening's entertainment. She expected to find out about the traditional pastimes of this isolated community. Instead, the evening turned out to be a viewing of *Basic Instinct* on video. The film at that point hadn't even reached the cinemas in London.

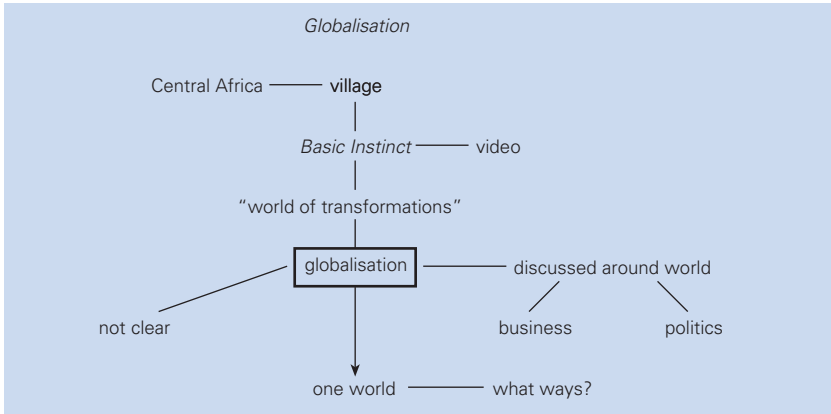
Such vignettes reveal something about our world. And what they reveal isn't trivial. It isn't just a matter of people adding modern paraphernalia - videos, TVs, personal computers and so forth - to their traditional ways of life. We live in a world of transformations, affecting almost every aspect of what we do. For better or worse, we are being propelled into a global order that no one fully understands, but which is making its effects felt upon all of us.

Globalisation is the main theme of my lecture tonight, and of the lectures as a whole. The term may not be - it isn't - a particularly attractive or elegant one. But absolutely no one who wants to understand our prospects and possibilities at century's end can ignore it. I travel a lot to speak abroad. I haven't been to a single country recently where globalisation isn't being intensively discussed. In France, the word is *mondialisation*. In Spain and Latin America, it is *globalización*. The Germans say *globalisierung*.

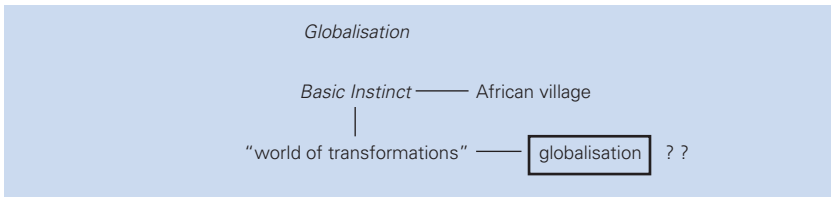
The global spread of the term is evidence of the very developments to which it refers. Every business guru talks about it. No political speech is complete without reference to it, yet as little as 10 years ago the term was hardly used, either in the academic literature or in everyday language. It has come from nowhere to be almost everywhere. Given its sudden popularity, we shouldn't be surprised that the meaning of the notion isn't always clear, or that an intellectual reaction has set in against it. Globalisation has something to do with the thesis that we now all live in one world - but in what ways exactly, and is the idea really valid?

Now have a look at my notes (below) for the opening of that lecture. They are possibly shorter than you might expect, and you might feel that the layout is a bit strange. I've tried to record just the key concepts and to leave out background information. I've made links between key points by drawing lines instead of taking up time by writing extra words.

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If I had been prepared to add to my notes after the lecture in order to fill in any gaps, I could have written even less:



Here's how Helen might have begun to make notes from a lecture on the Founding Fathers from her course on American Studies. The notes are written along the line, as you might normally expect to write.

Founding Fathers - America

Country gents / upper class / those in commerce - had influence & power - e.g. Thomas Jefferson (7,500 acres) & wife (11,000 acres).

The colony was governed separately from Britain - the Governor appointed by the Crown.

Governor app. a Council. Council app. local assemblies.

There was more representation of the people than in Britain because more land available.

N. States - 75% males voted

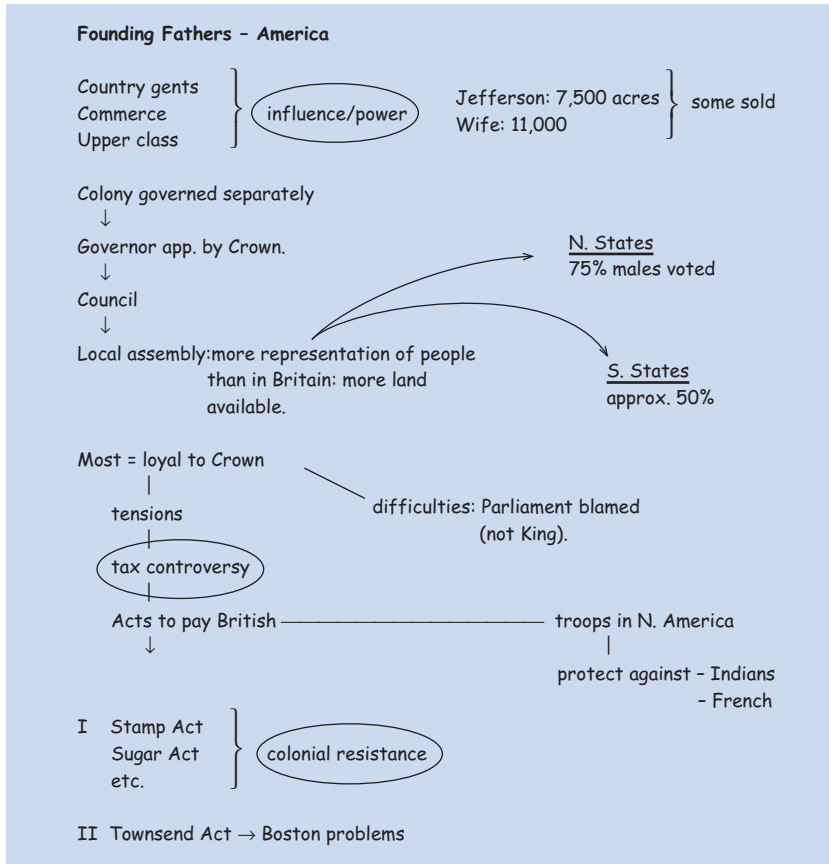
S. States - 50% " "

Most colonists were loyal to the British Crown. When there were difficulties, they blamed Parliament (not the King).

There were some tensions over taxes. Britain passed acts to recoup expenses - e.g. for British troops in N. America - to protect against Indians & French.

Colonists resisted the Stamp Act and the Townsend Act (which led to problems in Boston).

Below, however, you can see what Helen actually did, because, by the time she took these notes, she'd had bit of practice in using a clearer layout.



The main things to notice here are:

- only a few key words are written down
- lines are drawn to link points
- there's space to add more later
- these notes are very easy to read

Another method of taking notes is to draw a mind map (see below and chapter 2). With this method, you start by putting the title of the lecture in the middle of the page and then draw a straight line each

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time you want to note something down. Use capital letters to make things stand out. You can add bullet points or lists. You can also colour-code points after the lecture to make things stand out. If you are good at drawing, you can even add small pictures since visual cues are good memory-sparkers.

Mind maps are extremely useful in some areas – especially for preparing essays and revision notes – but my own feeling is that they work less well in lecture situations. This is partly because links are so crucial: it's tricky, when you come to the end of a page, to know how to link the following page to it. For this reason, I favour Helen's method of working down the page. It's important, however, to find a method that works for you in relation to the course you're on and the type of lectures you attend. Trying out some new methods should help you discover what's going to be quickest and clearest for you.

There will always be things you miss. So go over your notes on the same day as your lecture if you can. You are likely to be able to fill in extra points while your memory is still fresh. This is one of the best ways of helping to make the material stick in your mind. If you can make time for a brief study session with a friend, you'll probably come up with all the important points between you.

Taking notes can be quite hard work, and you'll probably find it easier if you adopt a good posture. If, for example, I'm listening to the radio for Budget changes that will affect me, I have little trouble in hearing exactly what I need to know because I'm so alert. The more you are interested in your subject, the easier it will be to spot crucial points in what you hear.

Here are some tips for surviving a lecture:

beforehand:

- check your syllabus to see how this lecture fits in
- do some reading on the topic
- write down three questions before the lecture starts
- talk to other students about likely topics

during:

- note key headlines on any handouts provided
- pay special attention to the introduction
- listen for words or phrases that are stressed

afterwards:

- debrief with other students

- discuss any contentious points
- add items you missed

Devising specific questions before going into a lecture can be especially helpful for focusing your mind on what's to come and getting your brain in gear. It may not matter too much if the lecture doesn't provide specific answers. The object of the exercise is to get your brain alert and moving. You can always follow up various issues later if you need extra information.

When going over your notes, you can add colour-coding for different topics or processes. Aim also to put in headings and sub-headings to show the main topic areas. All of the following are great for helping things stick in your mind:

- patterns
- colour
- pictures
- diagrams
- lists
- highlighting
- underlining
- boxing
- ringing
- arrows for linking

The important thing is to find the method of note-taking that is quickest, easiest, and that suits you best. However you do it, make use of as many abbreviations as you can because these are great time-savers. Here are a few I use all the time:

therefore	∴
because	∵
is	=
isn't	≠
nineteenth century	⑑
twentieth century	⑒
more than	>
less than	<

It's a good idea to get into the habit of making your own simple short forms for words you use often. Here are some of mine:

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history	hist.
literature	lit.
psychology/psychological	psych.
tradition	trad.

If you need to get in some practice in note-taking before starting a course, you might try listening to a radio programme on a subject linked to your course. Go for radio rather than TV programmes if possible so that you won't be distracted by pictures.

ANALYSIS: UNDERSTANDING A TEXT

Obviously, you'll have more thinking time when you take notes from books. When you are faced with a chapter or article to read and absorb, there are various strategies you can use to make the process easier.

Before you begin reading anything, it's a good idea to ask yourself some questions about what is likely to be in the text. Try to think up three or four, such as:

- Will I find out about x?
- What details will there be on y?
- What is the writer's view on z?

It doesn't matter if your questions don't seem particularly penetrating. The object of the exercise is just to get your brain in gear. Asking yourself any kind of question will help because this will start to focus your brain on the topic area you are going to be reading about.

The next thing to do is to scan the material very quickly. Look at headings, sub-headings, diagrams, graphs and any other illustrations. This will help to make you feel more comfortable because your brain will be starting to become familiar with the material. If you are facing something that looks difficult, just covering the ground in this brief manner will start to make the task seem less daunting.

Then you can skim. Read just the first and last sentences of each paragraph. This is another way of familiarising yourself with the subject matter. It's a way of tricking the mind into thinking that it knows all about what's coming. Doing this will almost automatically make a difficult piece of material seem more accessible. You will see below that those first and last sentences can be particularly revealing.

After this, you can do a slower reading in order to work out in detail what's being said.

In order to work through the following section, please now read the article 'Why a high society is a free society' by the philosopher A. C. Grayling (originally published in the *Observer*). This is not dense material. I've chosen something reasonably straightforward so that you can quickly follow some analysis of it. The paragraphs have been numbered so that you can refer to things easily.

Why a high society is a free society

A. C. Grayling

1 One measure of a good society is whether its individual members have the autonomy to do as they choose in respects that principally concern only them. The debate about heroin, cocaine and marijuana touches precisely on this. In my submission, a society in which such substances are legal and available is a good society not because drugs are in themselves good, but because the autonomy of those who wish to use them is respected. For other and broader reasons, many of them practical, such a society will be a better one.

2 I have never taken drugs other than alcohol, nicotine, caffeine and medicinal drugs. Of these, I have for many years not taken the two former. I think it is inimical to a good life to be dependent for pleasure and personal fulfilment on substances which gloss or distort reality and interfere with rationality; and yet I believe that heroin, cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and cognates of these should be legal and available in exactly the same way as nicotine and alcohol.

3 In logic [there] is no difference between legal and currently illegal drugs. Both are used for pleasure, relief from stress or anxiety, and 'holidaying' from normal life, and both are, in different degrees, dangerous to health. Given this, consistent policy must do one of two things: criminalise the use of nicotine and alcohol, in order to bring them in line with currently illegal substances; or legalise currently illegal substances under the same kinds of regime that govern nicotine and alcohol.

4 On civil liberties grounds the latter policy is preferable because there is no justification in a good society for policing behaviour unless, in the form of rape, murder, theft, riot or fraud, it is intrin-

sically damaging to the social fabric, and involves harm to unwilling third parties. Good law protects in these respects; bad law tries to coerce people into behaving according to norms chosen by people who claim to know and to do better than those for whom they legislate. But the imposition of such norms is an injustice. By all means let the disapprovers argue and exhort; giving them the power to coerce and punish as well is unacceptable.

5 Arguments to the effect that drugs should be kept illegal to protect children fall by the same token. On these grounds, nicotine and alcohol should be banned too. In fact there is greater danger to children from the illegality of drugs.

6 Almost everyone who wishes to try drugs, does so; almost everyone who wishes to make use of drugs does it irrespective of their legal status. Opponents say legalisation will lead to unrestrained use and abuse. Yet the evidence is that where laws have been relaxed there is little variation in frequency or kind of use.

7 The classic example is Prohibition in the USA during the 1920s. (The hysteria over alcohol extended to other drugs; heroin was made illegal in the USA in 1924, on the basis of poor research on its health risks and its alleged propensity to cause insanity and criminal behaviour.) Prohibition created a huge criminal industry. The end of Prohibition did not result in a frenzy of drinking, but did leave a much-enhanced crime problem, because the criminals turned to substances which remained illegal, and supplied them instead.

8 Crime destabilises society. Gangland rivalry, the use of criminal organisations to launder money, to fund terrorism and gun-running, to finance the trafficking of women and to buy political and judicial influence all destabilise the conditions for a good society far beyond such problems as could be created by private individuals' use of drugs. If drugs were legally and safely available through chemist shops, and if their use was governed by the same provisions as govern alcohol purchase and consumption, the main platform for organised crime would be removed, and thereby one large obstacle to the welfare of society.

9 It would also remove much petty crime, through which many users fund their habit. If addiction to drugs were treated as a medical rather than criminal matter, so that addicts could get safe,

regular supplies on prescription, the crime rate would drop dramatically, as argued recently by certain police chiefs.

10 The safety issue is a simple one. Paracetamol is more dangerous than heroin. Taking double the standard dose of paracetamol, a non-prescription analgesic, can be dangerous. Taking double the standard medical dose of heroin (diamorphine) causes sleepiness and no lasting effects.

11 A good society should be able to accommodate practices which are not destructive of social bonds (in the way that theft, rape, murder and other serious crimes are), but mainly have to do with private behaviour. In fact, a good society should only interfere in private behaviour in extremis.

12 Until a century ago, now-criminal substances were legal and freely available. Some (opium in the form of laudanum) were widely used. Just as some people are damaged by misuse of alcohol, so a few were adversely affected by misuses of other drugs. Society as a whole was not adversely affected by the use of drugs; but it was benefited by the fact that it did not burden itself with a misjudged, unworkable and paternalistic endeavour to interfere with those who chose to use drugs.

13 The place of drugs in the good society is not about the drugs as such, but rather the freedom and the value to individuals and their society of openness to experimentation and alternative behaviours and lifestyles. The good society is permissive, seeking to protect third parties from harm but not presuming to order people to take this or that view about what is in their own good.

autonomy freedom to determine one's own actions
inimical unfavourable, hostile
cognates related things
analgesic pain killer

► Key sentences

Within any piece of writing, the paragraphs will show how the writer has broken down the main subject. Everything in a paragraph is likely to revolve around one topic (or possibly a group of minor but related

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topics) and every paragraph will contain a key sentence – that is, the most important statement in the paragraph. Once you have found this key sentence, understanding meaning becomes a lot easier.

Look at Grayling's first paragraph – his introduction. This is the point where a writer is likely to make clear what the text is going to be about. Grayling's first sentence prepares the reader with the words 'good society' and 'autonomy'. We begin to get the message that he has a particular ethical stance and that he is in favour of the freedom of the individual. Sentence 2 gets straight to the main topic: drugs. Then, in sentence 3, he gives an immediate clue that this is the core of the paragraph by saying, 'In my submission'. He's clearly going to set out his stall here:

In my submission, a society in which such substances are legal and available is a good society ... because the autonomy of those who wish to use them is respected.

Notice that I've omitted the comment, 'not because drugs are in themselves good'. I've done this because it's an aside – interesting, but not part of Grayling's main statement. Sentence 4 makes an additional point but it's clearly not part of Grayling's main drift at this juncture.

The key sentence in paragraph 2 is the long one beginning 'I think ...'. The first two sentences are merely personal information. In the third and final sentence, Grayling starts to develop his ideas. (Note that in an essay, you won't generally mention yourself – see chapter 2.)

In paragraph 3, the key sentence is the first. It forms the basis on which Grayling's argument (set out in the third and final sentence) rests in this paragraph – that society must either criminalise nicotine and alcohol or legalise illegal substances.

In paragraph 4, the key sentence is again the first. It explains which of the possibilities put forward at the end of paragraph 2 should be chosen and why. The remaining part of this paragraph gives further elaboration and explanation of this statement. In paragraph 5, the key sentence is the first and in paragraph 6, it's the last. Before reading on, note down which you think is the key sentence in paragraph 7.

Generally speaking, explanation in a paragraph will be secondary to the key sentence, and anything in brackets is clearly not the main focus of the writer's ideas. The opening sentence here points us to Prohibition without making any statement about it. The final sentence sets out the situation. The key sentence is 'Prohibition created a huge criminal industry.' This overturns the idea made by the opponents of legalisation that was put forward in the previous paragraph. Don't

worry if you didn't get this right. If you've not done this kind of thing before, just focus on picking up the general idea. You'll improve by leaps and bounds with a little practice.

In each of the paragraphs 8–13, the key sentence is the first. This is clearly a typical position for it. A paragraph will then elaborate on its initial statement and frequently be tied up neatly at its end by a sentence setting out the writer's particular angle on that statement – his or her argument (see chapter 2). Things can get a little tricky here. The key sentence will be the logical base on which the paragraph rests and will help you to understand its meaning; but it might not be the one that interests you most in relation to the assignment you're working on (see 'Selecting information', below).

Whenever you are faced with reading a complex text, following the punctuation can be a help towards understanding. Sentences are a paragraph's building blocks and a writer will be expecting you to absorb the meaning one sentence at a time. Even watching for commas can help you with picking out meaning, as they mark off different parts of a sentence, showing which sections fit together (see the section on commas in chapter 14).

► Implication, suggestion and bias

It's important to be alert for attempts to sway your judgement in things you read – for statements that result from a writer's bias, or that just don't hold water. Seemingly simple things like repetition or the use of a term as though it had academic significance can also be used to sway readers.

Grayling repeats the phrase 'good society' a number of times, and he uses it as though it has a specific meaning that we can all agree on. But your definition of a good society may not be the same as his – or mine – even though we'd probably agree that such a society would be founded on sound ethical principles. He is a very experienced writer, so this repetition cannot have occurred by chance. It's been done for a reason. When he comes to his conclusion, Grayling subtly strengthens the effect by changing from the non-specific '*a* good society' (my italics) to the specific '*the* good society'. He has not only given the term prominence by repetition but has finally enforced its validity with the word 'the'.

Explicit language says exactly what it means:

The train for Brighton leaves at 1500 hours.

Implicit language contains some kind of suggestion that is not actually stated:

“We’re told that the train for Brighton leaves at 1500 hours.”

That sentence is not so straightforward. By beginning it with the words, ‘We’re told’, the speaker suggests that the information might not be accurate – that in this case, there might be some delay. There’s a further possible implication that trains to Brighton are often late. So there’s an implied criticism of the service on this line – or possibly of the whole rail network.

Look at this sentence:

Easton’s MP has been seen lunching with high-ranking members of the Opposition on three occasions in the last fortnight.

What’s the implication? It’s that the MP in question is about to leave his party and defect to the Opposition. But this wasn’t stated outright, so if a sentence like this appeared in a newspaper, there could be no accusations of libel. The writer has stuck to observable facts, but has put them forward in such a way that readers will draw the conclusion that defection is imminent.

► Things that writers omit

When a writer wants to put forward a particular view, he or she will frequently omit to mention facts and arguments that might detract from that view. It’s essential to be on your guard for this. A. C. Grayling’s piece on heroin was written for a newspaper (the *Observer*) and is an ‘opinion’ piece. This means that he did not need to include detailed evidence or give references for his assertions. The article is useful, therefore, as a means of discovering Grayling’s views and as a way, perhaps, of broadening our perspective on the drug issue. What it does not do is provide much material on the current state of heroin use that could be used to prove an academic argument in one of your own essays.

NOTE-TAKING FROM WRITTEN SOURCES

There are various ways you can make notes, and what you do will depend partly on the subject you are studying and partly on what the

notes are to be used for. People also find that particular methods suit them better than others, so you need to take account of your own personal preferences.

You will be guided, in part, by the task or assignment you've been set. You're almost certainly going to be either writing an essay or preparing to give a short talk or a seminar paper. It's a good idea to have a note of the task in front of you so that you focus your reading and note-making clearly on the required area and so prevent yourself from wasting time on things that aren't relevant. *Never* spend time on books that are only vaguely related to your subject; and never make notes on a whole chapter unless it is brimfull of ideas and data that are relevant to your assignment. Pick and choose the things you need and those that will be useful for you.

If you own the book you're working from, do underline things and make brief notes in the margin. Some people feel that doing this would deface the book. Books you've bought for your studies, however, are your tools. They are there to help you get a qualification. So make them work for you. If you use pencil, you can always rub things out later. It's best not to use a highlighting pen since highlighting can't be changed if you find you've made an error.

We all develop our own methods of note-making. There are, however, several things you will need to do. Always take a fresh sheet of paper and copy carefully at the top:

- the title of the book or journal (underline this)
- the full name of the author
- the publisher
- the date and place of publication of a book, plus edition (if relevant)
- volume number, plus first and last page numbers of the article for a journal

Many of us learn this the hard way, finding that we have scraps of paper containing disconnected notes and no reference to where they came from. You can't use ideas or quotations in your assignments without saying where you got them. So without names and titles, your work would be wasted.

You need to record the relevant page numbers for both points you note and for quotes. It's a good idea to put this in your left-hand margin. Page numbers are essential for:

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- referencing (see chapter 3)
- finding your way back to a point you might want to check or expand on later

If you have ideas of your own or want to note down a comment on what the writer says, be sure to use a consistent method of showing this in your notes, otherwise it may be hard to differentiate your own observations from what the writer actually wrote. I generally put my comments in square brackets and add my initial.

Wherever possible, make notes in your own words rather than copying the original. This helps you to fully understand what you are writing about and will be useful for essays where you will need to prove that you understand a topic. It's fine, however, to copy occasionally where the writer has put something especially well or when it would be particularly difficult to change the way something has been expressed. When copying, quotation marks are essential (see chapter 3).

► Full notes

If you were to make full notes on A. C. Grayling's article, they would probably look something like those below. These would be useful if you were either having to write specifically on Grayling or make a detailed summary of 'Why a high society is a free society' (see chapter 5). There are paragraph numbers down the left-hand side. If you were taking notes from a book, this is where you'd be putting in page numbers.

- 1 Soc. where all drugs legal = gd. because: freedom of individual.
- 2 Grayling believes: a) 'good life' shd. not depend on 'substances which ... distort reality' b) hard drugs shd. be legal.
- 3 Legal/ illegal drugs used for: pleasure, stress relief, escapism. Both = 'dangerous to health'.
- 4 Only practices that harm soc. or 'unwilling third parties' shd. be illegal. Letting those who 'claim to know ... better' than others to make laws = wrong.
- 5 Same applies to children. Kids more at risk when drugs illegal.

- 6 Drug-taking not prevented by laws. Relaxation of law doesn't change no. of users.
- 7 Prohibition in USA caused increase in crime.
- 8 Organised crime = threat to society: money-laundering, terrorism, vice rings, buying political influence. Ans. = controlled sale of drugs in chemists.
- 9 If addicts got supplies on prescription, petty crime wd. lessen.
- 10 Dangers of overdose on prescription = small.
- 11 If a practice isn't dangerous to soc., it shd. not be illegal. A 'good society' restricts 'interfere[nce] in private behaviour'.
- 12 Some people will suffer from misuse, but hist. shows little damage to soc. as a whole from drug use.
- 13 Freedom of individuals to choose lifestyles = essential in 'good society'.

► Selecting information for a particular essay

In most situations, you won't want to take notes on a whole article or chapter. Let's suppose you've been asked to write an essay with the following title:

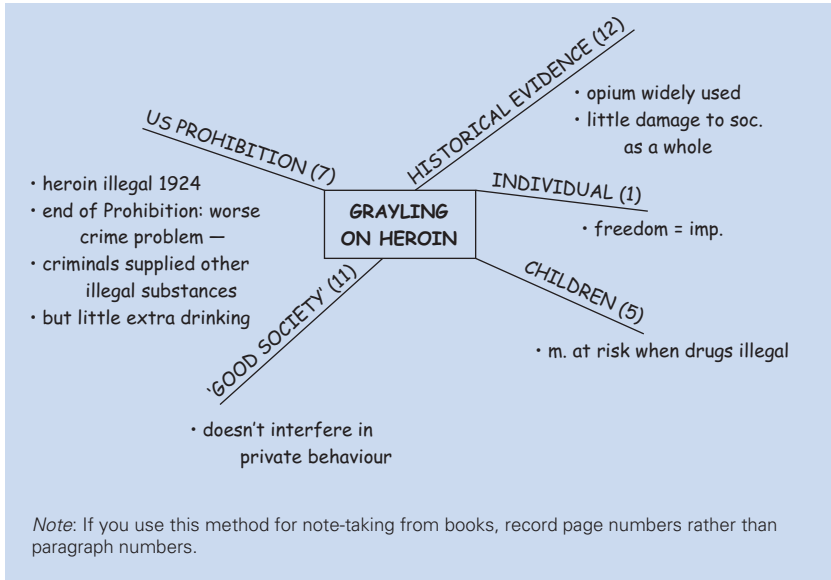
Heroin should be legalised. Discuss.

Your essay would look at facts on drug use, examples, and the views of various professionals and commentators. So if you wanted to mention Grayling, you'd need just his main ideas. You might make the following notes from his article:

- 1 A 'good society' protects freedom of the individual.
- 5 Children more at risk when drugs illegal.
- 6 Prohibition in USA exacerbated crime problem.
- 8 Legal availability through chemists wd. reduce organised crime.
- 11 Gd. soc. restricts 'interfere[nce] in private behaviour'.
- 12 Hist. shows little damage to society as a whole from drug use.

You might, however, prefer to make your notes in the form of a mind map, like the one on the following page.

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At some point, you might like to have a look at *The Mind Map Book* by Tony and Barry Buzan. You'll see how a map can hold a large amount of information and become a valuable tool in your learning process.

Yet another way of organising your information is to put it in the form of a table – something like this:

Grayling on heroin		
'Good Society'	Children	Historical evidence
individual autonomy (1)	more at risk when drugs illegal (5)	lifting Prohibition (US) left: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worse crime problem • no extra drinking (7)
protects third parties (4)		little damage to society from wide use of opium (12)
doesn't interfere in private behaviour (11)		

Note: The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs in the article.

Your essay would be likely to contain a number of facts on heroin use and on medical issues as well as the views of various commentators, and you'd also need to come to a conclusion on the best policy to adopt. If you were in favour of legalising heroin, you might note the reasonableness of Grayling's position and stress his points on less damage to children and the lack of historical evidence showing any harm to society.

If, on the other hand, you became convinced by your reading that heroin should not be legalised, you might still want to refer to Grayling's article because, in order to 'discuss' the proposition on legalisation, you'd need to show a range of views. So you might suggest that there are issues where freedom of the individual must be curtailed and that Grayling's concern about 'interfere[nce] in private behaviour' is misplaced.

SUMMARY

This chapter has covered:

Note-taking in lectures

- how to prepare for a lecture
- techniques for note-taking
- what a page of lecture notes might look like

Analysis

- ask yourself questions
- scan the material
- find key sentences
- look for the argument

Note-taking from written sources

- recording the source
- using your own words
- taking full notes
- choosing points relevant to a specific essay
- linear notes, mind maps and tables

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