

Tips for Effective Lecture Handouts

INTRODUCTION

- We forget 90% of everything said to us in a 24-hour period.
- Information shifts from short-term to long-term memory.
- The best way to jog someone's long-term recall is through a well-prepared handout.
- Handouts can be used to organize information and structure content in a lecture.
- Handouts are an ideal place to put charts/tables too unwieldy for the big screen.



HANDOUT TIPS

- All course handouts should be available on the first day of a unit of instruction.
- State the lecture objectives at the beginning of your handout.
- Avoid the “skeleton” handout where students must write continuously. A structured handout with key concepts and principles is best for learning.
- If using journal articles, guide audience to need-to-know parts by highlighting or underlining relevant sections.
- With powerpoint handouts, print slides three to a page, leaving a column for note-taking.
- Text is made more readable when short paragraphs and white space are used.
- Bold-faced type and italics draw attention to key concepts, but sentences or phrases in all capital letters are not recommended.
- Update your lecture handout each year to improve clarity and to add new knowledge.

HANDOUT GRAPHICS

- Omit colored or shaded backgrounds.
- Replace grays with hatch marks in charts/graphs.
- Print text in solid black.
- Adding borders around visuals defines their edges.
- Table or figure legends should be legible.

Source: *A Handbook for Medical Teachers, 4th Edition., 2001 (Available in OME Library).*