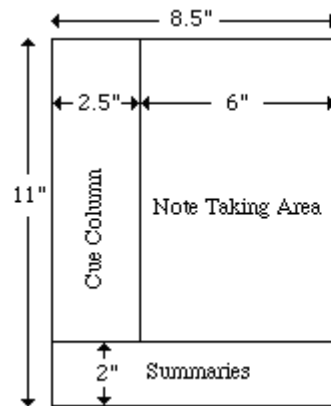


The Cornell Note Taking System



Note Taking Area: Record lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible.

Cue Column: As you're taking notes, keep cue column empty. Soon after the lecture, reduce your notes to concise jottings as clues for Reciting, Reviewing, and Reflecting.

Summaries: Sum up each page of your notes in a sentence or two.

This format provides the perfect opportunity for following through with the **5 R's** of note-taking:

Record

During the lecture, record in the main column as many meaningful facts and ideas as you can. Write legibly.

Reduce

As soon after as possible, summarize these facts and ideas concisely in the Cue Column. Summarizing clarifies meanings and relationships, reinforces continuity, and strengthens memory.

Recite

Cover the Note Taking Area, using only your jottings in the Cue Column, say over the facts and ideas of the lecture as fully as you can, not mechanically, but in your own words. Then, verify what you have said.

Reflect

Draw out opinions from your notes and use them as a starting point for your own reflections on the course and how it relates to your other courses. Reflection will help prevent ideas from being inert and soon forgotten.

Review

Spend 10 minutes every week in quick review of your notes, and you will retain most of what you have learned.

The Cornell Note Taking System

STEP ONE: RECORD

1. Prepare your note paper in the prescribed note-sheet format. Use only one side of each sheet of note paper.
2. Summarize and paraphrase the facts and ideas presented; record definitions as stated.

3. Make headings to indicate changes in topics during the course of the lecture.
4. Use numbering and/or indentation to organize supporting ideas under each heading.
5. Leave some space before each new heading. This allows for editing and addition of information later.
6. Aim for telegraphic sentences and abbreviations. This improves your note taking speed.
7. Write legibly, where possible.
8. Edit as soon as possible because of our rapid rate of forgetting. Ideally, edit your notes immediately after the class; if this is not possible, edit within the same day.

STEP TWO: REDUCE OR QUESTION

- **Reduce.** Reduce each main idea or set of facts into key words or phrases. Write these key phrases in the Recall Clue Column. These recall clues have three related purposes:
 - a. Summarizing information into key phrases tests your comprehension of the information recorded.
 - b. Formulating the recall phrases is a form of the deep processing of information necessary for learning.
 - c. The key phrases function as your memory cues during review sessions.
- **Question.** Instead of key words and phrases, you may formulate test questions. These are questions based on the information recorded in the notes. They serve the same purposes as the recall words and phrases. Write these test questions in the Recall Clue Column.

STEP THREE: RECITE

- 1. Recitation means explaining the information in the notes out loud, in your own words and from memory.
This information is triggered by the recall clues or the test questions in the Recall Clue Column.
- Purposes of Recitation:
 - a. Improves learning: Psychologists who study how the human memory works say that reciting aloud is a powerful technique for implanting information into long-term memory.
 - b. Ensures understanding: Reciting requires that you think about and understand the information you are committing to memory.
 - c. Facilitates retrieval: Understanding and reflecting about information improves information retrieval. Studies show that students who recite tend to do better on tests than students who just read their notes silently.
- Steps in Recitation:
 - a. Cover up the notes in the Record Column.
 - b. Use Recall Clues to stimulate your memory and recite the relevant information.

c. Slide the cover down to check your answers. This gives you immediate feedback how well you have learned and are able to retrieve the information. If you have difficulty recalling the information or if your answers are incorrect or incomplete, learn and then recite again.

STEP FOUR: REFLECT

- Reflection has to do with thinking about the information you are learning.
- One way to reflect is to look for connections with:
 - a. your own personal experiences and observations; and
 - b. other facts and ideas discussed in the course.
- Another way to reflect is to ask questions like :
 - a. How do the main ideas of this lecture fit together into a "bigger picture"?
 - b. How do these ideas fit in with the previous lecture(s)?
 - c. What ideas do I agree with? What ideas do I disagree with?
 - d. Which ideas are clear? Which ideas are confusing?
 - e. What new questions does the information in this lecture raise?
 - f. What are some possible applications of the key points of this lecture?.

STEP FIVE: RECAPITULATE

- Write a recapitulation or summary of the main ideas in the lecture using your own words. The best test of how well you comprehend the information is to recapitulate or summarize.
- 2 kinds of summary are suitable for lecture notes. Choose the one that works best for you.
 - a. Write a summary of each page of lecture notes in the Summary Area at the bottom of each note-sheet.
 - b. Write a summary of the whole lecture on the last note sheet.

STEP SIX: REVIEW

- Two kinds of review are helpful in learning and storing new information.
 1. **Immediate Review:** This takes place when you edit your notes soon after the lecture and when you go through Steps 2 to 4 of the Cornell System.
 2. **Ongoing Review:** This involves scheduling study time each week to review previously learned information. A quick review can be accomplished by reading the page summaries or the lecture summary.
- Two benefits of review stand out:
 - a. You are able to connect the new material with previously learned information.
 - b. You are better prepared for tests and exams. Constant review means you do not have to cram before exams, suffer less from test anxiety, and have better recall of information learned during tests.