

# Helping Students Learn the Cornell Style

Getting students comfortable with Cornell notes includes familiarizing students with the format. The chart below explains the placement of material on a page of notes.

Class \_\_\_\_\_  
Topic \_\_\_\_\_  
Source (lecture, book) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 2) Questions/Main Ideas

This side is always completed after the notes are written on the right.

*Develop questions about the information in the right hand column within 8 hours of taking notes on a lecture or from a book*

*Anticipate what someone might ask about the information in the note column*

*Identify key words and phrases from the right hand column*

*Mark or highlight questions that should be asked of the teacher, tutor or other students*

Review notes regularly  
Use notes as Study Guides

## 3) Summarize the note material

## 1) Notes

When taking notes during class or while reading a book, write in the right hand column

Write in phrases

Write quickly but legibly

Develop an abbreviation system

Leave space between ideas

Leave space for any information missed that can be filled in later

Be selective; don't write verbatim what is said or read

Look for organization of a lecture or book; number or organize information accordingly

Underline important information

Review and revise notes; add/delete information, clarify, organization, swap notes with other students to ensure full coverage of material, highlight and write symbols to indicate important information, add diagrams or cross reference

Cover the right hand column; recite or write out the answers to the questions in the left hand column; check answers with notes and find answers to any new questions

At the bottom of the page, write a summary of the notes

# THE CORNELL NOTETAKING SYSTEM

What are the advantages?

## Three Advantages

1. It is a method for mastering information -- not just recording facts.
2. It is efficient.
3. Each step prepares the way for the next part of the learning process.

What materials are needed?

## Materials:

1. Loose-leaf paper to be kept in binder
2. 2-1/2 inch column drawn at left-hand edge of each page to be used for recall cues

How should notes be recorded?

## During class, record notes:

1. Record notes in paragraphs, skipping lines to separate information logically.
2. Don't force an outlining system, but do use any obvious numbering.
3. Strive to get main ideas down. Facts, details, and examples are important, but they're meaningful only with concepts.
4. Use abbreviations for extra writing and listening time.
5. Use graphic organizers or pictures when they are helpful.

How should notes be refined?

## After class, refine notes:

1. Write questions in the left about the information on the right.
2. Check or correct incomplete items:
  - loose dates, terms, names
  - notes that are too brief for recall months later
3. Read the notes and underline key words and phrases
4. Read underlined words and write in recall cues in the left-hand column (key words and very brief phrases that will trigger ideas/facts on the right). These are in addition to the questions.
5. Write a reflective paragraph about the notes.
6. If possible, compare notes with a study buddy.

What are the ways to recite notes?

## Recite notes three ways:

1. Cover up right side page. Read the questions. Recite information as fully as possible. Uncover the sheet and verify information frequently (single, most powerful learning tool!)
2. Reflect on the organization of all the lectures. Overlap notes and read recall cues. Study the progression of the information. This will stimulate categories, relationships, inferences, and personal opinions/experiences. Record all of these insights!  
REFLECTION -- KEY TO MEMORY!!
3. Review by reciting, reflecting, and reading insights.

What are the five steps of this system?

## This system in brief:

1. Record lectures in the main column
2. Refine lectures with questions, corrections, underlining, recall cues, graphics and pictures
3. Recite by covering main column and expanding on recall cues-then verify
4. Reflect on organization by studying all cues
5. Review by repeating recite and reflect steps