

Advice for Using the Cornell System

Format for notes	<p>Write the date, class, topic of notes, source of notes (e.g., lecture, book, film) and page number (for each page of notes) at the top of a piece of lined paper.</p> <p>Mark a wide left margin (approx. 1/3 of page).</p> <p>Consider the right column the place for specific information. While taking notes, write in this column.</p> <p>Consider the left column the place for study questions.</p> <p>Use abbreviations.</p> <p>Paraphrase (put in your own words) to capture content but simplify writing.</p> <p>Use symbols (arrows, circles, underlining) or highlight important information, ideas/words that are unclear, relationships between ideas/information.</p> <p>Include graphics (e.g., diagrams, charts) when relevant.</p> <p>Skip a line between ideas.</p> <p>Within 24 hours of taking notes, develop your study questions and identify the main ideas for details recorded in the right column; write your study questions/main ideas in the left column. Write a summary at the end of the notes.</p>
Taking Notes: Some Tips	
Be an active listener	<p>Think about what is being said.</p> <p>Think about how what is being said relates to other points in the lecture and ideas from discussion/reading/other subjects.</p> <p>Ask questions.</p>
Be aware of lecturer/ speaker organization	<p>Listen for the speaker to forecast organization of the lecture (e.g., phrases like “Today I want to talk about,” or “By the end of this lecture, you should be convinced that...”)</p> <p>Look for lecture outlines on the board or on handouts. If the speaker uses an outline, record it on the right side of the notes.</p> <p>Use arrows/lines/circles/numbers to connect related ideas.</p>

<p>Use the speaker's style to identify important points</p>	<p>Become familiar with the speaker's style.</p> <p>Listen for important points that might be emphasized when the speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pauses or slows down • repeats a point • modulates the volume of her/his voice • uses introductory phrases (e.g., "The four main points are" or "Note the relationship") • writes on the board • gestures or uses visual aids
<p>Keep up with the speaker</p> <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p><i>Example:</i></p>	<p>Write only the important ideas such as names, places, dates, events, examples, terms, definitions, causes, effects, evaluations, cross references; make it brief, but clear.</p> <p>Speaker says: "Hippocrates, a Greek who is considered to be the Father of Medicine, was born on the island of Cos in 460 B.C."</p> <p>Notes say: "<i>Hippocrates (Gr.) Father of Med. B. Cos 460 B.C.</i>"</p> <p>Use abbreviations for familiar words.</p> <p>Speaker says: "George Washington was not, in a sense, America's first president."</p> <p>Notes say: "<i>G. Wash. Not Am's 1st Pres.?</i>"</p>
<p>Be alert to the speaker's stance</p>	<p>Some lecturers attempt to persuade, as well as inform, listeners; when applicable, note ideas/references/opinions that provide insight into the speaker's point of view.</p>
<p>Review notes shortly after a lecture</p>	<p>Develop study questions and identify main ideas.</p> <p>Fill in details for clarity.</p> <p>Look up and add the definitions of new words/terminology.</p> <p>Identify information that is unclear and/or questions that need to be answered; write and mark questions in the text of notes or at the end where they will be easily found; get answers to the questions from other students and/or the speaker.</p> <p>Add symbols to highlight important ideas and key words.</p> <p>Delete irrelevant information.</p> <p>Review the overall organization of the material; add symbols to make the organization clear or rewrite for clarity, as needed.</p> <p>Write a summary of the significant ideas.</p>
<p>Make use of the format</p>	<p>Spread out or hold notes so that the right side of the page is covered; review ideas and answer study questions from the left column; use specifics on the right side as an answer key. (Important step—this is your single most powerful learning tool!)</p> <p>Engage in an oral quiz with others, using study questions from the left column.</p> <p>Cover the specifics on the right side with blank paper; write answers to the study questions and explanations of the main ideas.</p>

Write

Write summaries of the most important material in the notes.

Write questions you want to ask your teacher.

Write anticipated test questions beyond those already in the left column; write answers to these questions.

Review

Frequently review notes to keep information and unanswered questions fresh in your mind.

Recite information from notes.

Exchange notes with others to flesh out information and understanding.

Use notes in study groups to provide a common ground of material for reference and review.

