

How to use the Cornell Notetaking System

VERY IMPORTANT to understanding the Cornell Notetaking System!

- The Cornell Note System is a method for MASTERING INFORMATION, not just for recording facts.
- It is efficient.
- Each step prepares the way for the next part of the learning process.

Materials:

1. Loose-leaf paper
2. 2 ½ inch column drawn at the left-hand edge of each paper to be used for questions.
3. 3-4 lines left at the bottom of page for summary section.

How should your notes be recorded?

During class, record notes on the right-hand side of the paper:

1. Record your 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 – they save you time
5. Use graphic organizers or pictures when they are helpful

How should notes be refined?

After class, refine your notes:

1. Write questions in the left column 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—fill in the details
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 at the bottom of the page
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 of 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 from the left side. Study the progression of the information. This will stimulate categories, relationships, inferences, personal opinions/experiences. Record all of these insights!
REFLECTION=KEY TO MEMORY!!
3. Review by reciting, reflecting, and reading insights.

What are the six steps of this system?

1. Record your notes in the main column
2. Within 8 hours, read over the notes to fill in gaps and make notes more legible
3. Identify main ideas and write questions in the left-hand column based on main ideas.
4. Recite by covering main column and expanding on recall cues. Then verify.
5. Write a summary at the bottom of the page.
6. Review your notes regularly. Short, fast, frequent reviews will produce better understanding and recall. (Remember what the Forgetting Graph showed!!)