

The Cornell Note-taking System

What are the advantages of using the Cornell note-taking system?

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 is needed to get started?

1. Loose-leaf paper (to be kept in binder).
2. A 2 1/2-inch column at left side of each page (for writing questions and recall cues).
3. A 3-4 line section at bottom of page (for summary).

How should notes be recorded?

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

1. Strive to get main ideas down. Facts, details, and examples are important, but they're meaningful only alongside concepts.
2. Don't force an outlining system, but do use any obvious numbering.
3. Use abbreviations to save time.
4. Use graphic organizers or pictures when they are helpful.
5. Separate blocks of information logically by skipping lines between them.

How do I make my notes more useful?

After class, refine notes:

1. Read your notes and underline key words and phrases.
2. Correct/enhance incomplete items:
 - Loose dates, terms, names.
 - Notes that are too brief for recall months later.
3. Write questions in the left-hand column about the information on the right.
4. Read underlined words and write recall cues in the left-hand column (keywords and very brief phrases that will trigger ideas/facts recorded on the right). Note: These are in addition to your questions.
5. At the bottom of the page, write a summary paragraph about your notes.
6. If possible, compare notes with a study buddy.

Note: If taking Cornell notes electronically, use tools within the program to highlight, edit, and revise. Notes can be submitted electronically to your teacher but should be printed out to ~~use for reviewing~~ ~~be reviewed~~.

What are the best ways to use your notes to prepare for a tutorial, test, etc.?

1. Cover up the right side of the page. Read the questions. Recite the information from memory as fully as possible. Uncover your notes and verify information frequently (single, most powerful learning tool!)
2. Reflect on the organization of all lectures for which you have notes and study the progression of information. Compare these notes and recall cues. (This will prompt categories, relationships, inferences, personal opinions/experiences.) Record all of these insights! REFLECTION = THE KEY TO MEMORY!!
3. Review by reciting, reflecting, and reading insights.

What are the seven steps of the Cornell system?

1. Record notes in the main column (right side of paper).
2. Within 8 hours, read over notes to fill in gaps and to make notes more legible.
3. Identify main ideas and write your questions in the left-hand column.
4. Cover the main column; use your recall cues to recite the information recorded in your notes, and then verify.
5. Write a summary at the bottom of the page.
6. Review your notes regularly. Short, fast, frequent reviews produce better understanding and recall.
7. Use as a study tool.

