

# Cornell Note Taking Method

As a college student you will need to perfect your method of note taking. Accurate and thorough class notes are an important part of your college career. It is essential that you learn how to take notes in class that you will be able to understand later when you study. Learning and utilizing good note taking skills will be an asset that will benefit you throughout your college career and beyond. There are a variety of different ways you can take notes, but the Cornell Note Taking System is a method that is very efficient.

What is the Cornell Note Taking System?

Designed by Walter Pauk of Cornell University, this method of taking notes allows you to take notes that are organized, thorough and easy to understand. The key to this system is that you do not re-write complete sentences, however, you would write down main ideas and use abbreviations instead.

How to use the Cornell System

1) Divide your page into two columns; the cue/keyword column and the note-taking column. Your note-taking column should be about six inches wide while your cue column should be about two to three inches wide. Label your columns as such. Leave room at the bottom of your page for your summaries.

2) Next, you should follow what the method calls "The Five R's".

- **Record:** During class, use the note-taking column to record important ideas and facts. Try not to write out complete sentences, as this will take too much time. Instead use abbreviations or symbols. Be sure to write clearly and even put page numbers for reference to your text later. During this step you should also take the time to summarize your notes. You should leave yourself extra space at the bottom of your page for a brief summary.

- **Reduce:** After class or soon after, go through your notes that you took during class. Summarize them using one or two words. Record these in your cue/keyword column. By reducing large chunks of information into one or two keywords, you are forcing yourself to memorize and learn the information from class.

- **Recite:** Fold your paper in half or cover the note-taking column. Go through the keywords you recorded and try to recall the main ideas of the lecture by using your own words.

- **Reflect:** Go through your notes and think about the significance of the facts or how you can apply them to other facts from your text. Form opinions and relationships with your information.

- **Review:** You should review your notes often. Go through your information for a few minutes each day. This will help you retain the information and be well prepared for upcoming exams.

Of course, some students may have other note-taking methods that they find work better for them. The Cornell method is one that has been used by many students over the past fifty years and is recommended by most professors across the country. After using the Cornell system you will notice that you retain more information from your lectures and your notes are easier to understand when studying for exams.