

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

Studying Using the Cornell Method

Why use the Cornell Method?

- Simply put, the Cornell Method is regarded as the simplest and fastest way of taking notes while still retaining the most amount of information
- The contrasting colours and summary box help to keep information organized and easily accessible
- The format makes it easy to pull out major concepts and ideas
- This method is ideal for people who take notes by hand, but can be modified for people who type their notes as well

You Will Need...

- Loose sheets of paper/notebook (as per your preference)
- Highlighters in varying colours
- Pens/pencils in varying colours (as per your preference)
 - It is a good idea to use grid paper, a blue or black pen, two highlighters and three coloured pens – two of the same colour but in different shades and one in a contrasting colour. If you are already acquainted with colour coding, go ahead and use a few more, but this is the best scheme for basic colour coordination.

The Basics:

- Don't write everything that your professor says – focus on the key points and relevant information
- Reference your material throughout, using page numbers, quotations, and charts and tables
- Use topics and titles for a quick study guide
- Don't rewrite your notes – save this time to study the material instead!
- The Cornell Method uses a special format designed to condense and organize notes without a lot of recopying. Your paper is divided into three parts: a 2" column on the left side; a main note space; and a summary space at the bottom of the page.

Setting Up Your Paper (see graphic, below):

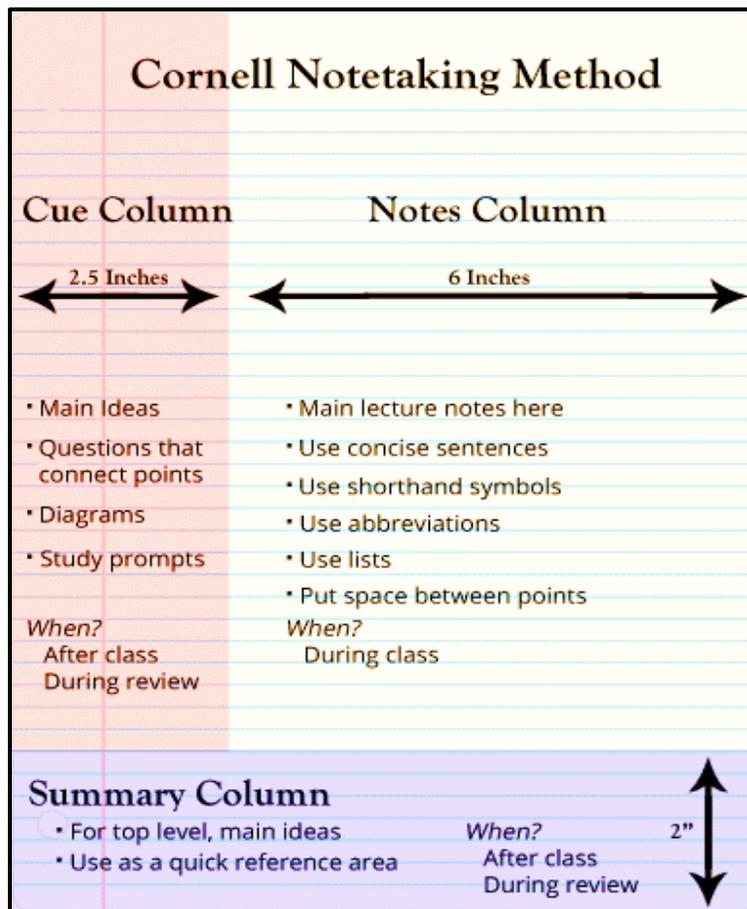
- This method will be using the triple division system
- In the left column, you will write the topics/titles of your material
- After you write your notes in the main space, you can use the left-hand column to label each idea and detail with a key word or "cue." After class, use the space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.
 - You can also write notes such as the professor's recommendations, tidbits that don't fit in the general notes column, reference articles, or reminders about due dates in the left column

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Method (adapted from “Cornell Notes,” 2013):

- **Record** – During class, use the notetaking column to record the lesson using simple sentences that express ideas using only the most necessary words.
- **Question** – After class, formulate questions based on the notes in the notetaking column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, and strengthen memory; as well, by writing questions, you leave yourself a good tool for later review and study.
- **Recite** – Cover the notetaking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the left column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to your prompts.
- **Reflect** – Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: What’s the significance of this information? How can I apply what I’ve learned? How does this learning fit with what I already know? What should I investigate next?
- **Review** – Spend time each week reviewing all your previous notes. Frequent review is much more powerful than a long cramming session.



References:

- Cornell Notes. (2013). Retrieved November 23, 2016, from <http://www.donthetutor.com/success-tips/note-taking>
- Cornell Notemaking Method [Electronic Image]. (2015). Retrieved from https://www.reddit.com/r/coolguides/comments/3yb07x/cornell_notemaking_method/?st=ivv19c7v&sh=9974afc8