

Note Taking: Cornell Method

The Cornell note-taking method is a five-step process that walks you through three important stages: 1) taking your notes, 2) modifying your notes for more effective studying, and 3) reviewing and studying from your notes.

Goal

Using this method with both your textbook and lecture notes will allow you to take more accurate, detailed notes to study from without the need to go back to your textbook to look up additional information.

How to Use

Draw a vertical line 2.5 inches from the left side of a loose-leaf piece of paper; this will serve as the recall column (a place to add keywords and study questions after taking notes). Notes will be taken to the right of this section, in the record column, either directly from your assigned textbook readings or your lectures.

• **Step 1: Record**

Record important information that you will need to know for assignments or tests in the larger, right-hand column. Use headings to separate different ideas and to keep your notes organized. Avoid recording your notes word for word and using words or phrases that will lose their meaning over time.

• **Step 2: Reduce**

In this column, condense the notes that you took during lecture or from your textbook, essentially creating a study guide for future use. Carry over the headings you used in the record column to serve as a topical guide during your studying; then write brief study questions or keywords to answer or define during your studying.

• **Step 3: Recite**

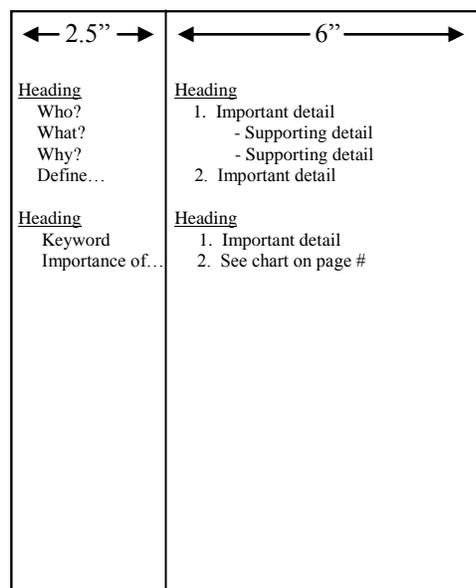
Cover the record column containing your detailed notes and read aloud the study questions or keywords you added to the recall column, answering or defining them as you go along. Pull down the paper covering the record column as you progress to check your accuracy; adjust the information in your recall column if necessary.

• **Step 4: Reflect**

This step can be individualized and include many different activities and study tools, so long as you allow yourself to really think about the information in your notes. For example, you can overlap the recall columns of your notes to gain a better sense of the overall structure of your subject or write a brief summary of your notes, tying all ideas together in a short paragraph.

• **Step 5: Review**

Review your notes by reading over the record column and then answering the study questions or keywords found in the recall column. Repeat this process until you feel confident that you know the information well enough to do well on all assignments and the test.



Adapted from: Wong, L. (2006). *Essential study skills* (5th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.