

CORNELL NOTES

Cornell notes originated at Cornell University. This notetaking system was adopted because it was originally created to help students be successful in college. The Cornell notetaking system is based on research done in the area of memory and learning theory. It is a very valuable system because it takes students through the cycle of learning. It is much more than just a way to record information. Teaching Cornell notes will take time, but what we have learned is that by the time students leave high school and get into college, it is one of the most valued skills they take with them. Notetaking is considered a skill and therefore will improve with time and practice. In addition, the Cornell notetaking system incorporates what students do with their notes once they have taken them. By using Cornell notes consistently, students learn to see writing as a tool for learning. Some teachers have their own way of having students take notes. For example, if a teacher wants students to use an outline, a graphic organizer, or a mind map, all that can be written on the right-hand side. The left-hand column can still be used for questions and the bottom section for a summary.

The Cornell Notetaking System

What are the advantages?

Three Advantages:

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 materials are needed?

Materials:

1. Loose-leaf paper to be kept in binder.
2. 2½ inch column drawn at 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 notes be recorded?

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

1. Record 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 for extra writing and listening time.
5. Use graphic organizers or pictures when they are helpful.

How should notes be refined?

After class, refine 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.
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.

