



# NOTE TAKING FOR LECTURES

## Do your lecture notes make sense? Do they accurately reflect the lecture?

Why should you take notes?

- To differentiate the relevant from the less relevant
- To focus and maintain attention during class (Listening attentively for important points will keep you awake.)
- To enhance storage of information in memory (Writing helps internalize information.)
- To build connections between the new and what you already know
- To provide a written record for review (You'll always have materials to study for the test.)

## General Tips for Taking Notes During Lectures

Be prepared	<p><b>Before lecture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anticipate the topics and predict what the professor is going to say</li> <li>2. Ask yourself what you already know about the topic</li> </ol>
Listen and pay attention	<p><b>During the lecture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen with purpose and expectation</li> <li>2. Attend to cues that show importance: cue words, voice inflection, repetition, summaries</li> </ol>
Develop a system that works for you	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Develop a system to note key ideas, concepts, definitions</li> <li>4. Use abbrev. and symbols – make sure you know what they mean!</li> <li>5. Leave blank spaces for information missed and then ask a student or the professor to help fill in the blanks</li> <li>6. Write more than you think you need to know – more info is better than less</li> <li>7. Take notes continuously in class – you never know what will be on the test or what you'll need later!</li> <li>8. Write down ideas, themes, concepts and not just the cold, hard facts</li> <li>9. Listen for reasons and evidence that support those facts and concepts</li> <li>10. Be active – Ask questions!</li> </ol>
Review & Summarize	<p><b>After the lecture</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review as soon as possible to add or clarify information</li> <li>2. Summarize! This is very important! It will make essay writing and essay tests easier.</li> <li>3. Highlight important ideas</li> </ol>
Ask questions!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Make note of any questions you have so you can ask them in class or in the professor's office hours</li> <li>5. Gather all your resources – review notes from texts, classmates, labs, etc. daily, weekly and pre-exam</li> </ol>
<b>Summary:</b>	

**Depending on the class and the type of information, there are different ways to take notes:**

**1) Outlining**

Outlining works well for organized lectures and in classes where the professor passes out an outline or writes main topics on the board.

Indenting the lines indicates the relationship or hierarchy of ideas. Don't worry about the rules of outlining (i.e., roman numerals, etc.). No need to write complete sentences

**2) M - A - P - P - I - N - G**

This method of diagramming ideas, facts, or concepts illustrates their relationships using boxes, circles and lines. Mapping is a great way to visually show relationships and create memory cues.

Examples:

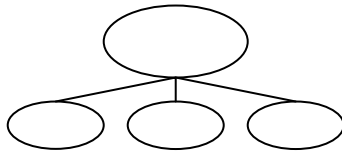
Sequence:



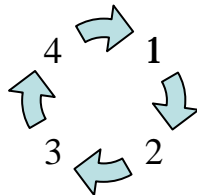
Comparison & contrast:

x	y

Web:



Cycle:



**3) Summarizing**

A summarization is a synopsis of the most important points in your own words. Stay 5 - 10 minutes after class and write the summary. This works well for seminars in which students participate in lively discussions but can't take consistent notes.

**4) Cornell Method (see next page)**

## The Cornell Method of Note Taking for Lectures

The Cornell Method for note taking is an efficient and organized method for taking notes during class. Write the topic and date at the top of the page. On a divided sheet of paper, write lecture notes on the right-hand side (Note Taking Column). Take notes on only the front side of the page. After lecture, reduce the notes to key ideas on the left-hand side (Cue Column). Summarize the page of notes at the bottom of the page.

Pre-printed notepads for the Cornell Method are available in the Wellesley College Bookstore. You can also make your own note sheets by folding paper lengthwise with the crease approximately 2.5" from the left side.

### ***Front side of paper:***

<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">CUE COLUMN</div> <p>Organize into 2 columns</p> <p>Note taking steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide paper</li> <li>2. Write heading</li> <li>3. Take notes</li> <li>4. Write key ideas</li> <li>5. Summarize page</li> <li>6. Use back side of page for questions, re-organization, practice</li> </ol>	<div style="text-align: right;"> <p>The Cornell Method of Note Taking March 2, 2005 pg. 1</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 250px; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">NOTE TAKING COLUMN</div> <p>Cornell System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized, efficient, 2-column system for taking notes</li> <li>• Provides active involvement with notes after class</li> <li>• Encourages frequent review</li> </ul> <p>How to take notes using the Cornell System:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Divide note paper into two sections: approx. 2.5" on left and 6" on right</li> <li>2. Write subject, date and pg #'s at top</li> <li>3. During lecture, take notes on right side of page (Note Taking Column)             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use only one side of paper</li> <li>b. Takes notes in a format with which you are most comfortable</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Immediately after lecture, write key ideas on the left side (Cue Column)</li> <li>5. Write a summary (2-4 words) of the entire page's contents at the bottom of the page. Summarizing forces you to place facts in larger relationships, giving overall meaning to your notes.</li> <li>3. On the back side of the page:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Note questions - Write questions you might have or questions that might appear on a test</li> <li>b. Reorganize the info - Organize ideas into more manageable forms using maps, charts, etc.</li> <li>c. Practice - Written rehearsal is as important as oral rehearsal</li> <li>d. Relationships - Note relationships between ideas and between new info and info you already knew</li> <li>e. Paper topics or ideas - Keep track of possible paper topic ideas or ideas to include in assignments</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p>Summary in 2-4 words</p>	

*(This information was adapted from Pauk, W. (1993). How to study in college. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.)*

***Back of paper:***

- Do not take lecture notes on the back sides of pages. Reserve the back side of the page for questions to ask professors, paper topic ideas, re-organization of ideas onto maps, and generation of questions that might be on tests, etc.
  
- Use this space for:
  - 1) Questions – two kinds
    - a) Confusions  
(If you write down your questions, you will be more focused when you meet with your professor or a tutor.)
    - b) General questions that might be on a test  
(During office hours ask the professor if this is the type of question he or she might ask.)
  - 2) Ideas on topics for papers  
(Especially good for courses with assignments that focus on writing)
  - 3) Practice  
(Studying for tests is about review, repetition, rehearsal. Do them in written form as well as in your mind)
  - 4) Creating maps or graphic organizers (These show relationships among ideas and create memory cues. See back of front page of handout for examples.)