



NOTE-TAKING AND IN-CLASS SKILLS

Adequate notes are a necessary adjunct to efficient study and learning in college. Think over the following suggestions and improve your note-taking system where needed.

1. Listen actively - if possible think before you write - but don't get behind.
2. Be open minded about points you disagree on. Don't let arguing interfere with your note-taking.
3. Raise questions if appropriate.
4. Develop and use a standard method of note-taking including punctuation, abbreviations, margins, etc.
5. Take and keep notes in a large notebook. The only merit to a small notebook is ease of carrying and that is not your main objective. A large notebook allows you to adequately indent and use an outline form.
6. Leave a few spaces blank as you move from one point to the next so that you can fill in additional points later if necessary. Your objective is to take helpful notes, not to save paper.
7. Do not try to take down everything that the lecturer says. It is impossible in the first place and unnecessary in the second place because not everything is of equal importance. Spend more time listening and attempt to take down the main points. If you are writing as fast as you can, you cannot be as discriminating a listener. There may be some times, however, when it is more important to write than to think.
8. Listen for cues as to important points, transition from one point to the next, repetition of points for emphasis, changes in voice inflections, enumeration of a series of points, etc.
9. Many lecturers attempt to present a few major points and several minor points in a lecture. The rest is explanatory material and samples. Try to see the main points and do not get lost in a barrage of minor points which do not seem related to each other. The relationship is there if you will listen for it. Be alert to cues about what the professor thinks is important.
10. Make your original notes legible enough for your own reading, but use abbreviations of your own invention when possible. The effort required to recopy notes can be better spent in rereading them and thinking about them. Although neatness is a virtue in some respect, it does not necessarily increase your learning.
11. Copy down everything on the board, regardless. Did you ever stop to think that every blackboard scribble may be a clue to an exam item? You may not be able to integrate what is on the board into your lecture notes, but if you copy it, it may serve as a useful clue for you later. If not, what the heck -- you haven't wasted anything. You were in the classroom anyway.
12. Sit as close to the front of the class, there are fewer distractions and it is easier to hear, see and attend to important material.
13. Get assignments and suggestions precisely - ask questions if you're not sure.

The Cornell Note Taking System





Recall Column

-----2 1/2"-----	-----6"-----
<p>Reduce ideas and facts to concise jottings and summaries as cues for Reciting, Reviewing, and Reflecting.</p>	<p>Record the lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible.</p>

The format provides the perfect opportunity for following through with the 5 R's of note-taking. Here they are:

- 1. Record.** During the lecture, record in the main column as many meaningful facts and ideas as you can. Write legibly.
- 2. Reduce.** As soon after as possible, summarize these ideas and facts concisely in the Recall Column. Summarizing clarifies meanings and relationships, reinforces continuity, and strengthens memory. Also, it is a way of preparing for examinations gradually and well ahead of time.
- 3. Recite.** Now cover the column, using only your jottings in the Recall Column as cues or "flags" to help you recall, say over facts and ideas of the lecture as fully as you can, not mechanically, but in your own words and with as much appreciation of the meaning as you can. Then, uncovering your notes, verify what you have said. This procedure helps to transfer the facts and ideas of your long term memory.
- 4. Reflect.** Reflective students distill their opinions from their notes. They make such opinions the starting point for their own musings upon the subjects they are studying. Such musings aid them in making sense out of their courses and academic experiences by finding relationships among them. Reflective students continually label and index their experiences and ideas, put them into structures, outlines, summaries, and frames of reference. They rearrange and file them. Best of all, they have an eye for the vital-for the essential. Unless ideas are placed in categories, unless they are taken up from time to time for re-examination, they will become inert and soon forgotten.
- 5. Review.** If you will spend 10 minutes every week or so in a quick review of these notes, you will retain most of what you have learned, and you will be able to use your knowledge currently to greater and greater effectiveness.

