

Academic Advising

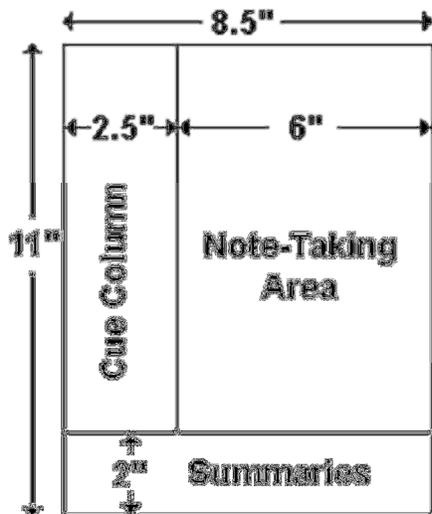
CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM

What is the Cornell System?

There is no “right way” to take notes in class. However, one note-taking system you might find effective is called the Cornell System, which was designed by Walter Pauk, emeritus, at Cornell University. To use this system you will need a large loose-leaf binder that allows you to insert class handouts, rearrange notes easily, and remove notes to spread them out and study.

Page layout

The distinguishing feature of the Cornell System is the layout of the page on which you take your notes (see diagram). The page layout includes a note-taking area and large margins on the left and bottom of the page. This format is helpful in recording, reviewing and clarifying information from class. Each section should be clearly marked on your page.



Note-taking area

The space to the right of the vertical margin is where you actually record your notes during the lecture. Pick a note-taking format with which you are comfortable, but remember that you should:

- keep notes for each course in a separate binder
- begin a new page for each lecture
- date and number each page of notes
- use phrases instead of sentences
- use words instead of phrases
- indent to distinguish major and minor points
- use your own words (however, formulas, definitions and facts should be noted exactly)
- use abbreviations and symbols (like texting)
- if you miss information, leave a blank space
- clear up missing information by consulting your teacher, your textbook or a classmate

Cue (recall) column

The space to the left of the vertical margin is the cue (or recall) column. The cue column is not created until you **review** your notes (which you should do as soon possible after the lecture). As you study the material, devise questions which the notes answer; these questions are the "cues" that should be written in the cue column. By writing questions, you are forced to think about the material in a way that clarifies meaning, reveals relationships, establishes continuity, strengthens memory, and attempts to predict exam items.

Summaries (reduce)

The area below the horizontal margin near the bottom of the page should be reserved for a summary of that page. A summary is, at most, only a few sentences. In your own words, provide a concise review of the important material on the page. In writing a summary, you are forced to view the material in a way that allows you to see how it all fits together, in a general sense.

To learn more, read Pauk's book, *How to Study in College*, available at the Marianopolis College Library.