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# NOTE TAKING

It is not enough to sit down, open your notebook, and doodle in the margins as your teacher is lecturing! The quality of your notes is directly related to the grade you receive in the class. Some students find note taking difficult because they have difficulty listening (which is addressed in the next section). As you can see memorization and review, note taking, and listening are all connected. This section will provide you with note taking tips as a starting point for good note taking habits.

**Remember: your notes contain valuable clues as to what information your teacher thinks is important.**

## *Basic Note Taking Tips*

- Buy notebooks that will help you organize your work. For example: separate notebook and folder for each class, three ring binder with loose leaf (this allows you to add handouts if necessary), or a multiple subject notebook.
- Sit in the front of class; you'll be able to hear, see, and pay better attention to the teacher.
- Put a header and date on your notes.
- If possible, review the text or material before your class so that the ideas will already be familiar to you.
- Use the left-hand margin to summarize key concepts of your notes.
- Use color or highlighters to emphasize key points or conclusions (but don't go overboard).
- Draw pictures that represent different ideas in your notes.
- Leave lots of blank space where you can write questions, themes or ideas after you've taken your notes (see Cornell Note Outlines below).
- Use a consistent form or outline so that you can easily navigate your notes.
- Write your own reflections to help you connect your notes with your thoughts.
- If the teacher writes something on the board, repeats a phrase or idea, or emphasizes something, always write it down.

- Use, review, revise, add to your notes daily; you'll remember more and understand the material better.
- Write legibly.
- Listen carefully and pay attention to changes in pitch, tone, movements, and gestures: all these are clues to the importance of what your teacher is saying and what you should be writing.

### *Fast-Talking Teacher Tips*

- Use abbreviations to help you keep up with the teacher. Make up your own if you have to!
- Be selective: DO NOT try writing a word for word dictation.
- Don't be concerned with spelling and grammar—for your own notes, this is fine, just don't practice this when writing an essay paper!
- Use numbers and symbols in replace of words.
- Write down any questions you have.
- If you miss something or fall behind, leave a space and ask the teacher or a classmate later on.

**Above All:** If your professor lectures faster than the speed of light, speak up. This may take some courage, but I guarantee that every other student in the class is thinking the same thing. Raise your hand or say “excuse me”, then ask your professor to repeat what you missed. Incomplete notes are useless to you.

### *Abbreviations*

Here are some abbreviations used in lecture notes; there are more on the following page.

**sol'n** = solution  
**ie** = therefore  
**prob** = problem  
**abs** = absolute  
**impr** = improve  
**kn** = know  
**¶** = paragraph

**=** = equals or equal  
**w** = with  
**imp** = important  
**th** = theory  
**sq.rt.** = square root  
**mult** = multiply  
**vol** = volume

### *More Abbreviations*

**kdge** = knowledge

**V** = volume or velocity

**-** = Minus

**+** = Plus

**sg** = Something

**ng** = Nothing

**ag** = Anything

**&** = And

**F** = Women, Females

**M** = Men, Males

**1/2** = One half

**->** = Leads to, results in

**2x** = (3x, 10x, etc.) Twice as  
large, two times as many

**re** = About

**pg** = Page(s)

**eg** = For example

**ref** = Reference

**ch** = chapter

**no.** or **#** = number

**et al** = Others

**phil** = Philosophy, Psychology

**gov't** = Government

**sci** = Science

**xn(ty)** = Christian (ity)

**pl** = Political

**wk** = Week

**yr** = Year

**b** = But

**tk** = Take

**w/o** = Without

**w/i** = Within

**w/x** = With the exception of

**rd** = Read

**hw** = Homework

**J, jnl** = Journal

## Cornel Note Taking Formats

	Name Date Page 1
	Note Taking
Why take notes?	Take notes: to remember, stay awake, help me study, enhance concentration
What is included in good notes?	Good notes include: main pts., imp. terms, topic, definitions, date, my name, class name, abbreviations, graphics, diagrams, blank space
What skills are needed?	Skills needed: listening, concentration, legibility, organization
What are some note-taking structures?	Common structures: outline, modified outline, diagram/Mindmaps, summary/paragraph, matrix, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ or Recall (Cornell Method)
How can I review my notes?	Ways to review notes: out loud, quiz, rewrite, list main ideas, rework, place in chronological order, make test, create questions
Important Terms: Blank space, main terms, Mindmaps, matrix, $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ or Recall (Cornell), review	

# Cornell Notes

Name

Date

Topic

Course

Here, in the Connections Column, write one or more of the following:

- Questions
- Vocabulary Words
- Review
- Connections
- Reminders

Here, write down major points and important information.

Make sure you leave room in the Connections Column so you can add notes and test review questions later on when studying.

Here, write down one of the following:

- Summary of what you learned (in your own words)
- The five most important points of the lecture
- Questions you still need answered

### *Visuals and Note Taking*

Creating visuals are a powerful way of note taking, studying, review, and memorization. Making and using a visual forces you to be an active learner, rather than a passive one. Visuals force you to think! There are three basic types of note taking visuals: Question Charts, Key Word Diagrams, and Idea Pictures.

#### *How to Build a Question Chart*

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1. Write the Summary Question (at the top of your paper) asking the purpose or topic of the chart.
2. Place ITEMS to be compared across the top of your paper and QUESTIONS down the left.
3. Write your questions down the left-hand side that apply to all items. (All items must be in a category you can name and the questions must apply to all items.)
4. Write complete questions.
5. Complete the chart by writing key words/phrases in the cells (boxes).
6. Include references in the cells as to where in your lecture notes and texts additional information can be found.

\*See following page for an example.

## What are some relevant facts about these new cars?

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Neon   Escort   Metro   Jeep   Golf   Tercel

What's the cost?

How long is the warranty?

How comprehensive is the warranty?

How do I rate the appearance?

What safety features are there?

What's the mileage per gallon?

What's the reputation for body durability?

What's the reputation for engine durability?

What are scheduled maintenance?

### *Why are Question Charts beneficial?*

- They involve all four skills of successful learners. Successful learners ask questions, get feedback, break down tasks, and set goals.
- A single Question Chart provides the answers to many multiple choice questions.
- They are another form of reviewing your notes in order to commit the information to long term memory.

### *How to Make a Key Word Diagram*

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1. Write an essay question from your notes or readings.
2. Using your notes, list the key words that answer your question.
3. Draw a diagram that helps you see the connections among your key words, a diagram which hopefully “triggers” the whole answer for you. (It may be difficult at first to come up with a diagram, but the more you make, the easier it will become. Most Key Word Diagrams are silly, but they work!)
4. Test yourself often by writing your Diagrams from memory.
5. Use your Diagrams to write an essay question. Check off each key word from your Diagram as you use it in your essay.

### *Key Word Diagram Examples*

#### *The Pro/Con T*

Should we have capital punishment in Michigan?

PRO	CON
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#### *The Compare/Contrast Key Word Diagram*

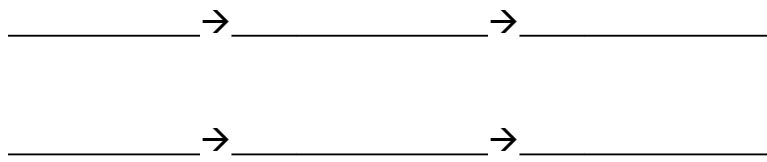
What are some similarities and differences between baseball and football?

Similarities

Differences

*The Chain of Events Diagram*

Discuss the main events in the founding of the United States of America.



*The Cause/Effect Diagram*

Why do pianos often go “out of key” in humid weather?



***Why are Key Word Diagrams beneficial?***

- They associate pictures with writing to imprint the ideas and facts into your memory.
- They are easy and personal. The sillier they are, the easier you’ll recall them.
- You can easily write these in the margins of your notes for review later on.

## How to Make Idea Pictures

1. Make these from notes you have already taken (it's easier this way).
2. Write a new term or idea in the center of your paper.
3. Build associated terms around the central idea, then link them together.
4. Practice saying your terms aloud.
5. Draw the Idea Picture on a scrap piece of paper during the test so you can reference it. (Make sure you ask your professor first so he/she doesn't think you are cheating!)

### *Examples*



