

# Taking Effective Notes

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Dr. Idna M. Corbett  
Learning Assistance and Resource Center  
West Chester University

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- @ Learning to take notes effectively helps you to improve study and work habits and to remember important information.
  - @ Often, you are deceived into thinking that because you **understand** everything that is said in class you will therefore remember it. This is dead wrong! Write it down.
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- @ The secret to developing this skill is practice.
  - @ You should strive to improve this skill constantly.



# There are many reasons for taking lecture notes

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- @ Taking notes forces you to listen carefully and test your understanding of the material.
  - @ When you are reviewing, notes provide a gauge to what is important in the text.
  - @ Personal notes are usually easier to remember than the text.
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- @ The writing down of important points helps you to remember them even before you have studied the material formally.
  - @ Notes enable you to retain important facts and data and to develop an accurate means of arranging necessary information.
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# Instructors usually give clues to what is important

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Some of the more common clues are:

- @ Material written on the blackboard
  - @ Repetition
  - @ Emphasis
    - Emphasis can be judged by tone of voice and gesture.
    - Emphasis can be judged by the amount of time the instructor spends on points and the number of examples he or she uses.
  - @ Word signals (e.g. "There are two points of view on..." "The third reason is..." "In conclusion...")
  - @ Summaries given at the end of class.
  - @ Reviews given at the beginning of class.
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# Cornell System of Note-Taking

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- @ The Cornell Method of note making is a 2-column system of making notes.
  - @ Making notes, as distinguished from taking notes, is the active process you engage in to think about the information you are describing.
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# The 6 R's of the Cornell Method

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@ Record

@ Reduce

@ Recite

@ Reflect

@ Review

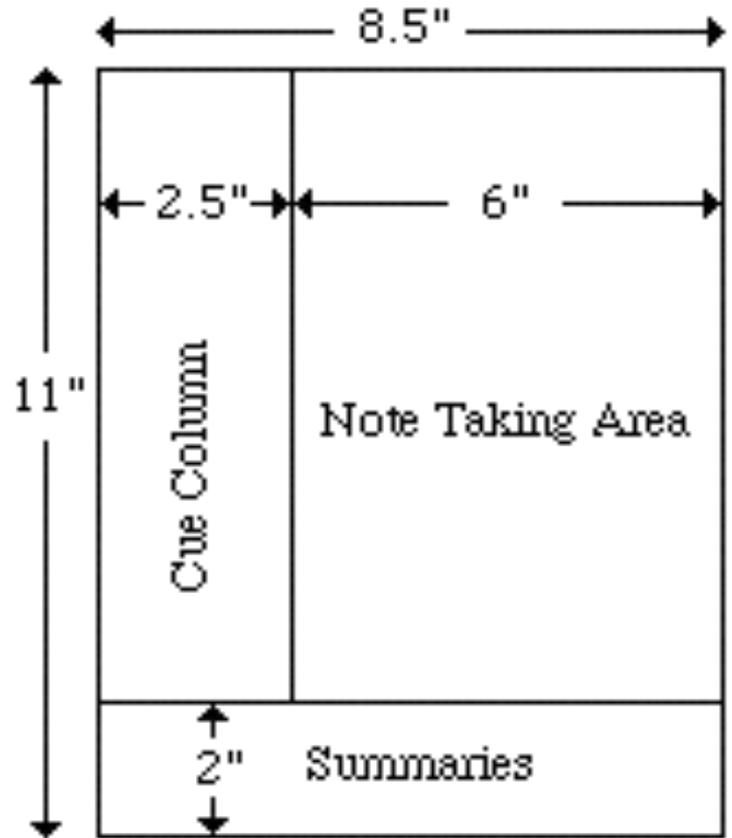
@ Recapitulate

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# Step One: Preparing the System

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- @ Use a large loose-leaf notebook on which you will have ample room to take notes.
- @ Draw a vertical line down the left side of the page 2 1/2" from the left margin. This is the Recall Column.
- @ Notes will be recorded to the right of this line and key words and phrases will be written on the left.
- @ Leave 2" at the bottom of the page to record questions to ask your instructor and possible test questions.



# Step Two: During the Lecture

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- @ Date your notes.
  - @ Number the pages.
  - @ Record your notes in your customary style. Your object is to make your notes complete and clear enough so they will have meaning for you weeks later.
  - @ Skip lines to show the end of one idea and the beginning of the next.
  - @ Write as legibly as possible.
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- @ Don't write down everything that you read or hear. Be alert and attentive to the main points. Concentrate on the "meat" of the subject and forget the trimmings.
  - @ Make notes brief. Never use a sentence where you can use a phrase. Never use a phrase where you can use a word.
  - @ Use abbreviations and symbols, but be consistent. Have a uniform system of punctuation and abbreviation that will make sense to **you**.
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- @ You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. If you quote **directly** from an author, quote **correctly**.
  - @ The following should be noted exactly: formulas, definitions, and specific facts.
  - @ Use outline form and/or a numbering system. Indention helps you distinguish major from minor points.
  - @ Leave lots of white space for later additions. If you miss a statement, write key words, skip a few spaces, and get the information later.
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- @ Don't try to use every space on the page. Leave room for coordinating your notes with the text after the lecture.
  - @ List key terms in the margin or make a summary of the contents of the page.
  - @ Omit descriptions and full explanations. Keep your notes short and to the point. Condense your material so you can grasp it rapidly.
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# Step Three: After the Lecture

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- @ Since the most forgetting occurs immediately after learning, try to consolidate your notes as soon after class as possible.
  - @ **Reduce** the notes to key words and phrases as soon after the lecture as possible.
  - @ During your study session, reread your notes and rethink the entire lecture. Then reduce each fact and idea in your notes to the key words and phrases used.
  - @ Formulate a question that your notes answer.
  - @ In the margin to the left, write the key words or the question opposite the facts in your notes. These notations in the margin will act as triggers to your memory when you study.
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- @ **Recite** the lecture by covering your notes and using only the key words/questions column.
  - @ Say each fact or idea in your notes aloud and from memory.
  - @ Recite aloud and in your own words the full facts and ideas brought to mind by the cue or trigger words or question. Then check your answer.
  - @ Correct yourself if necessary and repeat until you can recall the information.
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- @ **Reflect** on the material by adding your own ideas and opinions. Reflection has to do with thinking about the information you are learning.
  - @ One way to reflect is the look for connections with
    - your own personal experiences and observations; and
    - other facts and ideas discussed in the course.
  - @ Another way to reflect is to ask questions like
    - How do the main ideas of this lecture fit together into a "bigger picture"? What is the significance?
    - How do these ideas fit in with the previous lecture(s)?
    - What ideas do I agree with? What ideas do I disagree with?
    - Which ideas are clear? Which ideas are confusing?
    - What new questions does the information in this lecture raise?
    - What principles are applicable?
    - What are some possible applications of the key points of this lecture?
    - How does this fit with what you already know?
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# Don't forget the sixth R!

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- @ **Review** your notes every evening, before you settle down to study.
  - @ Try to review at least 10 minutes to assure retention of the material. Short, fact and frequent reviews will produce far better understanding than studying all night.
  - @ Two benefits of review stand out:
    - You are able to connect the new material with previously learned information.
    - You are better prepared for tests and exams. Constant review means you do not have to cram before exams, suffer less from test anxiety, and have better recall of information learned during tests.
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# Saving time on note-taking

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- @ Some students say that they plan to rewrite or type their notes later.
  - @ To do so is to use a double amount of time: once to take the original notes and a second to rewrite them.
  - @ The advice is simple: **DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!**
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# Should you use shorthand?

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- @ There are some students who attempt to take notes in shorthand. Though shorthand is a valuable tool for a secretary, it is almost worthless for a student doing academic work. Here's why.
- Notes in shorthand cannot be studied in that form. They must first be transcribed.
  - The act of transcribing notes takes an inordinate amount of time and energy but does not significantly contribute to their mastery.
  - It is far better to have taken the notes originally in regular writing and then spend the time after that in direct study and **recitation** of the notes.
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# Tape recording notes

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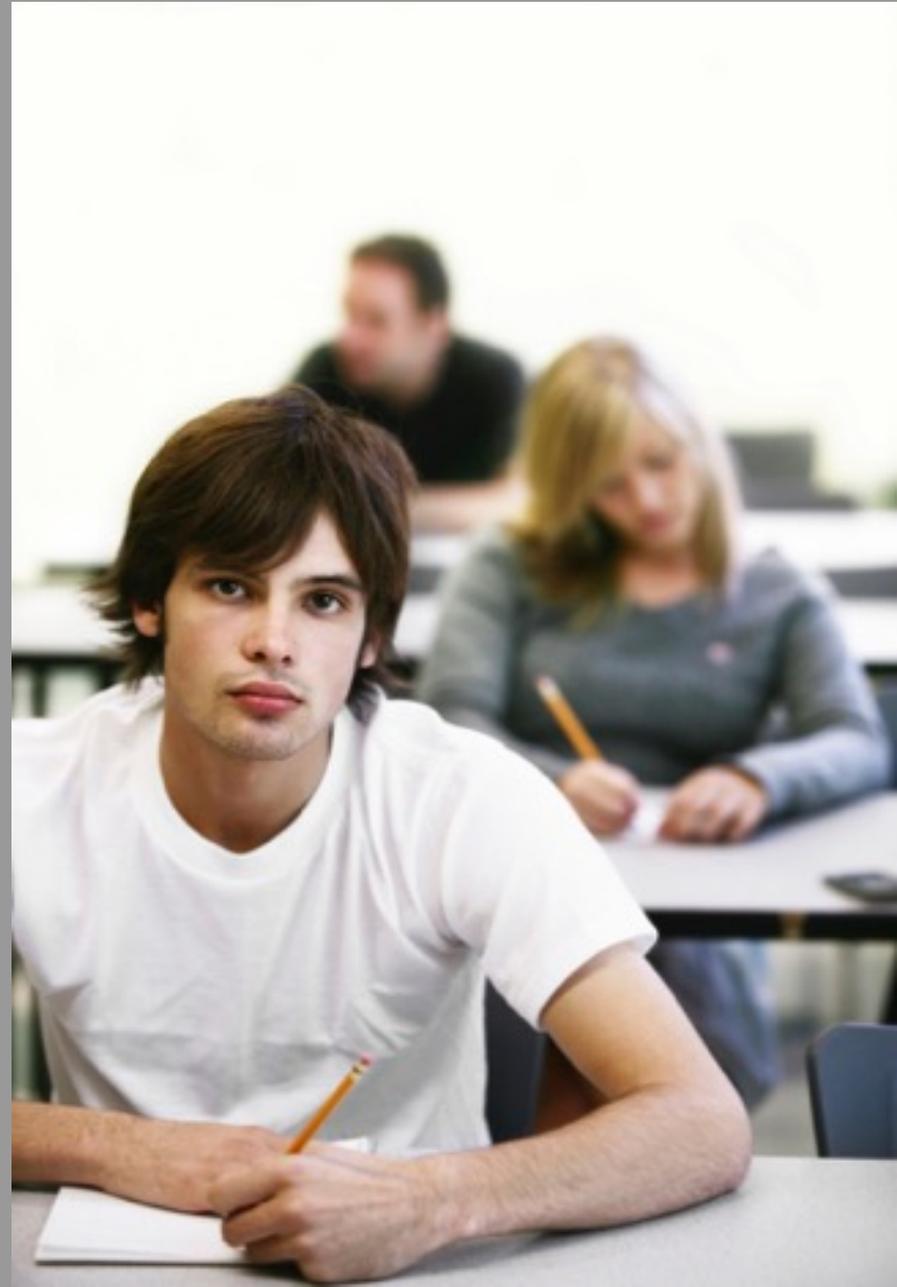
- @ The lecture on tape precludes flexibility.
  - @ The lecture on tape has to be listened to in its entirety including the worthwhile points as well as the "fillers."
  - @ If you take the easy way out - recording the lecture on tape as you sit back doing nothing - will box you into inflexibility.
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- @ Whereas, handwritten notes may be studied selectively.
  - @ Immediately after taking notes you can study them in five minutes before the next class as you walk toward the next building, as you drink your coffee, or energy drink.
  - @ , in looking over your notes, may decide that the notes contain only four worthwhile ideas which you can highlight, relegating the rest of the lecture to obscurity.
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- Method that has been successfully used in college classes and the military
- Air force trainees were able to score at least **95 percent** on a 100-question, closed book test using triple highlighting
- **Yellow highlighter** is used to record what **you** determine to be important information in the chapter—don't highlight what you already know
- **Blue highlighter** is used to record important points emphasized by **instructor** during the lecture



- Use your lecture notes to highlight what your instructor thinks is important in **blue**
- **Pink highlighter** is used to answer **questions** at the beginning or end of the chapter
- These answers are what the author has determined important
- **Triple highlighted** information is most important and most likely to be on your test
- **Reread everything** that is highlighted with **all three colors** because you most likely have the important information triple highlighted





**That's All!**