CORNELL NOTES

Saddleback College
Reading Lab
Please take a moment to consider if any of the following statements apply to you...

1. I can’t write down everything the instructor says because she/he talks too fast.
2. The notes I take are often disorganized and hard to understand.
3. I have difficulty taking notes because I get distracted.
4. I spend more time making flash cards than studying them.
Most college students answer “Yes” to at least one of the preceding statements.

Taking good notes is key to succeeding in college.

- Studies show that you will forget 80% of what you hear in two weeks, and 95% will be gone in four weeks!

- Note taking is one of the most effective ways to retain information given during a lecture.

- Your notes can be used as a study guide for tests.
Note Taking Do’s

- Attend all lectures and sit in the front.
- Use a large, loose-leaf binder.
- Write on only one side of the page.
- Write in your own words and include ideas as well as facts.
- Skip lines and leave space between ideas.
- Develop your own abbreviations and symbols.
Note Taking Don’ts

- Don’t sit near friends who distract you.
- Don’t doodle.
- Don’t give up if the instructor is moving too fast.
- Don’t look for facts only. Be sure to record any examples your instructor gives, too.
Benefits of using the Cornell Method:

- Organizes notes
- Saves time and encourages efficiency
- Especially useful for reviewing and studying for tests
- Incredibly easy to use
- Improves concentration and keeps you involved with the material and lecture
The Cornell Notes format

In the Cornell Method of note taking, you divide your paper into three parts. The smaller left side contains key words or phrases. The larger right side contains more detailed notes. The bottom section is for the summary.
The Cornell Method

Step 1

- Once you have divided your paper into three parts, you are ready to take notes in the right column.
- Organize your notes according to the main ideas your teacher discusses.
- Each time a new topic or concept is introduced, skip a line.
- Don’t try to write each word your instructor says, instead paraphrase and use your own words.
Knowing what to include in your notes is sometimes hard...

Record these types of information:

- Details, facts, or explanations that expand or explain the main points that are mentioned. Don't forget examples.
- Definitions, word for word.
- Enumerations or lists of things that are discussed.
- Material written on the chalkboard or on a transparency, including drawings or charts.
- Information that is repeated or spelled out.
Muscle tissue has several functions.
1. Movement- attaches to the skeleton and moves the body by moving the bones
2. Maintains posture- skeletal muscles contract continuously
3. Joint stabilization- muscle tone helps stabilize and strengthen
4. Heat generalization- contractions produce heat and help maintain body temp

Different functions can help distinguish different types of muscle tissue.

Contractibility- generate strong pull
Excitability- electrical impulses stimulate cells to contract
Extensibility- stretched by opposing muscle contraction
Elasticity- recoils passively and resumes resting length
The Cornell Method

Step 2

- When you are finished taking notes at the end of the lecture, it is time to fill in the left column.
- Review your notes and underline key words and phrases that can be used to stimulate your memory.
- Jot the key words down in the left column next to the note section they refer to.
**Muscle tissue** has several functions

1. **Movement** - attaches to the skeleton and moves the body by moving the bones
2. **Maintains posture** - skeletal muscles contract continuously
3. **Joint stabilization** - muscle tone helps stabilize and strengthen
4. **Heat generalization** - contractions produce heat and help maintain body temp

Different functions can help **distinguish different types** of muscle tissue

- **Contractibility** - generate strong pull
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**Example of inserting key terms**
The Cornell Method

Step 3

☐ Within 24 hours, look back at your notes and write a brief summary in the bottom section of the page.

☐ You may also jot down possible test questions.

☐ This helps to increase understanding of the topic and provides a concise, but detailed and relevant record of previous classes.
Editing class notes is essential!

- Edit for words and phrases that are illegible or don't make sense.
- Edit with a different colored pen to distinguish between what you wrote in class and what you filled in later.
- Note anything you don't understand by underlining or highlighting to remind you to ask the instructor.
- Compare your notes with the textbook reading and fill in important details in the blank spaces you left.

From *Becoming a Master Student* (1997) by Dave Ellis
The Best Part…
Using Cornell Notes for Studying!

The Cornell Method has a built-in study system.

1. Simply fold back a page of notes on the line between the two main columns.
2. Use the key words to jog your memory of the notes you wrote in the main section.
3. Practice repeating the information you recorded.

No more time spent on making note cards!
"ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN AND BELIEVE IN IT. NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS BY ACCIDENT."

— CHUCK KNOX, NFL FOOTBALL COACH