



Taking Notes

1. Use full sized notebook paper (you need the space)
2. Use a ballpoint pen – you will need to write quickly and you can't write as fast with a pencil (tips break, dull) or felt tip pen (runs dry) – if you make a mistake or need to change something just cross it out
3. Use a header to show the lecture topic and date
4. Abbreviate recurring terms – make a key to help you remember what your abbreviations stand for
5. Write down whatever your professor puts on the board and mark it somewhere – print in block letters, box it in (when you review later you will know which points your teacher emphasized)
6. Review, review, review the notes
 - a. Immediately after class review your notes and fill in any missing information
 - b. Later in the day review your notes and pull out or at least identify the key words/ definitions that are important
 - c. Just before your next class meeting review your notes from the previous lecture

Note Taking Formats:

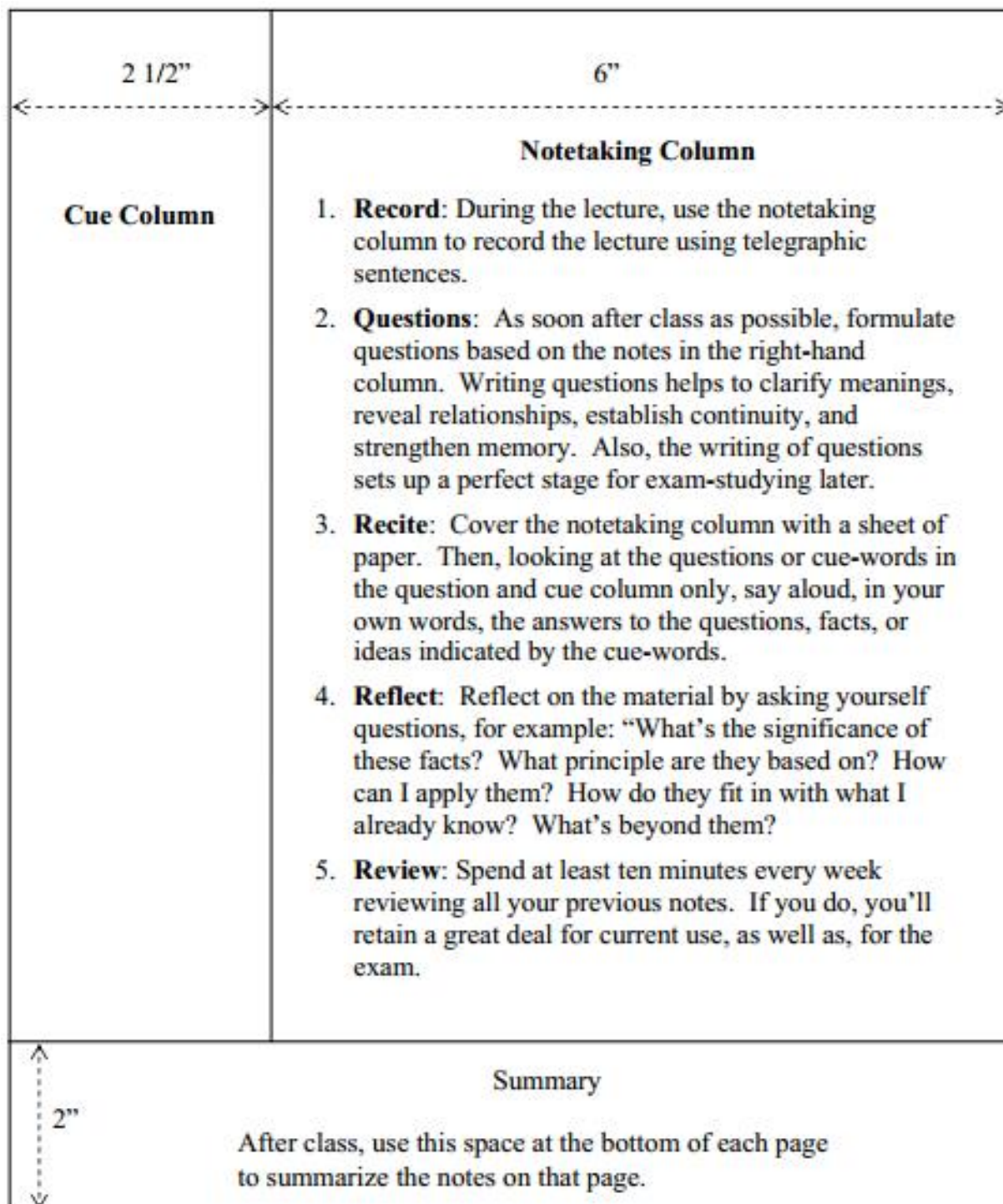
Outline Format: Use Roman numerals (I., II., III., etc) to label main ideas, and numbers and upper- and lower- case letters to indicate secondary ideas, examples, and explanations.

Paragraph Format: Write detailed paragraphs that summarize topics works well for taking notes on reading, but it is hard to summarize a lecture before it is complete.

List Format: This format is very effective when taking notes on terms and definitions, facts, and sequences. Lists work very well with the Cornell Format (see below).

Cornell Note Taking: The Cornell system for taking notes is designed to save time and be highly efficient. There is no rewriting or retyping of your notes. A sample Cornell Note Taking Notes is available on the next page. Use the steps below to create your Cornell Note Taking Template:

1. On any piece of college ruled lined paper, draw a horizontal line about 3 quarters down from the top of the page.
2. Then place a ruler's left edge along the red vertical line on the left of the page. Draw a vertical line along the right edge of the ruler, from the top of the page down to the horizontal line from in the previous step. The result is a page of Cornell notes ready to be used!
3. On the top of the page record the title of the notes, date, and section/chapter of the book that the notes pertain to.
4. Write notes normally in the largest right hand rectangle. When possible, try to use abbreviations and short sentences to help keep pace with the professor.
5. The left hand column is for cue words and/or questions. These should line up horizontally with the respective notes directly to the right in the large rectangle. These phrases are like the tops of flash cards while the bottoms of said flash cards are the respective notes to the right in the large rectangle.
6. The bottom rectangle should be filled in after class, ideally the same day as the lecture. Here you summarize the notes of that particular page.



HINT: If done successfully, a page of Cornell notes can be used for review and studying! Cover up the right large rectangle and read the left rectangle's cue phrases/questions. Recite/Answer them as best you can, and after you can review your answers by uncovering your notes and checking against them.

Note Taking Techniques

Identify the main ideas – How? Prime yourself for the lecture. Use your course outline and review your reading notes just before class begins. Listen for repetition and pauses in the lecture. Pay particular attention to what the professor writes on the board.

Don't try to write down everything – As an active listener and note taker you need to listen, process, and record. You will have shorter, but more useful, notes. Leave blank spaces in your notes so you can go back and fill in additional details you might have missed.

Don't be thrown off by disorganized lecturers – When a lecture is disorganized it is your job to try to organize what is said into general and specific frameworks. After the lecture consult your reading material and classmates to fill in the gaps.

Be Note Savvy –

- If the instructor writes something on the whiteboard/smartboard or repeats an idea, then it is usually a key point and you should write it down.
- Try to use a three-ring binder as it allows for more flexibility in rearranging your notes and storing any handouts that you may receive.
- Try to sit near the front and center of the class where you will be less distracted, will be able to hear the professor, and will have a good angle on any visual aids that may be shown.
- Do not rely solely on someone else's notes as you may not understand everything that person writes down. Also, your brain may hold information better when you write it down yourself.
- Do reading assignments or homework questions before class as it is easier to take notes when you know what the instructor is talking about.
- Be sure to put a date on your notes and add titles and subtitles when you move to a new topic. This helps for easy referencing when you study.
- Write down any terminology along with the definition that the instructor may present.
- Make sure that you write legibly because if you cannot read the notes later they will be useless.
- If you have sloppy handwriting, it may be useful to type your notes after class when everything is fresh in your mind. Even if your handwriting is neat, you may still benefit by typing your notes after class.
- If you missed something that the professor said, then ask your professor to repeat it or go to the professor after class and ask for clarification. If you are in a rush, ask the professor at the beginning of the next class. You might also try to find the answer from a friend or in the text book.
- Compare notes with a classmate to be sure you did not miss any important points.

Adapted from: Fry, Ron. (1996). Get Organized. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press