

The CORNELL WAY

Ten Steps in the Cornell Note-Taking System

Part I: Note-Taking

C – Step 1: Create Format

Leave 1/3 of the paper on the left for questions and 2/3 on the right for notes.

Leave 2 inches on the bottom of each page for the summary.

Write name, class, date, topic, and objective in the heading.

Create an Essential Question based on the objective to be addressed in the notes and in the summary.

O – Step 2: Organize Notes on the Right Side of Your Notepaper

Take notes while listening to a lecture, reading a textbook, solving a math problem, etc.

Listen and take notes in your own words (i.e., paraphrase what you hear).

Leave spaces for revisions by skipping lines between ideas.

Abbreviate words and use symbols.

Write in phrases, not complete sentences.

Know what to write (i.e., differentiate between important information vs. trivial information).

Part II: Note-Making

R – Step 3: Review and Revise Notes

Distinguish main ideas from details.

Categorize information by highlighting or color coding.

Delete unimportant information.

Add your own thinking (i.e., fill in details to clarify, complete, or create greater meaning and understanding).

Identify unclear information by using a question mark.

Add references from other materials as they come to mind or make connections to other concepts/content.

Review for possible paper topics or test questions.

N – Step 4: Note Key Ideas to Create Questions

Write questions on the left side of your notes page that connect to key ideas.

Review the main ideas highlighter on the right side.

Determine the purpose of the lecture, reading, or activity.

Read the highlighted main ideas and create higher level questions.

E – Step 5: Exchange Ideas by Collaborating

Collaborate with a peer(s), as a small group, as a whole class, outside of class, etc., to compare, enhance, and revise your notes.

Fill in any gaps and clarify points of confusion.

Brainstorm a list of key terminology from the lesson to be included in the summary.