

The 5 Rs of Note-taking

The Counseling Department at College of the Canyons recommends that students use a modified version of the Cornell Note-Taking method. To use this note-taking method, the student divides the page into 3 sections:

1. RECORD NOTES

During a lecture, stay focused, listen attentively to the lecture, and take notes. Do not just listen! Try to write down as many meaningful ideas and facts as possible on the right hand side of the page. If you miss a word, just insert a _____ and keep writing. After class when you review your notes, you can check the textbook or other resources and check with other students in the class to fill in the blanks. If something the instructor says is confusing, put an * next to it so you know to ask for clarification about the point later. Taking notes keeps the mind focused so the information is received by the brain and registers in short-term memory instead of just passing through. Avoid all interruptions such as music, text messages, and daydreaming.

2. REDUCE NOTES TO QUESTIONS & KEY WORDS

After class, write questions in the left hand column that go along with the notes on the right. Think of *What, Who, Where, When, How,* and *Why*, questions. When it's time to study your notes, cover up the note section of the page and quiz yourself using the questions you wrote in the left column. You may also write key words for important concepts on the left hand side of the page. This rehearsal strategy helps you work with the information in your short-term working memory.

3. RECITE

Now cover the notes, and use the key words and questions as cues to help you recall the different points in the notes. Recite the answers to the questions and explain the key words. Then uncover your notes to check if the information you recalled is correct. This strategy is a rehearsal strategy that helps you work with the information in your short-term working memory. The longer and more frequently you work with the information by answering the questions and recalling the notes, the longer the information stays in working memory.

4. REFLECT & SUMMARIZE

At the bottom of the page, write 3 to 7 sentences summarizing in your own words what the notes on the page say. Explain the main point or points as if you had to teach someone else. Use key words, be concise, and clarify. Assign meaning to the information by stating how it is of value to you, why you need to know this, and if this information reminds you of any prior learning. These elaboration strategies help to transfer information in the brain from short-term to long-term memory.

5. REVIEW

Review Cornell notes frequently to help you work with the information and retain the information. The more frequently you work with information the longer the information will remain in store so you can retrieve it on the day of a test.

<p><u>QUESTIONS</u> <u>&</u> <u>KEYWORDS</u></p>	<p><u>NOTES</u></p>
<p><u>SUMMARY</u></p>	

More about Note-Taking...

To store information long-term in the brain, you can use additional elaboration strategies that make you **THINK** about the information. You can expand your knowledge and understanding of the material presented in a lecture or in a textbook by asking and answering further critical thinking questions:

Describe _____.

What is the relation between _____ and _____?

How does _____ impact _____?

What is the effect of _____?

What if _____?

What is the importance of _____?

Compare _____ and _____.

Contrast _____ and _____.

Thinking about information will help you store information in long-term memory so that you can retrieve it not just on the day of a test but at the end of the semester or for the next level of the course.

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