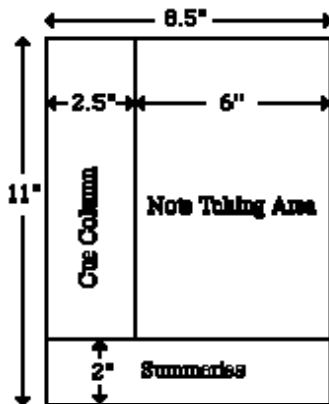


Cornell Notetaking System Explained



Note Taking Area: Record lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible.

Cue Column: As you're taking notes, keep cue column empty. Soon after the lecture, reduce your notes to concise jottings as clues for Rethinking, Reviewing, and Reflecting.

Summaries: Sum up each page of your notes in a sentence or two.

The Cue Column

The space to the left of the vertical margin should be reserved for a cue column. You should not write in this area during the lecture, while you are taking notes. The cue column is not created until you review your notes (which, ideally, you do as soon after the lecture as possible, and certainly before the next lecture). As you study the material in your notes, you should devise questions which the notes answer (think "Jeopardy"). These questions are the "cues" that should be written in the cue column. By writing questions, you are forced to think about the lecture material in a way that clarifies meaning, reveals relationships, establishes continuity, and, most importantly, strengthens memory.

The Summaries Space

The area below the horizontal margin near the bottom of the page should be reserved for a summary of the notes on that page. Your summary should be brief -- at most, only a few sentences. The page summary provides a concise review of the important material on the page, useful for later reference. More importantly, in writing a summary, you are forced to view the material in a way that allows you to see how it all fits together, in a general sense. The summary should be helpful in allowing you to see how specific facts fit into the broader landscape.

The Note-Taking Area

The space to the right of the vertical margin is where you actually record your notes during the lecture. Pick a note-taking format with which you are comfortable -- there are no hard-and-fast rules for this aspect of the Cornell system. However, you should not attempt to transcribe verbatim every word spoken by the instructor. It is usually not difficult to separate the essential material from the non-essential. For instance, if information is written on the blackboard, it is probably important enough to include in your notes. To avoid missing information during the lecture, you should develop a system of abbreviations you understand, and you should write in telegraphic sentences (where you only include enough words to carry the essential meaning). As you take notes, realize that your emphasis should be on the key ideas, rather than the actual words used to convey those ideas.