

# The Cornell Note Taking System

**Set Up Your Paper:** Draw a line as indicated on the paper. Include the class lecture or book title on the first page, number each page in the upper right corner.

## Recall Column

## Record Column

----- 2 1/2"-----

**Reduce** ideas and facts to concise jottings and summaries as cues for **Reciting, Reviewing,** and **Reflecting.**

6"-----

**Record** the lecture or book contents as fully and as meaningfully as possible. Record notes on the front of your paper **only**. **Lists and Diagrams** are recorded on the back of the page.

The format provides the perfect opportunity for following through with the 5 R's of note-taking. Here they are:

1. **Record.** During the lecture or reading, record in the main column as many meaningful facts and ideas as you can. Write legibly.
2. **Reduce.** As soon after as possible, summarize these ideas and facts concisely in the Recall Column. Summarizing clarifies meanings and relationships, reinforces continuity, and strengthens memory. Also, it is a way of preparing for examinations gradually and well ahead of time.
3. **Recite.** Now cover the column, using only your jottings in the Recall Column as cues or "flags" to help you recall, **say out loud** facts and ideas as fully as you can, not mechanically, but in your own words and with as much appreciation of the meaning as you can. Then, uncovering your notes, verify what you have said. This procedure helps to transfer the facts and ideas of your long term memory.
4. **Reflect.** Reflective students distill their opinions from their notes. They make such opinions the starting point for their own musings upon the subjects they are studying. Such musings aid them in making sense out of their courses and academic experiences by finding relationships among them. Reflective students continually label and index their experiences and ideas, put them into structures, outlines, summaries, and frames of reference. They rearrange and file them. Best of all, they have an eye for the vital-for the essential. Unless ideas are placed in categories, unless they are taken up from time to time for re-examination, they will become inert and soon forgotten.
5. **Review.** If you will spend 10 minutes every week or so in a quick review of these notes, you will retain most of what you have learned, and you will be able to use your knowledge currently to greater and greater effectiveness.

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For a fuller description of the Cornell Note Taking System, see *Essential Study Skills* by Linda Wong.