THE CORNELL NOTE-TAKING SYSTEM
an effective strategy for learning lecture material

Cornell Note-taking Method created by Walter Pauk
Note-taking Page Setup

- Use 8 ½ by 11 inch paper
- Utilize a three-ring binder
  - Keep notes and classroom handouts together
- Draw lines down and across paper
Prepare

Recall or Cue

Column
Reduce ideas after class into as few words as possible. Incorporate questions here.

Record Column
Record the lectures as fully as possible. Include details here.

Summarize
Condense main ideas. Put them in your own words.
Record

Record in Class

- During the lecture, write as many facts as you can.
  - Use shorthand to get the full ideas down.
    - Be consistent with any short cuts (abbreviations or symbols) and make a key to remember what they mean.
  - Leave spaces between ideas so you can fill in more later.
Reduce after Class – if possible due this prior to leaving the classroom.

- Condense these ideas and facts in as few words as possible in the Reduce/Cue column.
  - Demonstrates relationships between points/facts to strengthen memory.
  - Prepares you for exams gradually and ahead of time.
Recite

Recite from the Recall/Cue Column.

- Cover the Record Column with a note card.
- Using only the words in the Recall column, say over the facts as fully as you can in your own words.
- Then, uncover your notes and compare what you have said from the facts in the Record column.
  - Helps to transfer ideas to your long-term memory!
Reflect

- **Reflect on possible test questions and mark unclear points.**
- Make sense of your notes by finding relationships and order in the material.
- Put ideas in categories and tie previous material to new notes.
- Think about which points might appear on tests and highlight any unclear points. Ask questions before the next lecture.
Review to Improve your Memory.

- Spend 10 minutes a day in a quick review of your notes, to retain most of what you have learned and help relate the facts and ideas to present lectures or readings.
Note-taking Tips

- Keep a separate section of your notebook or binder for each course.
- Start a new page for each lecture.
  - Date your lecture notes and number all pages.
- Condense your thoughts and ideas.
  - Use a phrase in place of a sentence or a word instead of a phrase.
Note-taking Tips Cont’d

- Use indentations to distinguish between major and minor points.
- Put most notes in your own words, but the following should be noted exactly:
  - Formulas, definitions, and specific facts
- Use abbreviations and symbols wherever possible.
  - Note unfamiliar vocabulary and unclear areas.
Note-taking Tips Cont’d

- Develop a code system of note marking to indicate questions, comments, important points, assignment due dates, etc.

- Ensure that you can understand what you have written. Clarify if needed.

- Fill in missing information by consulting the professor, a classmate, your textbooks or additional resources.

GOOD LUCK!