

There is a variety of note taking methods, but no single method suits all students and even no single method can be applied to all types of materials. Depending on the type of class and personal learning style, you will develop your own method of taking notes. Below you find descriptions of different methods to assist you with the process of choosing the best method for you:

### **1. The Cornell Method**

Many successful students have found that the Cornell note taking system is very effective for lectures or reading that is organized around clearly defined topics, subtopics, and supporting details. The Cornell System is both a note taking and a study system.

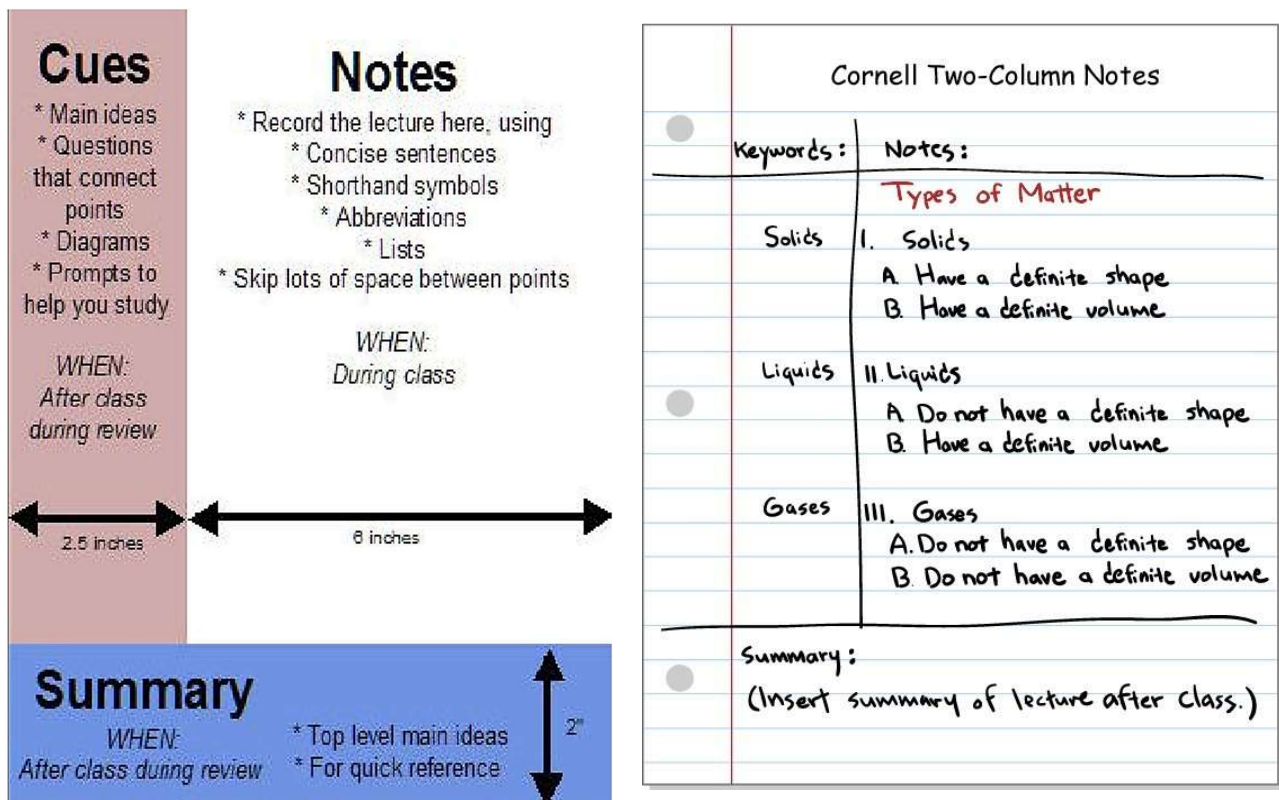
#### **a) Method**

- ✓ Rule your paper with a 2 ½ inch margin on the left leaving a six-inch area on the right in which to make notes. During class, take down information in the six-inch area. When the instructor moves to a new point, skip a few lines. After class, complete phrases and sentences as much as possible. For every significant bit of information, write a cue in the left margin.
- ✓ To review, cover your notes with a card, leaving the cues exposed. Say the cue out loud, and then say as much as you can of the material underneath the card. When you have said as much as you can, move the card and see if what you said matches what is written. If you can say it, you know it.

#### **b) Advantages**

- Organized and systematic for recording and reviewing notes.
- Easy format for pulling out major concept and ideas.
- Simple and efficient.
- Saves time and effort.

c) Example:



## 2. Outlining Method (Dash or Indented System)

### a) Method

- ✓ The information which is most general begins at the left with each more specific group of facts indented with spaces to the right.
- ✓ The relationship between the different parts is carried out through indenting.

### b) Advantages

- Well-organized system if done right.
- Outlining records content as well as relationships.
- It also reduces editing and is easy to review by turning main points into questions.

### c) Disadvantages

- Requires more thought in class for accurate organization.
- This system may not show relationships by sequence when needed.
- It doesn't lend to diversity of a review attach for maximum learning and question application.
- This system cannot be used if the lecture is too fast.

#### d) Example:

*Body Language and Oral Presentations*

**I. BODY LANGUAGE (conveys your state of mind)**

**A. Movement**

1. Strive for natural movement.
2. Control distracting mannerisms. (pacing, pen-clicking).
3. Develop natural style
  - (a) Move forward to stress points.
  - (b) Step back and focus attention on screen.
4. Hold objects so audience can see them. (Never pass them around)
5. Avoid excessive and uncontrolled movement.

**B. Facial Expressions**

1. Smile.
2. Appear relaxed and friendly.

**C. Gestures**

1. Use natural gestures to emphasize what you're saying.
2. Integrate and coordinate gestures with text.
3. Examples
  - (a) number of fingers = number discussed.
  - (b) sizes, shapes – tall, short
4. Use gestures to help pace yourself.
5. Use gestures based on audience size.

**D. Posture**

1. Practice good posture.
2. Don't prop up against wall or desk.
3. Don't sit unless it's part of presentation.

### 3. Mapping Method

Mapping is a graphic representation of the content of a lecture. It is a method that maximizes active participation, affords immediate knowledge as to its understanding, and emphasizes critical thinking.

#### a) Method

- ✓ Use paper with no previous writing on it.
- ✓ Connect all words or phrases or lists with lines, to the centre or to other "branches." When you get a new idea, start again with a new "spoke" from the centre.
- ✓ Go quickly, without pausing -- try to keep up with the flow of ideas. Do not stop to decide where something should go.
- ✓ Write down everything you can think of without judging or editing -- these activities will also disrupt the Mapping process.
- ✓ If you come to a standstill, look over what you have done to see if you have left anything out.
- ✓ You may want to use colour-coding, to group sections of the Map.

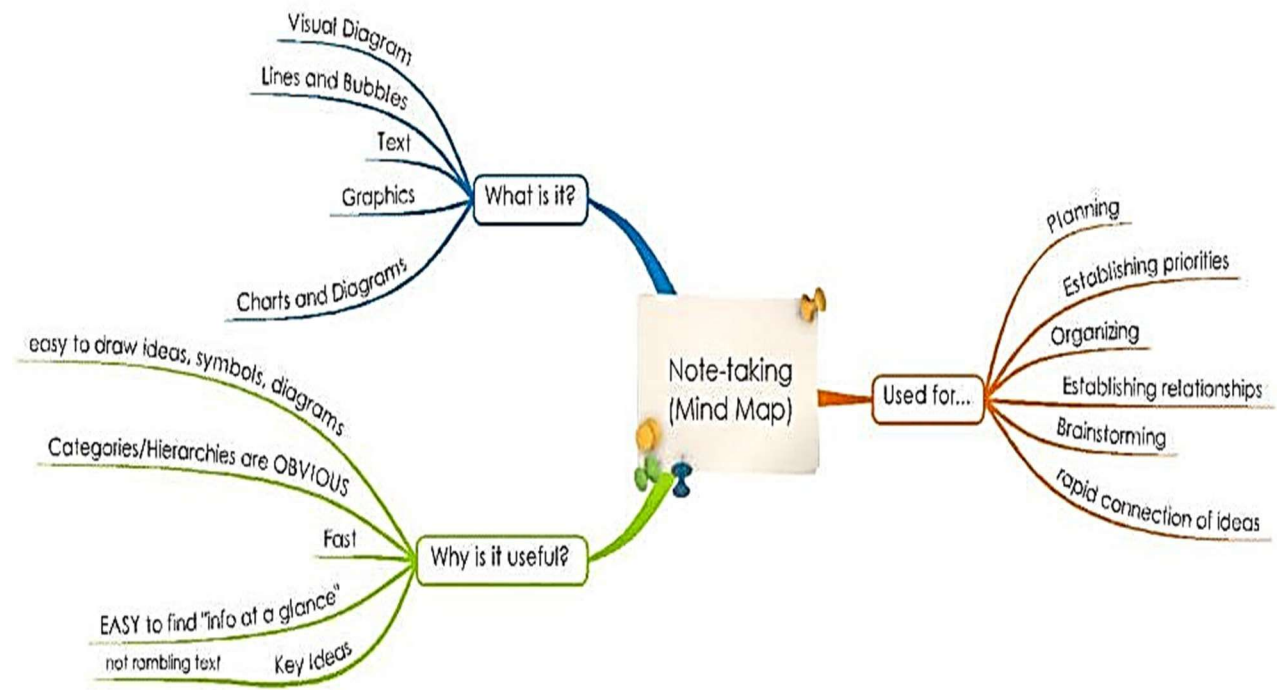
#### b) Advantages

- ✓ This format helps you to visually track your lecture allowing relationships to be seen easily.
- ✓ Easy to edit your notes by adding numbers, marks, and color coding.
- ✓ Review requires recall of thought processes which will force you to check understanding.

#### c) Disadvantages

- May run out of room on a single page.

#### d) Example:



#### 4. Charting Method

This method of note taking is great for subject matter that can be broken down into **categories, such as similarities/differences, date/event/impact, pros/cons, etc.**

##### a) Method

- ✓ Determine the categories to be covered in the lecture.
- ✓ Set up your paper in advance by columns headed by these categories.
- ✓ As you listen to the lecture or read texts, record information (words, phrases, main ideas, etc.) into the appropriate category.

##### b) Advantages

- This method is great for students who like to organize information neatly and learn well by recognizing patterns
- Helps you track conversation and dialogues where you would normally be confused and lose out on relevant content.
- Reduces amount of writing necessary.
- Provides easy review mechanism for both memorization of facts and study of comparisons and relationships.
- Great for history class.

##### c) Disadvantages

- Few disadvantages except learning how to use the system and locating the appropriate categories. You must be able to understand what is happening in the lecture.

#### d) Example

Method	When to use it?	Pros	Cons
1. Cornell	.....	.....	.....
2. Outlining	.....	.....	.....
3. Mapping	.....	.....	.....
4. Sentence	.....	.....	.....

#### 5. Sentence Method

You can use it when the lecture is somewhat organized, but heavy with content which comes fast. Also, use it when you can hear the different points, but you don't know how they fit together.

##### a) Method

- ✓ Write every new thought, fact or topic on a separate line, numbering as you progress.

##### b) Advantages

- Slightly more organized than the paragraph.
- Gets more or all of the information. Thinking to tract content is still limited.

##### c) Disadvantages

- Can't determine major/minor points from the numbered sequence.
- Difficult to edit without having to rewrite by clustering points which are related.
- Difficult to review.

##### d) Example:

- At first, Freud tried conventional, physical methods of treatment such as giving baths, massages, rest cures, and similar aids. But when these failed, he tried techniques of hypnosis that he had seen used by Jean-Martin Charcot. Finally, he borrowed an idea from Jean Breuer and used direct verbal communication to get an unhypnotized patient to reveal unconscious thoughts.

##### - Sample Notes:

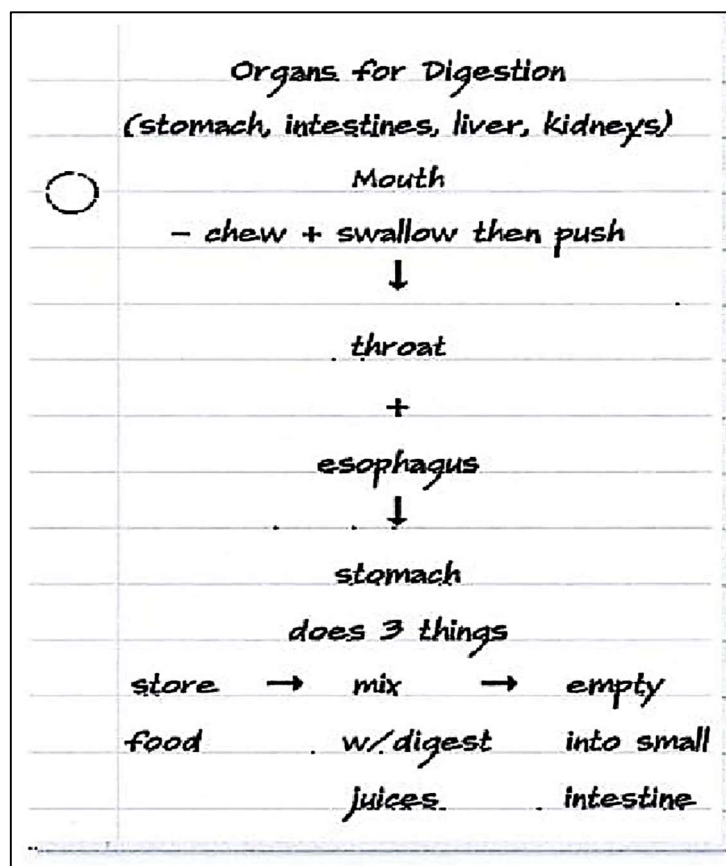
*Freud 1st -- used phys. trtment; e.g., baths, massages etc. This faild. 2nd -- used hypnosis (fr. Charcot) Finally -- used dircet vrb. commun. (fr. Breuer) - got unhynop, patnt to reveal uncons. thoughts.*

### Practice

**Task One:** There are different ways in which information can be recorded. Make a note of the advantages and disadvantages of each mode.

Mode of Recording	Advantages	Disadvantages
Writing every word from source		
Using outline notes		
Using diagrams/ branching notes		
(text) underlining/ highlighting in colour		
(text) computer scanning		
(text) photocopying		
(text) making notes in margins		
(spoken input) Audio recording		

**Task Two:** Look at these notes made by a student from a lecture then summarise them in your own words.



**Task Three:** Read the following passages (transcripts) carefully, and take notes using each time one method of note taking.

### **Passage 1**

Although there are over one hundred kinds of whales in the world (and even more names to designate each kind), most whales can be classified into three major categories. The gregarious whales are friendly toward people. This category includes extroverts (like the humpback) which feed off microscopic marine life, and acrobats (like the porpoises) which have teeth and eat small fish. Unlike the gregarious whales, the aggressive whales are dangerous. They include killer whales which hunt in packs, and sperm whales which hunt alone. In addition to these two groups, there is another group: the shy whales. They are divided into those which seem indifferent to other whales as well as to people, and those which have been hunted to near-extinction. Example of the former is the finback; example of the latter is the blue whale.

### **Passage 2**

The means of communication may be divided into three categories. These categories are: speech, writing and electronic communication. The oldest of these forms of communication is undoubtedly speech. It is believed that speech originated perhaps one million years ago, possibly by imitation of natural sounds. The next big step forward in communication was the invention of writing. It had two major advantages over speech. Firstly, the speaker himself did not have to be present in order to communicate. And secondly, the knowledge of one generation could be accumulated and passed on to the next. The most recent development has been the use of electronic means of communication. These can be subdivided into those which require a wire or cable connection for transferring messages (such as the telephone) and those which do not (such as radio and television).

### **Passage 3**

What are the ways in which a student can acquire information? Firstly, he will acquire information from his tutors, in three main ways- by lecture, by tutorial and by handouts which the tutor may give him. Secondly, he may acquire information from other experts outside this college: principally by reading and also perhaps by listening to the radio, listening to cassette recordings, or watching educational TV programmes. Thirdly, he will get information from his fellow students: perhaps in student-led seminars, perhaps in the contributions of other students in tutorials, or perhaps just in informal conversation. Lastly, he can acquire information from himself! By thinking about his subject and linking together what he has heard and seen, he may come up with new ideas, which are his alone.

#### **Passage 4**

There are many different kinds of musical instruments. They are divided into three main classes according to the way they are played. First, some instruments are played by blowing air into them. These are called wind instruments. The woodwind family is so called because the air is made to vibrate inside a wooden tube. Examples of these are the flute and the clarinet. Another family of wind instruments is made of brass: the trumpet and the horn, for example. There are also various other instruments such as the mouthorgan and the bagpipes. Second, some instruments are played by banging or striking them. One obvious example is the drum, of which there are various kinds. Instruments like this are called percussion instruments. The musical instruments which have strings make up the last big group. There are two main kinds of string instruments: those in which the music is made by pulling strings and those where the player draws a bow across the strings. Examples of the former are the harp and the guitar. Examples of the latter are the violin and the cello.