

## **Cornell Note-Taking System**

1. Draw a line down your paper 2 1/2 inches from the left side to create a 2 1/2 inch margin for noting key words and a 6-inch area on the right for sentence summaries.
2. Record your notes in the 6-inch area on the right side of your paper during class. Use your own words and make sure you have included the main ideas and significant supporting details. Be brief.
3. Review your summary sentences and underline key words. Write these key words in the column on the left side of your paper. These words can be used to stimulate your memory of the material for later study.
4. The Cornell method can be used for taking notes on classroom lectures or textbooks. The following chart explains the procedure and gives a visual display of the results.

Taking Class Notes: The Cornell Method <sup>1</sup>	
<p>← 2 ½ inches →</p> <p>Reduce ideas to concise jotting and summaries as cues for reciting.</p>	<p>← 6 inches →</p> <p>Record the lecture as fully and as meaningfully as possible.</p>
Cornell Method	This sheet demonstrates the <u>Cornell Method</u> of taking classroom notes. It is recommended by experts from the Learning Center at Cornell University.
Line drawn down paper	You should <u>draw a line down your notepage</u> about 2 ½ inches from the left side. On the right side of the line simply record your classroom notes as you usually do. Be sure that you write legibly.
After the lecture	<u>After the lecture</u> you should read the notes, fill in material that you missed, make your writing legible, and underline any important materials. Ask another classmate for help if you missed something during the lecture.
Use the Recall Column Key Phrases	The <u>recall column</u> on the left will help you when you study for your tests. Jot down any important words or <u>key phrases</u> in the recall column. This activity forces you to rethink and summarize your notes. The key words should stick in your mind.
Five Rs	The <u>Five Rs</u> will help you take better notes based on the Cornell Method.
Record	1. <u>Record</u> any information given during the lecture, which you believe will be important.
Reduce.	2. When you <u>reduce</u> your information, you are summarizing and listing key words/phrases in the recall column.
Recite	3. Cover the notes you took for your class. Test yourself on the words in the recall section. This is what is meant by <u>recite</u> .
Reflect	4. You should <u>reflect</u> on the information you received during the lecture. Determine how your ideas fit in with the information.
Review	5. If you <u>review</u> your notes, you will remember a great deal more when you take your midterm.
Binder and Paper	Remember it is a good idea to keep your notes in a <u>standard-sized three-ring binder</u> . Also you should use only full-sized loose-leaf binder paper. That way you will be able to add handouts easily to your binder.
Hints	Abbreviations and symbols should be used when possible. Abbrev. & sym. give you time when used automatically.
<small>Stahl, Norman A. and James King. "A Language Experience Model for Teaching College Reading, Study and Survival," 25th College Reading Association Annual Conference, Louisville, KY, 30 October 1981.</small>	

## Mapping

Mapping is a visual system of condensing material to show relationships and importance. A map is a diagram of the major points, with their significant sub-points, that support a topic. The purpose of mapping as an organizing strategy is to improve memory by grouping material in a highly visual way.

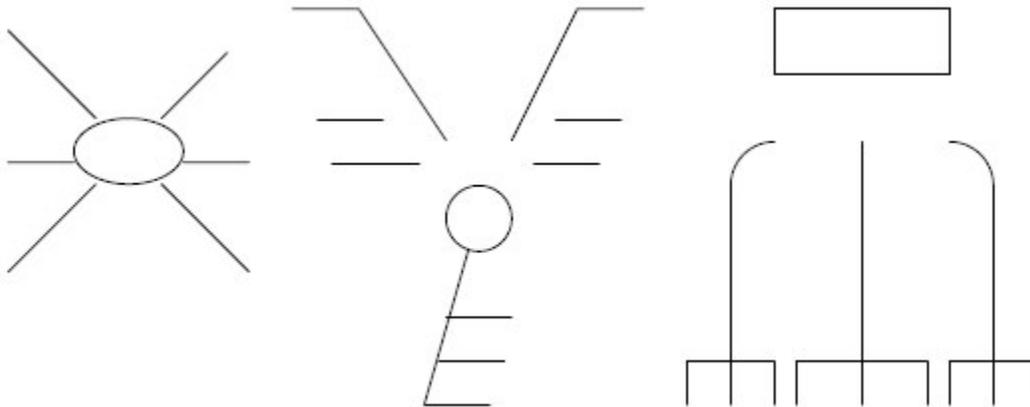
The map provides a quick reference for over-viewing a lecture or a textbook chapter.

## How to Map

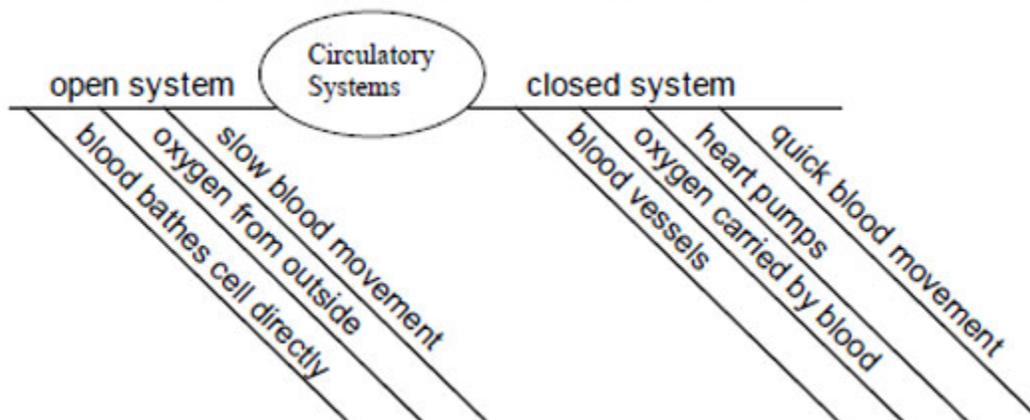
The following steps describe the procedure to use in mapping:

1. Draw a circle or a box in the middle of a page, and in it write the subject or topic of the material or lecture.
2. Determine the main ideas that support the subject and write them on the lines radiating from the central circle or box.
3. Determine the significant details and write them on lines attached to each main idea. The number of details you include will depend on the material and your purpose.

Maps are not restricted to any one pattern, but can be formed in a variety of creative shapes as the following diagrams illustrate:



The following diagram illustrates how the lecture on the circulatory system could be mapped. Notice how the visual display emphasizes the groups of ideas supporting the topic.



## Outline Method

- Start main points at the margin.

- Indent secondary and supporting details.
  - Further indent major subgroups.
- Definitions, for example, should always start at the margin.
- When a list of terms is presented, the heading should also start at the margin.
  - Each item in the series should be set in slightly from the margin.
  - Examples, too, should be indented under the point they illustrate.
- When the lecturer moves from one idea to another, show this shift with white space by skipping a line or two.

### The Charting Method

Charting is effectively a table of rows and columns. The top row normally classifies the concept with descriptions or keywords listed in the row below.

Charting Method example

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Special theory of relativity	Albert Einstein	1905	'On the electrodynamics of moving bodies'
Law of universal gravitation	Isaac Newton	1687	<i>Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica</i>

This method enables you to quickly identify facts and their relationships with other information.

### Smart Wisdom:

The basic theory behind Smart Wisdom is that instead of taking down linear notes in the form of sentences you listen out for the key words and place them in a chain. Basically you drop the words that aren't important.

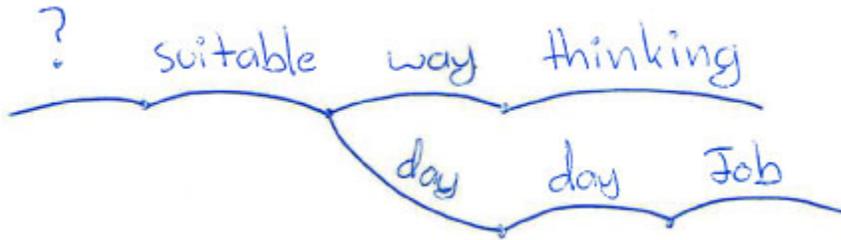
So a quote from lecture or a piece of research might be:

“Is it suitable for my way of thinking and my day to day job?”

Using smart wisdom this would become:

## suitable way thinking day day job?

You then put the words in a chain and use joins to replace the dropped words, see below.



It takes a while to get used to taking notes in this way but it helps many students recall more information, then with more traditional note taking methods.

### Other Thoughts on Note Taking

Organization is key with notes, and the more organized you are the better the chances you'll actually remember that information. The basic idea of notes is to keep them short, but have enough triggers in the keywords to jumpstart your memory when you look at them again:

- Stick to keywords and very short sentences.
- Write out your notes in your own words (not verbatim from a teacher or colleague). One exception to this is when you hear a good turn of phrase that helps you remember the the note, or if you're writing out a direct quote.
- Adjust the note-taking style to fit both your needs and the speakers.

Really, you only want to write down what matters. Notes are tricky, because you want to keep things simple, and get down only the amount of information needed to help you recall it later.

You have a lot of options for different note-taking methods, but none of them are perfect for everyone. Depending on the circumstance and the type of person you are, you'll have better luck with certain methods. So, it's best to try a few.

