

# Four Parts of the Cornell Way

## Part 1: NOTE-TAKING

Reading or listening to information for the first time while jotting down and organizing key points to be used later as a learning tool

### **C** Create Format

**Step 1: Create Cornell notes format and complete heading.**

- If Cornell notepaper is not provided, set up paper upon entering the classroom:
  - Write name, class, period, date, topic, standard/objective in heading.
  - Create an essential question based on the standard/objective to be addressed in the notes and in the summary.
  - Leave 1/3 of the paper on the left for questions and 2/3 on the right for notes.
  - Leave 2 inches on the bottom of each page for summary.
  - Be prepared to actively listen and take notes.
- If Cornell notepaper is provided, upon entering the classroom:
  - Write name, class, period, date, topic, standard/objective in heading.
  - Create an essential question based on the standard/objective to be addressed in the notes and in the summary.
  - Be prepared to actively listen and take notes.

### **O** Organize Notes

**Step 2: Organize notes on right side.**

- Take notes while listening to a lecture from the teacher, reading a textbook or novel, watching a video, solving a math problem, participating in a science lab, engaging in Socratic Seminar, and while participating in tutorials, etc.
- Listen and take notes in own words—paraphrase what you hear.
- Leave spaces for revisions by skipping lines between ideas.
- Abbreviate words and use symbols, when appropriate.
- Write in phrases (not complete sentences).
- Use bullets or lists, when possible.
- Change pen colors to indicate change in concept.
- Use indentation to show relationships between ideas.
- Know what to write=important information vs. trivial information.
- Recognize cues, “This is important...” “This may be on the next test...” and repeated information.
- Incorporate teacher’s note taking style/requirements on the right side—outline style, diagrams, graphs, illustrations, etc.

# Part 2: NOTE-MAKING

Within 24 hours of taking the notes, revise these notes, generate questions, and use collaboration to create meaning.

## R Review and Revise

### **Step 3: Review and revise notes**

- Use the “Cornell Note Revision Checklist” to revise notes.
- Separate main ideas from details by underlining.
- Keep important information by highlighting or color coding.
- Delete unimportant information by drawing a line through it or not highlighting.
- Add your own thinking/fill in details to clarify, complete, or create greater meaning and understanding.
- Identify information that needs clarification using a question mark to indicate the need to check with a partner or teacher.
- Add references from/to other materials as they come to mind or make connections to other concepts/content.
- Use symbols (star, checkmark, etc.) to indicate what is significant.
- Use \* for information that may be used on a test, essay, tutorial day, etc.
- Create a visual or symbol to represent and help recall information.

## N Note Key Ideas

### **Step 4: Note key ideas to create questions.**

- Use inquiry on the left side that connects to the key ideas.
- Review the main ideas highlighted on the right side.
- Determine the purpose of the lecture, reading, or activity.
- Read aloud the highlighted main ideas on the page, and create a question that is answered with this main idea.
- Develop questions on the left side that identify the main ideas on the right side by interacting with the information through the revision process in Step 3:
  - Lower-Level Questions: Some material in the note section may not lend itself to generating higher-level questions. In this case, link notes to a previously learned concept to write a higher-level question or develop additional notes adding personal meaning and details to create ownership of the material.
  - Higher-Level Questions: It is important for the Cornell notes to create higher-level questions by applying Bloom’s or Costa’s vocabulary. It is necessary to understand the meaning of the word used and how to use the terminology accurately ask a higher-level question. Adding “How do you...” does not create a higher-level question.

## E Exchange Ideas

### **Step 5: Exchange ideas by collaborating.**

- Collaborate with a peer(s), as a small group, in your tutorial group, whole class, outside of class, etc., to compare, enhance, and revise your notes.
- Using a different color pen, fill in any gaps, and clarify any points of confusion in writing to complete your notes.
- Brainstorm a list of key vocabulary from the lesson to be included in the summary.

## Part 3: NOTE-INTERACTING

Interact with notes taken by creating a synthesized summary. Use Cornell notes as a learning tool to increase content class achievement.

### L Link Learning

**Step 6: Link learning to create a synthesized summary.**

- Review notes taken, questions developed on the left, and prior knowledge to identify the main ideas to be used in the summary.
- Address the essential question of the lesson in the summary.
- Use the notes of the right side as support to write the summary.
- Synthesize, combine main ideas together, to internalize learning from the questions/notes.
- Answer the higher-level questions from the left side in the summary to tie together the main ideas.
  - Creating a summary is the opportunity to connect and make sense of the information from the lesson and identify any remaining points to be clarified.
- As the summary is written, there may be a need to address any remaining points of confusion with new questions on the left side to ask teacher, tutor, or classmate.
  - Leave the right side blank until this discussion has happened.
  - Document the clarification in the blank space on the right side, after the discussion.

### L Learning Tool

**Step 7: Use completed Cornell notes as a learning tool.**

- Review notes taken, questions developed, and summary=this may also be done in a study group.
- Apply new learning to increase performance in content class by using notes to study for a test, to write an essay, as a reference during tutorial, to prepare for a presentation or Socratic Seminar, Philosophical Chairs, etc.
- Interact with material by taking notes, writing questions, and summarizing to internalize material to increase new learning.
- Using the notes as a learning tool provides opportunity for students to transfer knowledge to long-term memory by making meaning of the notes and forming connections.

# Part 4: NOTE-REFLECTING

Use written feedback to address areas of challenge by setting focus goals to improve future notes.

## **W**            **Written Feedback**

**Step 8: Provide written feedback.**

- Submit Cornell notes weekly to be checked for quality using the Cornell notes rubric or checklist and/or quantity in binder check.
- Review, revise, and improve notes, questions, and summary based on feedback.
- Written feedback and suggestions for improvement may be provided by a peer, a tutor, or teacher.

## **A**            **Address Feedback**

**Step 9: Address written feedback.**

- Address feedback by using “Cornell Note Focus Goal Activity” to create a goal for improvement on future note-taking.
- Use the feedback provided, identify an area of challenge.
- Write a focus goal to improve this area.
- Identify specific actions to address this challenge in future note-taking.

## **Y**            **Your Reflection**

**Step 10: Reflect on your learning.**

- Gather all Cornell notes on the topic, concept, standard, objective, essay, etc.
- Review notes, questions, and summaries on all Cornell note pages.
- Reflect on the learning by completing a “Cornell Note Reflective Log” to show how you mastered and/or applied your new knowledge.