

Modified Cornell Method

With the Modified Cornell Method of note taking, different parts of the notebook paper have different functions. Notes are recorded in the middle of the page, key words and concepts are kept in the area to the left of this section called the Recall Column, and a Summary is recorded at the bottom of the paper, and a special RCC Column is created to the right of the page. In this last column, one records reactions, comments, and commentary that occur both during and after the note taking—many times well after writing the initial summary.

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| Recall Column: ←1.5"→ (Key words) | Notes: (Main ideas / Incomplete sentences) | RCC: ←2"→ (Reactions, Commentary, corrections) |
| Summary: ↑ 4" ↓ (Complete sentences and phrases) | | |

The Modified Cornell method of note taking offers several advantages. It results in more organized notes. It allows students to quickly identify key words and key concepts. The notes can easily be used as a study guide for exam preparation. The arrangement of information is aesthetically pleasing and easy to scan, making it easy to locate particular pieces of information. The strategy may be adapted to a number of presentation formats. Plus, students are able to vent emotions and tend to return to the notes modifying and appending the information in the right hand column—sometimes well after taking a test or completing a class.

Process of note taking:

- During lecture, record the main ideas and concepts on the right side of the page. This is the notes column.
- Rephrase the information in your own words before writing it down.
- Skip one line between ideas and several lines between topics.
- Avoid writing in complete sentences.
- As soon after class as possible, review the notes in the right column and clarify any ambiguous information.
- Compare the information with the book and/or other students' notes.
- Then pull the main ideas, concepts, terms, places, dates, and people from the right column and record them in the left-hand recall column.
- Prepare a summary of the lecture material and record it at the end of the notes.
- The summary may be in sentences or short phrases. It should include only the main ideas from the lecture.

Credit: This document owes most of its content to the Muskingum College Center For Advancement Of Learning's guide: "General-Purpose Learning Strategies".