Cornell Note Organization Format

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To succeed in college, important ideas from lectures and textbooks must be *identified, organized, recorded, practiced, and stored in long term memory* for recall when needed. **The Cornell Format** helps learners do these important tasks required for learning. Using the ***Cornell Format*** has helped many learners uncover a previously hidden ability to learn and remember better than ever before and earn higher grades.

One immediate benefit from the **Cornell Format** is it is an **easy way to gather and organize formation** to be learned. A second benefit is it **saves time because it speeds learning** of information that may appear on quizzes and exams. A third benefit of using the **Cornell Format** is the ability to self-test to **discover that has and has not been learned before a test is taken** when something can still be done about it. A final benefit is often **better exam and final course grades**.

SETTING UP THE CORNELL FORMAT

The Cornell Format is set up by:

(1) **Draw a vertical line** the length of the page about 1/3 of the way from the left margin.
(2) **Using details, turn main points from lectures and textbooks into questions** and placed to the left of the line.
(3) **Answers are formed out of details** to explain main ideas and placed on the right side of the line.

This should be done as soon as possible after attending lectures to minimize forgetting. According to individual style, questions may be formulated before, during, or after reading text assignments.

The Cornell Format encourages reading for the purpose of finding specific information to include as answers to possible test questions. This technique directly attacks the problems of poor concentration and forgetting what was just read. For lectures, **The Cornell Format** is a **simple way to reorganize notes** into a format from which it is easy to learn and one that promotes, not hinders, learning.

HOW THE CORNELL FORMAT LOOKS

What are the 5 phases in mitosis?	**A. Interphase** **B. Prophase** **C. Metaphase** **D. Anaphase** **E. Telophase**
What happens in each phase?	**Interphase** **Chromatin spreads out in indistinct mass.**
	Prophase **1. Chromosomes condense into sets of chromatids.** **2. Nucleolus and nuclear envelope disappear.** **3. Spindle microtubules appear.**
	Metaphase **1. Spindle complete.** **2. Chomatids move to spindle equator.**
	etc.

After the important points have been placed in this format, the next step is to recite.

REGULAR AND REPEATED RECITATION
of notes is the most important step to combat forgetting.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE FOR ORGANIZING NOTES USING THE CORNELL FORMAT LOOKS

What are 4 reasons for good notes?	1. Provides material to study & review for exams. 2. Helps focus attention in class. 3. Writing what is to be learned is a first step in learning. 4. Provides material on which to self-test to see what has & has not been learned before an exam is taken when I can still do something about it.
What are 5 Tips for taking notes?	1. Leave a main idea and its details. 2. Leave space between one main idea & its details & another main idea & its details. 3. Use abbreviations, short phrases, symbols, diagram, sketches, etc. 4. Number the details. 5. Use a specific format such as the Cornell format or outlines, etc.
What are 4 things to do after taking lecture notes?	1. Always rewrite and reorganize notes. 2. Compare notes with other students in the class. 3. Make questions out of main ideas and use details for answers. 4. Add diagrams, sketches, charts, and mnemonics to enhance recall.
4 steps in reviewing notes?	1. Cover up the details. 2. Looking only at the main idea, recite the details aloud from memory without looking. 3. Uncover the details to see if you have learned the material or not. 4. Discover how many times you have to quiz yourself in this matter to get all the answers correct using this method of self-testing.

HOW TO RECITE INFORMATION IN THE CORNELL FORMAT

Step 1. **READ A QUESTION ALOUD** with the answer covered.

Step 2. **RECITE THE ANSWER ALOUD** as completely as possible from memory, as if lecturing a class. Some learners prefer to write an answer from memory as if taking a test. The best way is to do both but at different times.

Step 3. Then **CHECK** the accuracy of the answer.

Step 4. If **RECITED** correctly, move on to the next main idea.

Step 5. **IF AN ANSWER IS NOT RECALLED OR IS RECALLED INCORRECTLY, LOOK AT IT AND READ ALOUD.** Then, reread the question and recite aloud as much of the answer as possible from memory before checking. Do this step as many times as needed until the answer is recited or written correctly *from memory*. Then, place a check mark in pencil next to the question to indicate that you have not learned this answer, yet.

Step 6. **REVIEW THE "I DON'T KNOW IT" MATERIAL AT LEAST, EVERY OTHER DAY.** Review "learned" material about every 2-3 days to keep the information fresh and to prevent forgetting. As the number of times increases that the information is received, the ability to recall is increased and more accurate.

WHY THE CORNELL FORMAT WORKS

A human's memory contains an immediate memory, and short-term memory, and a long-term memory (Kintsch l970, Miller and Johnson-Laird l976). Items must be stored in long-term memory to be available for later recall whether for exams or on the job. Information must be held in the short-term memory about 5 seconds to move that information from short-term toward long-term memory (Simon l969). When information using the **Cornell Format** is recited properly, information is held in the memory 3 to 5 seconds and moves toward long-term memory.