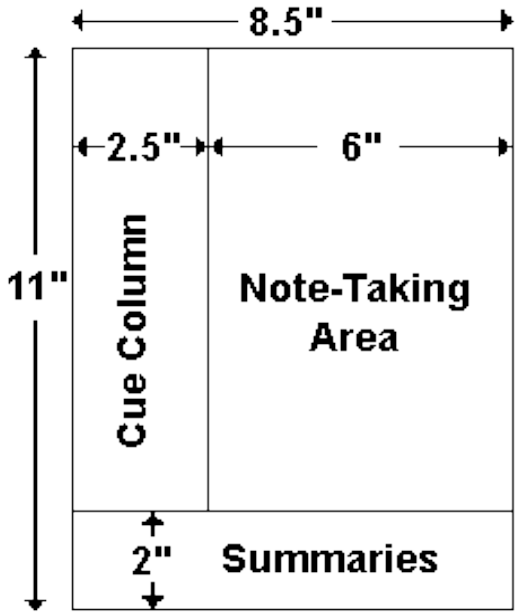
The Cornell System for Note-Taking

There is no one right way to take notes in class. One effective note-taking system is called The Cornell System, which was designed by Walter Pauk, emeritus, at Cornell University. To use this system you will need a large loose-leaf notebook. This allows you to insert class handouts, rearrange notes easily, or remove notes to spread them out and study.

Page Layout

The distinguishing feature of the Cornell system is the layout of the page on which you take your notes. The page layout includes large margins on the left and bottom of the page. A picture of this layout (not to scale), with dimensions, is shown below.



Cue (Recall) Column

The space to the left of the vertical margin should be reserved for a cue (or recall) column. You should not write in this area during the lecture, while you are taking notes. The cue column is not created until you review your notes (which, ideally, you do as soon after the lecture as possible, and certainly before the next lecture). As you study the material in your notes, you should devise questions which the notes answer (think "Jeopardy"). These questions are the "cues" that should be written in the cue column. By writing questions, you are forced to think about the lecture material in a way that clarifies meaning, reveals relationships, establishes continuity, strengthens memory, and attempts to predict test and exam items.

The Summaries

The area below the horizontal margin near the bottom of the page should be reserved for a summary of the notes on that page. A summary is brief -- at most, only a few sentences. The page summary provides a concise review of the important material on the page. More importantly, in writing a summary, you are forced to view the material in a way that allows you to see how it all fits together, in a general sense. The summary should be written in your own words... helping you to **own** the information.

http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/Departments/enreadtp/Cornell.html

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Note-Taking Area

The space to the right of the vertical margin is where you actually record your notes during the lecture. Pick a note-taking format with which you are comfortable -- there are no hard-and-fast rules for this aspect of the Cornell system. However, you should not attempt to transcribe verbatim every word spoken by the instructor. It is usually not difficult to separate the essential material from the non-essential. For instance, if information is written on the blackboard, it is probably important enough to include in your notes. To avoid missing information during the lecture, you should develop a system of abbreviations you understand, and you should write in telegraphic sentences (where you only include enough words to carry the essential meaning) or similar shorthand that is often used in cell phone text messages. As you take notes, realize that your emphasis should be on the key ideas, rather than the actual words used to convey those ideas.

Example:

	Climate classification, January 30
	I. System of climate classification
Koppen	*A. Invented by Vladimir Koppen, botanist. Saw biological activities as function of climatic characteristics*
What did he do? Why imp.?	*B. created climograph: displays mo'ly temp. & precip. on 1 graph*
Define climograph. How do you calculate problem?	*C. main concern was make it simple: rel'ship between potential evap and amt. of mois. rec'd at any geo. location*
Give example	
	II. Arctic climates: ET & EF. E avg. mo'ly temp. <50
List & define E climates	*ET: avg. temp. warmst mo 50F & <32F*
Characteristics ET? EF?	**tundra or continental subarctic*
	EF: avg. temp. in warmst mo. <32F
	**ice cap or arctic*
Define Humid Dry Boundary	*III. Humid Dry Boundary*
How is HBD calculated?	*A. Marks maj. diff. between humid & dry climate regime*
Example?	*B. Must know how boundary calculated*
***Summary**: Koppen was a botanist who invented a system of climate classification. He believed that characteristics of climate determined biological activities such as???? To classify climates, he developed the climograph, which displays variables of mo'ly temp. and precip. We are looking at the relationship between potential evaporation and amt. of moisture received at a particular geographic location. E-type climates are locations where avg. mo. temps are less than 50. Precip. is rec'd, but comes as snow. ET climates are tundra or continental subarctic. Warmest mo. = temps of 50-32F. EF climates are ice cap or arctic. Warmest mo. = below 32F.*	

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