

Cornell Notes Template

A structured note-taking system that builds review into the page itself.

How the Cornell method works

The Cornell method, developed at Cornell University in the 1950s, splits the page into three zones so that note-taking and review happen on the same sheet, instead of in separate steps.

1. Notes column (right, wide)

During class or while reading, write your main notes here. Use short phrases, not full sentences. Leave space between ideas — you'll fill gaps in later.

2. Cues column (left, narrow)

Within 24 hours, reread your notes and write a keyword, question, or prompt in the left column for each idea. These cues are what you'll use to quiz yourself later — cover the notes column and try to answer from the cue alone.

3. Summary (bottom)

At the end of the page, write 2–3 sentences summarizing the page in your own words. This step alone significantly improves retention, because it forces you to compress and restate the material instead of just rereading it.

PAIR IT WITH SPACED REPETITION

Use the cue column as the front of a flashcard and the notes as the back. Review the page again 1 day, 1 week, and 1 month later using our free spaced repetition calculator at beststudytips.com/tools/spaced-repetition-calculator.html

