

Wide Margin Notes

note taking

The most effective note-taking system is one that lets you take notes in a format that best suits the class and encourages you to engage with the information during your review. Leaving a wide left margin allows you to add information later and use your notes as a study tool when it comes time for review.

Steps for Wide-Margin Notes

1. Leave a 2 ½ inch margin and take your notes as usual, using abbreviations, symbols, and phrases instead of complete sentences.
2. When class is over, use the margin to create questions or label key phrases that your notes on the right answer or define.
3. To review, cover up the notes the right and try to recall the material using the questions or key terms in the margin. Then check your answers against your notes.

Other Note-Taking Tips

- Leave lots of white space in your notes in order to add more information from future lectures or to clarify points you may have missed.
- Always write the date and class name on every page of your notes.
- Listen for verbal and non-verbal cues from your faculty that a point is important—and then indicate that in some way in your notes.
- Listen for organizational cues to help guide your note-taking. “The four stages of...” or “Three reasons why” or “Therefore...”
- Create a symbol or cue to distinguish your thoughts from the lecturer’s thoughts.
- Highlight assignments or discussions of assignments in your notes so you can easily find them.
- Be sure to review your notes within 24 hours of class and reread all the notes you took that week on the weekend.

Wide Margin or Cornell Notes Format

	Date	Class	Page #
<p>AFTER LECTURE</p> <p>Create questions based on notes on the right</p> <p>Label any key terms</p> <p>Note important point!</p> <p>?! Clarify this idea later</p> <p>THIS WILL BE ON TEST!</p> <p>Use your left margin questions and key terms as the start of your daily review and study guide.</p>	<p>DURING LECTURE</p> <p>Write down facts and idea in phrases.</p> <p>Use abbreviations when possible.</p> <p>Leave white space when you miss something or don't understand a concept.</p> <p>AFTER LECTURE</p> <p>Reread your notes.</p> <p>Fill in blanks and make illegible writing clear.</p> <p>Start creating a "question bank" of possible test questions on the material covered.</p> <p>Now cover up your notes on the right and see if you can answer the questions you've created or define the key terms you've noted in the left margin.</p> <p>Read your notes over within 24 hours. Rereading right before you go to sleep allows your brain to do "offline processing" of your class notes.</p>		
<p>SUMMARY (After lecture, while it is still fresh in your mind)</p> <p>Draw a line at the bottom of your notes and using bullets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarize the big points or processes the lecture covered • what in particular did your faculty emphasize during the class? • use this space to collect and reflect on the subjects that were just covered 			