

# NOTETAKING OVERVIEW: 5 WAYS TO TAKE NOTES

Here are 5 notetaking methods that have been proven to be successful. Whether you are learning online or in-person, the physical act of writing can help you remember better than just listening or reading. Research shows that taking notes by hand is more effective than typing. finding a method of notetaking that works for you will improve your studying efficiency..and your preferred method may change based on the class, assignment, etc. Look over each method and see if there's one that works for you!



THE CORNELL METHOD  
THE OUTLINING METHOD  
THE CHARTING METHOD  
THE MAPPING METHOD  
THE SENTENCE METHOD

## SOME NOTES ABOUT NOTES...



### CONSIDER YOUR PURPOSE

Before you even begin taking notes, take some time to consider how you will use them later. Are you going to study for a test?

Writing a paper? Preparing a project or presentation?

Once you determine your purpose,  
you can make your notes work for you!

### WHAT DO YOU WRITE?

You don't have to write everything that your teacher says. Instead, try to focus on capturing the big picture, and include details that support this. Listen/look for key words such as "There are five main...", "In summary...", "A major reason is..." once you hear key words like these, you know that what comes next is probably important to know!

### WHAT ARE GOOD NOTES?

Efficient notes will:

- Include meaningful abbreviations and symbols
- Capture main ideas & important details
- include definitions, bullet points, diagrams, etc.

### CREATE NOTES YOU WILL USE!

There is no one good way to take notes. Good notes are not necessarily very detailed or very brief - the main thing to remember is that good notes are notes you can use!

## SOME NOTETAKING TIPS...

### READ AHEAD ... READ BEHIND!

Get familiar with your class syllabus so that you know the topics / focus of class ahead of time and what's going to be most important topics to focus on.

Read Ahead: Be prepared for class by previewing your textbook for what your teacher is going to cover next. This way, when your teacher presents information to you in class, it is not the first time you are exposed to this material.

Read Behind: Deepen your knowledge by reviewing material that was previously presented in class. Look back in your textbook and review your notes so that the information presented sticks with you!

Briefly review your notes from previous classes to help you situate the new ideas you'll learn in this class.

### DURING CLASS LECTURE

Focus on the main points your teacher discusses, then review your notes after class and fill in any gaps or define words that you didn't catch in class.

Jot down key words, names, dates, etc. then go back and define or explain them later

Use abbreviations and symbols

Write in bullets / phrases instead of complete sentences



### THE KEY IS WHAT HAPPENS AFTER CLASS (THE SAME DAY)

Help move the new knowledge from short-term to long-term memory by:

Taking a little bit of time to review the notes you took in class. Fill in & clarify.

Use colors to organize / highlight important concepts as well as identify what notes you took during class and what you filled in after class.

### WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFO ABOUT NOTETAKING?

Check out this free Canvas course presented by Cornell University:  
<https://canvas.cornell.edu/courses/1451>



# THE CORNELL METHOD



Whether you are reading your textbook, listening to a lecture or working online, you can use the Cornell Method of Notetaking. This method keeps your brain actively working in several different ways when learning. The process of writing details with associated questions helps you to apply, evaluate and analyze the information you learn.

The aim of The Cornell Method of Notetaking is to produce a concise but relevant set of notes, accompanied by cue questions and a summary intended to refresh your memory when reviewing your notes in the future.

The format below is a suggested page layout for this notetaking method. Feel free to adjust aspects of this system to see what works best for you, just be sure to keep the 3 basic components: details, cues & summary!

## HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

Summarize information by writing down concise points and sub-points in the details column. Then use the cues column to write down questions pertaining to these points.

Assume each detail could be used as an answer to the questions that you formulate in the cues column.

Finally, consolidate your knowledge by writing a short summary at the bottom of the page.

<b>COURSE/CHAPTER:</b>		<b>DATE:</b>
<b>TOPIC:</b>		
<b>CUES:</b> Write down cue questions here.  These questions are intended to help you remember or organize the material.  They can also help you identify what you need to study more.	<b>DETAILS:</b>  Write down facts here while you are reading your textbook, learning online, or listening to your teacher's lecture.  Use short statements, bullet points, abbreviations, symbols and drawings.  Leave space in between your notes to fill in with more details later.	
<b>SUMMARY:</b> Summarize what you've learned here.		



**NOTE:**  
Spend a few minutes after class completing your summary. This will help solidify what you learned in class. Also, review your notes just before your next class to make connections from one class to the next!

## 2 THE OUTLINING METHOD 2

The outlining method of notetaking helps you to take neat and organized notes using headings and bullet points to record important information. It is a versatile notetaking method that can be used during lectures, while reading your textbook or online learning. You can even turn your bullet points into study questions!

Start each section with a heading - this is the main idea that you will be learning about.  
Below the heading, you will add subtopics about that topic - indent them a bit on the page.  
Then you can add further details about the subtopics, again indenting them further on the page.

This specific format of organizing your notes is typically visually appealing and makes it easy to record important facts and details from a fast-paced lecture!

### HERE'S AN EXAMPLE OF HOW YOUR OUTLINE NOTES WILL LOOK:

▷ Main Idea

- ▷ sub topic
  - supporting fact
  - supporting fact
  - \* detail
  - supporting fact
- ▷ sub topic
  - supporting fact
  - \* detail
  - ↘ example

▷ Main Idea

- ▷ sub topic
  - supporting fact



Use cues from your textbook, such as chapter headings, as your main Ideas.

Use indentations to keep things neat & organized.

Read ahead in your textbook to preview the info that you will learn

Use color-coding and symbols to take your outlining to the next level!

This is one of the most common notetaking methods

# 3 THE CHARTING METHOD 3

The charting method of notetaking is useful when you need to categorize, classify or compare information in a logical manner. This method condenses notes by reducing the amount of writing involved. It is good for when you have facts that can be compartmentalized into tables and information that is somehow related to each other.

This method is not ideal for taking notes during live lecture. It is more beneficial when used as a summary table after you have analyzed the information presented to you.

## SO, WHERE DO YOU START?

First, you will need to identify the categories of information that you will be recording.

Then create your chart based on how many categories of information you have.

now you can begin filling in the chart with your notes.

	DETAIL CATEGORY 1	DETAIL CATEGORY 2	DETAIL CATEGORY 3
TOPIC A			
TOPIC B			
TOPIC C			



### NOTE:

You can create a table digitally on Microsoft Word, or just grab a pen and paper and draw the chart by hand.

Here's an  
Example

TYPES OF VINEGAR	DERIVED FROM:	USED FOR:	TASTE:
WINE VINEGAR	wine	french/ mediterranean cuisine	flavor of wine it was made from
MALT VINEGAR	malted barley	as a condiment	sweet, mild
RICE VINEGAR	rice wine	Asian dishes	slightly sweet, clean & elegant



## 4

## THE MAPPING METHOD

## 4

Did you know that the brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than it processes text! The mapping method, sometimes called mind mapping or concept mapping, can help you visualize information while making connections and identifying relationships among ideas you learn in class.

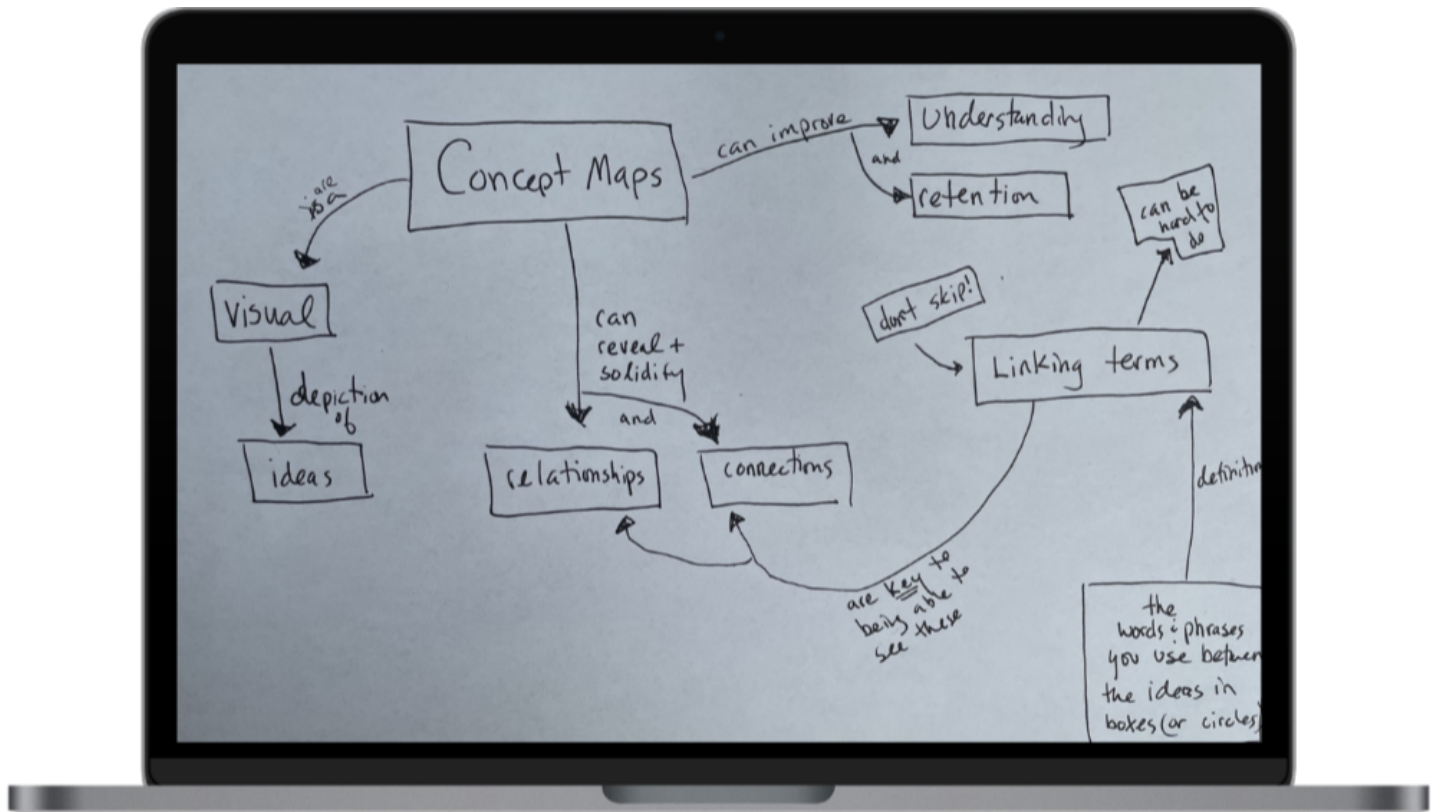
This method allows you to organize course material in a way that makes the most sense to you!

Basically, you will end up with a diagram with important ideas and terms, and how they are connected.

Concept maps can be a helpful study tool for any type of class. This personalized notetaking method can help you deepen your understanding and retain information better as well!

### CONCEPT MAP EXAMPLE, PROVIDED BY:

<https://live-learning-strategies-center.pantheonsite.io/how-to-study/studying-for-and-taking-exams/concept-maps/>



## HELPFUL TIPS FOR USING THE MAPPING METHOD

### Step 1: Do a mind dump!

Start by brainstorming the big-ideas you want to study.

Look through chapter headings, lecture notes and other class materials.

The order doesn't really matter, just get it all down on paper.

### Step 2: Choose a Main idea from your mind dump to map out

Put that main idea down on paper.

Write it somewhere in the middle of the page.

Circle it or put a box around it.

### Step 3: Start making connections

Jot down other terms and ideas that are related to your main idea on the page surrounding your main idea. Connect these ideas by drawing lines, arrows or other connections between concepts and terms

### Step 4: Insert linking terms

Add connecting words or phrases to demonstrate how your concepts and terms are related. Sometimes this is the most difficult part, but a very important step to deepen your understanding

#### NOTE:

There are many digital tools if you prefer creating concept maps on the computer. Just search "concept mapping" and find a digital tool that works for you!

## 5

# THE SENTENCE METHOD

## 5

The sentence method of notetaking is one of the most basic forms of note-taking, but just like all other methods, it has advantages and disadvantages.

This method is best used when new information is being presented to you and you can't yet decipher the main ideas from the other details. Also, if you have not had the chance to preview the information being presented so that you can implement one of the other methods of notetaking, you may want to try the sentence method. The biggest advantage of this method is that notes that are written in sentence format are oftentimes more comprehensive than other methods. Research has shown that the act of physically writing your notes increases your ability to recall information. One disadvantage is that because you are writing in complete sentences, you will have to write fast to keep up. Also, this method does not differentiate between major and minor points, or create connections between concepts.

### WANT TO GIVE THE SENTENCE METHOD A TRY? HERE'S WHAT TO DO:



Write down each sentence on a separate line, leaving space between each line.

Number your lines. This will make it easier to keep your notes organized and reference them at a later time to study.

Don't forget to review your notes later. Oftentimes when using the sentence method, you will actually want to rewrite your notes into one of the other formats of notetaking so that you can figure out main points, supporting details and connections between concepts.

## SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT NOTES...



Being committed to success is the key to success!  
Your engagement with your studies is more important than the method you choose.  
Experiment with the different methods of notetaking and Find what works for you. Use these tools to help you stay engaged and actively  
Listening and learning!