



# Note Taking

**How do you take  
notes?**

[amerenglis63@yahoo.com](mailto:amerenglis63@yahoo.com)  
<http://amerenglish.tripod.com>



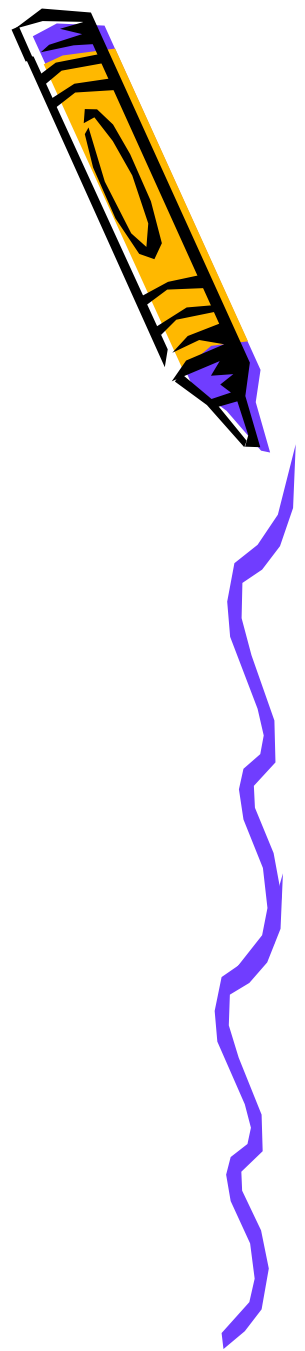
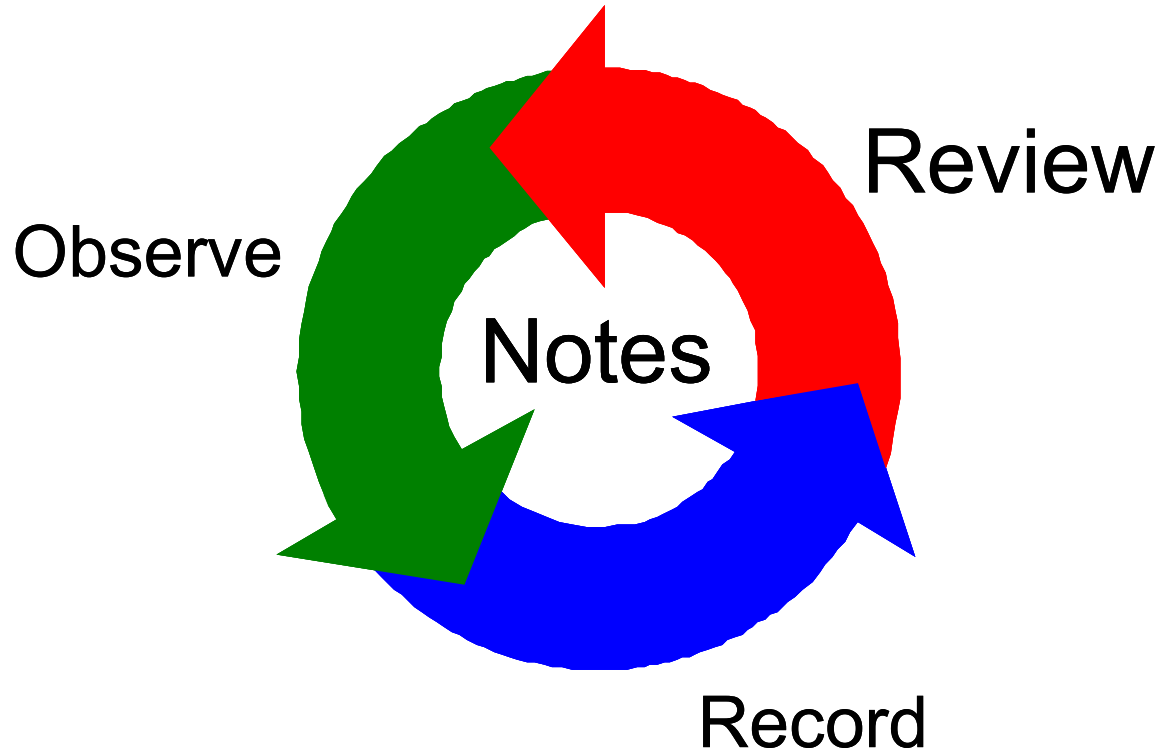
# Goal of Note Taking



- NOTES ARE SO ACCURATE AND DETAILED YOU DON'T NEED TO GO BACK TO THE BOOK TO STUDY.

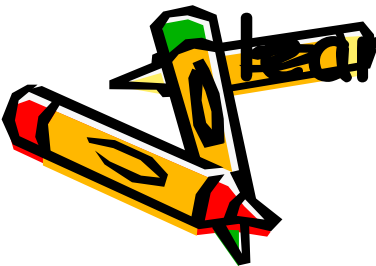
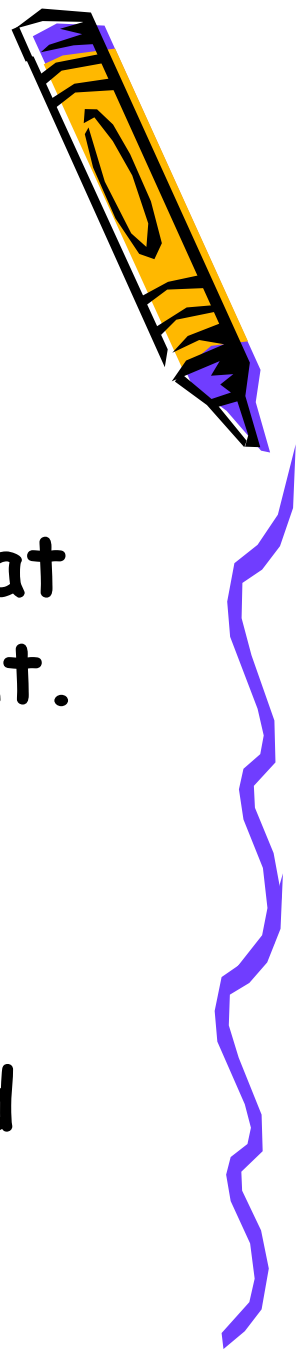


# The Note-Taking Process Flows



# Taking Notes

- Hearing something once is not enough to really learn it, and that is why note taking is so important. Clearly written, accurate notes help to capture information for later study and review. Taking notes also helps you to focus and learn during class time.



# Taking notes in class

- Sit close to the front of the class to minimize distractions.
- Be prepared to keep your notes neat and organized. Use a separate spiral-bound notebook for each subject, or use dividers in your loose-leaf notebook to make separate sections for each subject.
- Begin each note taking session at the top of a fresh page. Start by writing down the date.
- Do not try to write down everything the teacher says, but do try to record as many facts and ideas as you can. Mark important facts or main ideas with an asterisk or star or underline them.



# Taking notes in class Continued



- Use short sentences and phrases and easily remembered abbreviations and symbols. Some commonly used abbreviations and symbols are:
  - cf (compare)
  - ie (that is)
  - eg (for example)
  - w/ (with)
  - w/o (without)
  - &, + (and)
  - = (equals, is)
- Write clearly, and leave lots of blank space in the left margin or between ideas in case you need to add information later.
- Read over your notes as soon as you can after class. If there is anything you don't understand, ask the teacher at the next class.



# Taking notes from textbooks



- Organize your paper the same as for class notes.
  - Put the date at the top of the page.
  - Write down the name of the book and the chapter or section you will be taking notes from.
  - Leave space in the left margin or between ideas for your own comments or questions.
- Keep textbook notes separate from class notes. Use a separate notebook or a separate section in your loose-leaf notebook.
- Get a general idea of what the reading is about.
  - Read the introduction, headings and subheadings, and any paragraphs that summarize the content.
- Look at any illustrations or graphs and charts and read the captions.

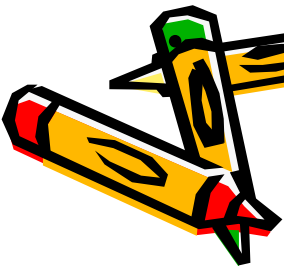


# Taking notes from textbooks

## Continued



- Go back and read the chapter or section carefully. Look for the main ideas.
- Try not to copy information directly from the textbook into your notes. Instead, summarize the information in your own words. This will help you to concentrate and learn.
- If you do copy directly from the textbook, use quotation marks to indicate that it is a direct quotation. Take care to copy the quotation exactly.



Summarize the main ideas at the end of your notes and circle them.



# Before the Lecture



- Even before you go to class to listen to a lecture or participate in a class discussion, you need to *prepare* to take notes. Pay attention to both the logistical and thinking/reviewing skills required for effective note taking:



# Before the Lecture Cont.



## Logistics:

- Use a loose-leaf binder, not a spiral-bound notebook. (This way you can organize your handouts and exams with your notes.)
- Date and number each page; keep each class separate in the binder

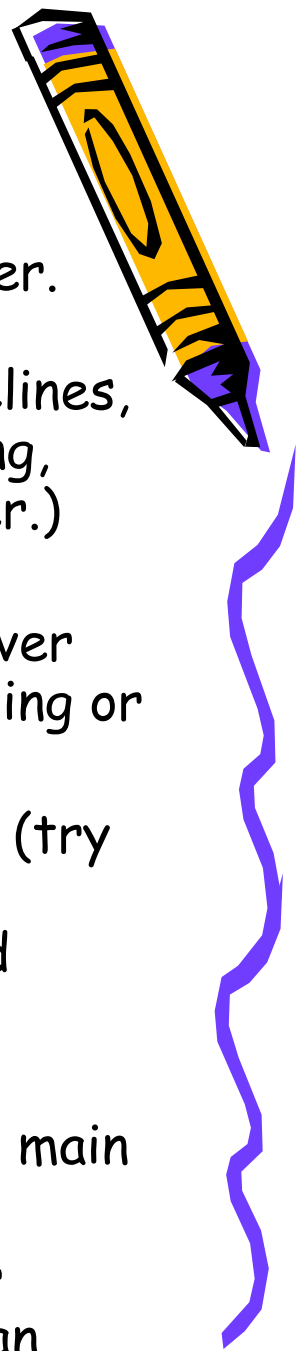


## Thinking/Reviewing:

- Review your notes from the previous class.
- Keep up with your reading/homework so you're not lost when class starts--it's hard to take notes when you're confused.
- Prepare questions for the teacher based on your reading/homework/



# During the Lecture



- Some teachers are better lecturers than others, and after a few classes you'll know more about the lecture style of each teacher. You can accommodate different styles by keeping some simple logistical tips in mind:



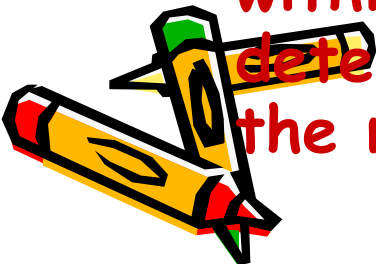
- Write on one side of the paper. (Use the back for sketching graphs/charts/pictures/timelines, writing questions, summarizing, making notes to yourself later.)
- Leave lots of blank space in between concepts and whenever you don't understand something or daydream.
- Use consistent abbreviations (try eliminating vowels), symbols (like arrows, underlining, etc.), and sentence fragments.
- Don't worry about creating elaborate outlines--just keep main ideas and examples together.
- Don't worry about spelling or handwriting (as long as you can read it).

# After the Lecture



What you do after the lecture is just as important as what you do during the lecture.

- Fill in the gaps by asking classmates, the teacher, or the TA what you need clarified.
- Consider swapping notes with classmates to see what they wrote down.
- Check spelling of crucial names/terms or other important information.
- Don't recopy your notes (a waste of time because your brain goes on automatic pilot).
- Instead of recopying your notes, review them within 24 hours. (Short-term memory deteriorates quickly, and you lose 50%-80% of the material if you don't review.)



# Continued

- Annotate your notes. (Mark what's important, add page numbers from textbook, etc.)
- Fill out the "Recall" column if you're using the Cornell system.
- Employ some critical thinking techniques to help the new information stick--summarize, synthesize with info from previous lectures/textbook/your life, find relationships, decide whether you agree/disagree, devise sample test questions based on the lecture, predict what the next lecture/reading will cover, etc.



# The Cornell System for Note Taking



- The Cornell system uses a double column format for taking notes. The lefthand column (called the Recall column) is reserved for marking main ideas and jotting down questions when you review your notes. The larger, righthand column (called the Capture column) is used for the notes themselves.



# Continued



- The Cornell system, useful for taking notes both in lectures and from textbooks or other print material, relies on four steps.
- If you'd like to see a sample of notes taken with the Cornell system, view [the following sample](#).



# Step 1



- The Cornell system begins with taking notes during the lecture using a simple format like this one:
- **main idea/keyword/name/date**
  - definition/explanation
  - supporting details
  - examples
  - etc.....
- Leave lots of blank space between ideas to make your notes easier to read later and to help you locate what information goes together and what needs to stay separate.
- Then begin with the next main idea/keyword/name/date and so on.





# Step 2



- The next step in the Cornell system begins after the lecture when you first start using the Recall column on the lefthand part of the page. Go through your notes and copy main ideas into the Recall column. Also write questions that prompt you to remember the accompanying details.



# Step 3

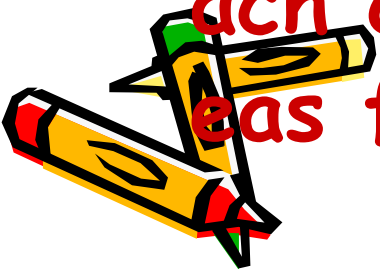
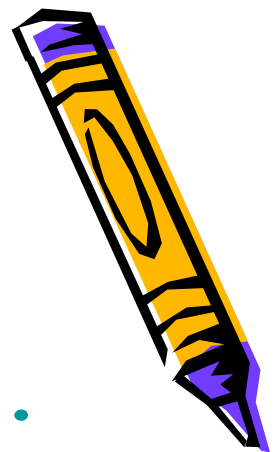


- In the next step of the Cornell system, you begin making the lecture material your own knowledge by covering up the Capture column of the notes and looking only at the main ideas and key words you've copied into the Recall column. Use the questions you've also jotted into the Recall column to recreate the main ideas of the lecture. Talk out loud. Become the teacher as you rehearse the information.
- This step reinforces what you know and helps you see what you don't. To work most effectively, though, you should review your notes right after each lecture and again every we



# Step 4

- The final step in the Cornell system helps you study for exams.
- Place your notes in front of you, overlapping, so that all the Capture columns are covered up. All the Recall columns are right next to each other--and there's your semester right in front of you! Now go down each column to review all the main ideas from the course.



# Taking Notes During Discussions



- Taking notes during discussions can be harder than taking notes during lectures because discussions tend to follow their own logic rather than a pre-determined path set by a speaker. Here are some pointers toward the most effective ways to compensate for the differences:



- Be sure to distinguish in your notes among what your professor says, what information comes from the book, what a classmate has said, and your own ideas that you wrote down.
- Evaluate the comments during the discussion.
- Write down the page numbers from the text that support people's comments.
- Write down all the information that the professor notes on the board.





- Pay particular attention when the prof repeats or rephrases another student's comment.
- Don't get so caught up in the emotions of a lively (or controversial) discussion that you ignore people who disagree with you or that you forget to take notes.
- Volunteer to share your thoughts--don't sit passively.
- Answer all of the professor's questions in your head.



# Using Notes to Write Papers

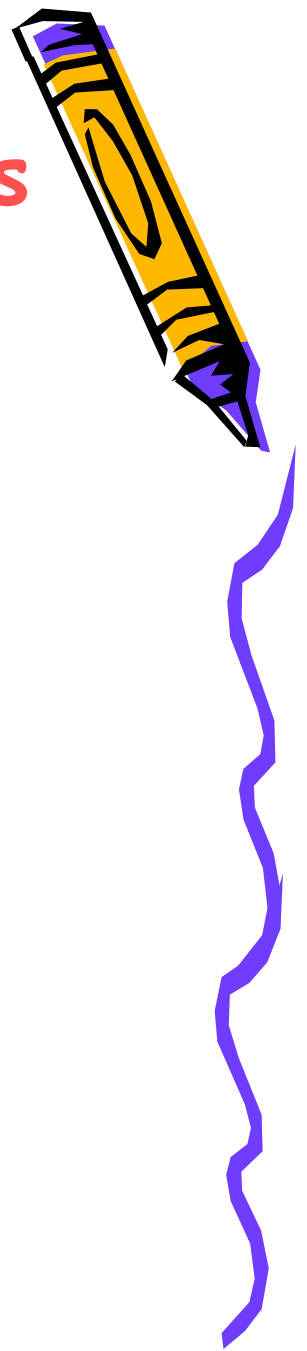


As you begin a paper based on class notes, here are some starting points:

- Use critical thinking techniques to reflect on the material--what is your opinion of it? What additional examples or explanations can you provide? Can you connect this material to other classes, outside reading, your own experiences?



- Be sure to distinguish in your notes among what your professor says, what information comes from the book, what a classmate has said, and your own ideas that you wrote down. This way, you can return to the source to search for more information (and credit the appropriate source).



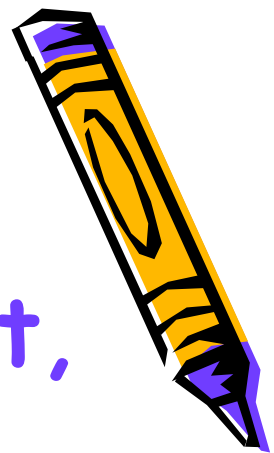


# Using Notes to Study for Exams



- You might try certain tactics to use your notes in preparation for essay exams:





- Review your notes regularly, not just right before the test, using a technique like the Cornell system or by explaining your notes aloud.

- Use your notes to create sample questions to study with.

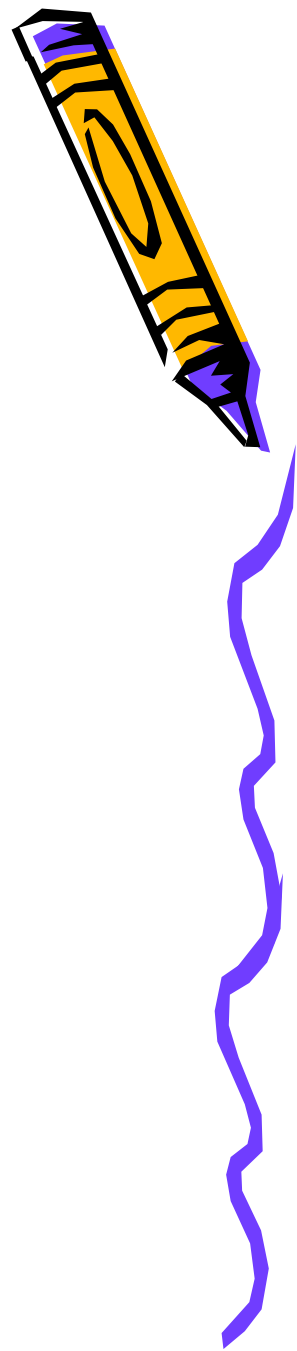
If you were the teacher, how would you test this material?



- Use critical thinking techniques to reflect on the material--what is your opinion of it? What additional examples or explanations can you provide? Can you connect this material to other classes, outside reading, your own experiences?
- Synthesize the information in your notes with your other assignments in the class (like what you read in the textbook that isn't covered in the lectures).



# PREPARING FOR NOTE TAKING

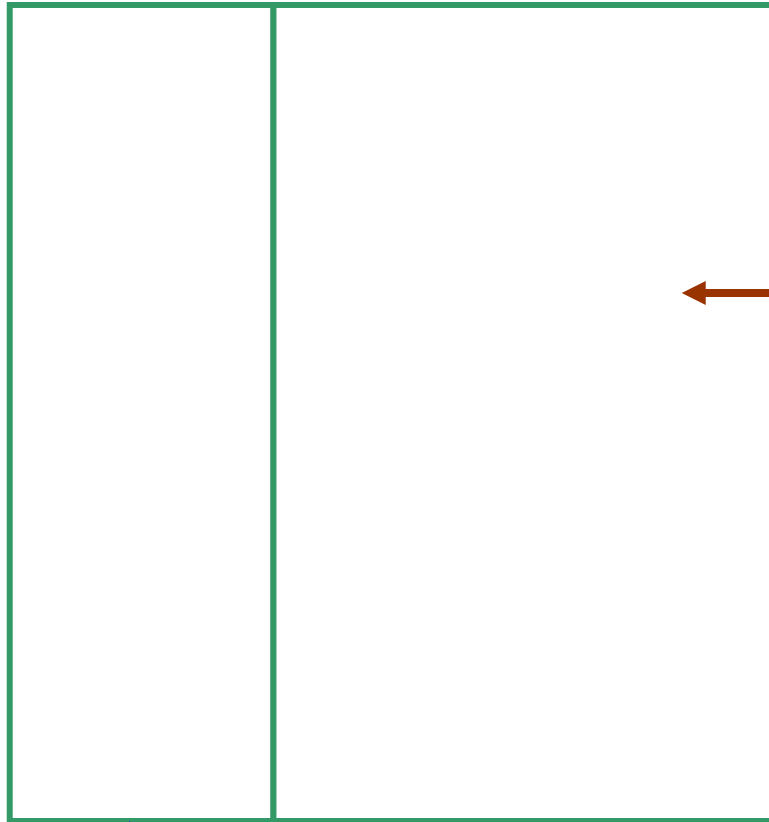
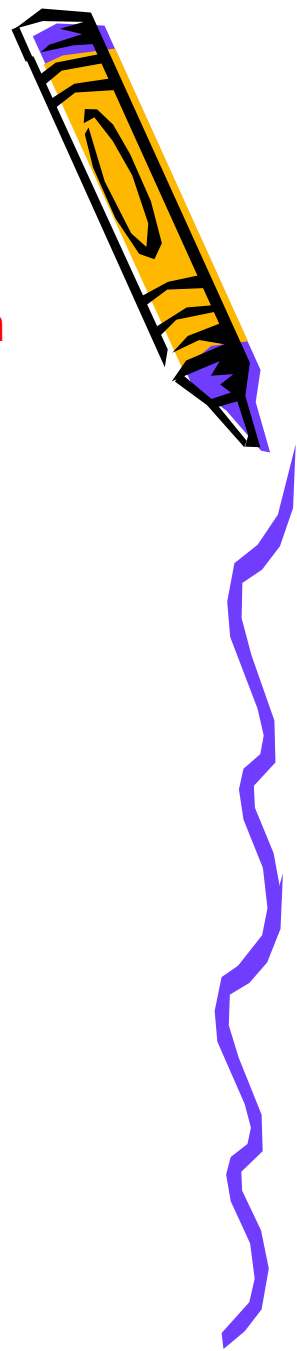


## PAPER-

- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCH MARGIN
- LAW NOTEBOOK
- CORNELL PAPER
- COURSE NAME
- CHAPTER #
- DATE



# Note Taking



1. Write notes in the right column.
2. Take notes only on the front side of notepaper
3. Number each page
4. Condense notes in the cue column

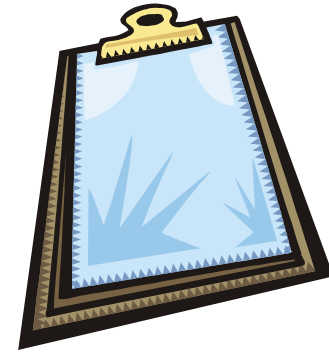
2 ½ inch margin  
Cue Column



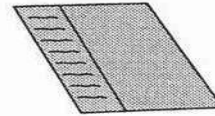
# THE FIVE "R'S"

- *Record* your notes in the right hand column
- *Reduce* your notes in the cue column on the left
- *Recite* out loud from the cue column
- *Reflect* on the information
- *Review* notes immediately and regularly

1. Record



2. Reduce



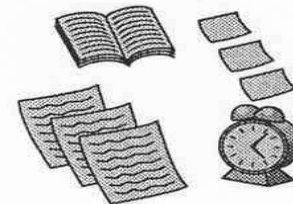
3. Recite



4. Reflect



5. Review



# Record

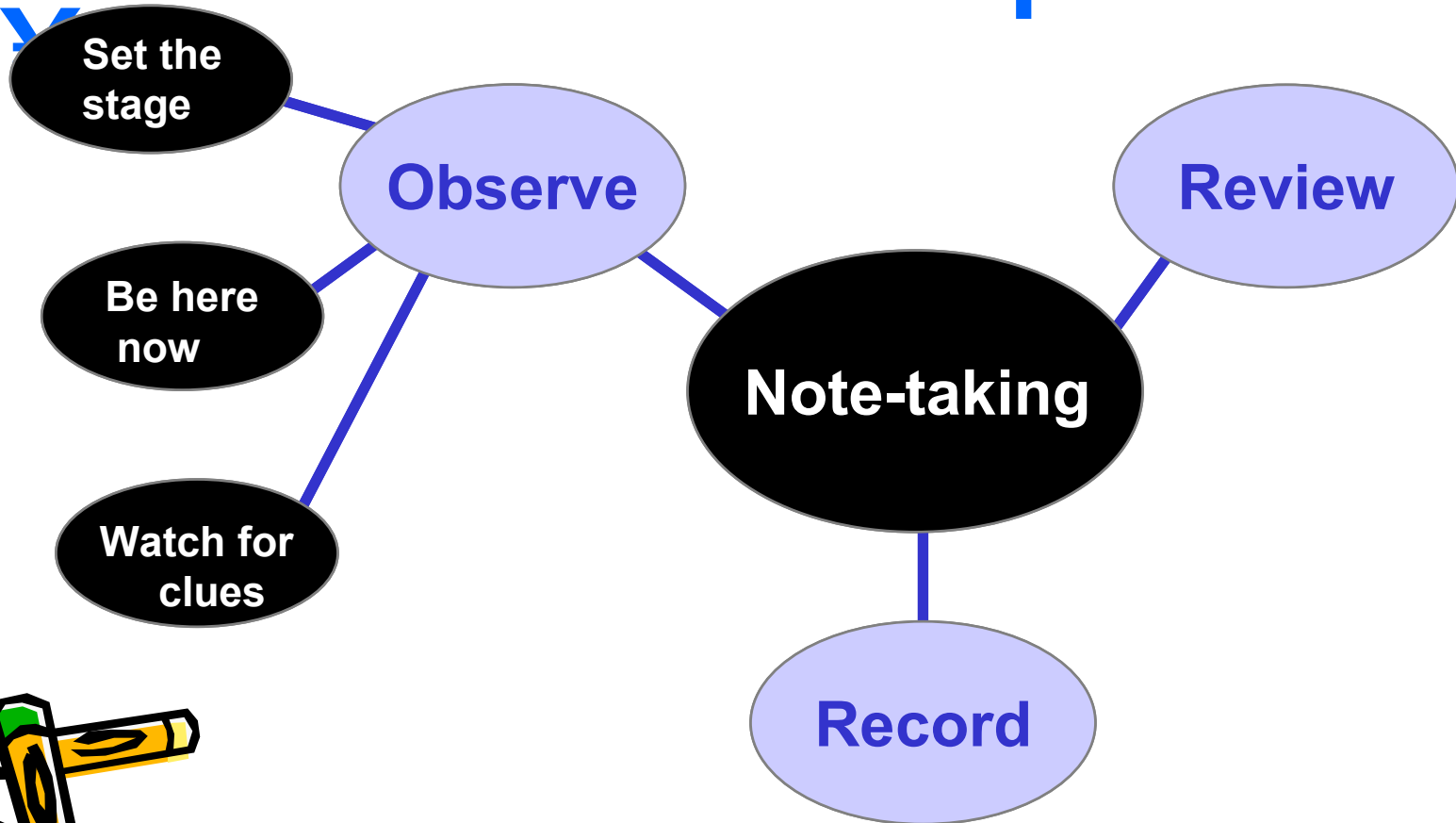


- Use key words
- Write notes in paragraphs
- Copy material from the board
- Use a three-ring binder
- Use only one side of the paper
- Use 3 by 5 cards



# RECORD

Create mind maps





# REDUCE



- **REDUCED VERSION OF TEXT.**
- **WRITE COMPLETE SENTENCES.**
- **OMIT NON-ESSENTIAL WORDS.**
- **MOVE HI-LITED INFORMATION INTO NOTES.**
- **NUMBER THE IDEAS**



# Remember!!!!

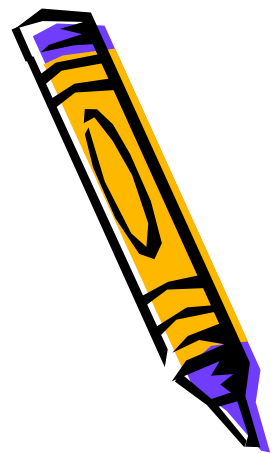
- *Record*

- *Reduce*

- *Recite*

- *Reflect*

- *Review*



# THE CORNELL NOTES<sup>4</sup>

“**CUE**  
**COLUMN**”

↳ **Notetaking Column** ↳

**1. RECORD:** DURING THE LECTURE, RECORD THE LECTURE USING CONCISE SENTENCES & KEYWORDS, IN THIS COLUMN.

## 2. QUESTIONS:

AFTER LECTURE, FORMULATE Qs BASED ON NOTES ON RHS COLUMN.  
QUESTIONS HELP:  
→ CLARIFY MEANING  
→ REVEAL RELATIONSHIP  
→ ESTABLISH CONTINUITY  
→ STRENGTHEN MEMORY

**3. RECITE:** COVER THIS COLUMN WITH A PIECE OF PAPER. THEN LOOK AT THE QUESTIONS FROM 2 & TRY TO ANSWER THEM FROM MEMORY, IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

## 4. REFLECT: REFLECT BY ASKING YOURSELF:

- WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS FACT?
- WHAT PRINCIPLE ARE THEY BASED ON?
- HOW CAN I APPLY THEM?
- HOW DO THEY FIT IN WITH WHAT I KNOW ALREADY?
- WHAT'S BEYOND THEM?

## 5. REVIEW: SPEND TIME REVIEWING ALL YOUR

PREVIOUS NOTES AT THE END OF EACH WEEK.

ADAPTED FROM

“HOW TO STUDY IN COLLEGE”

(7th ed.) BY W. PAUK

PENS AND MACHINE

# [SUMMARY]

AFTER CLASS, SUMMARIZE THE NOTES ON THIS PAGE.