STUDYSIM · CORNELL NOTES EXAMPLE

Cornell notes example: taking notes by hand vs. on a laptop

A real, filled-in Cornell page. Topic: the Mueller and Oppenheimer note-taking studies, as described by the Association for Psychological Science (APS). Cue questions on the left, notes on the right, summary at the bottom.

Course: Intro to Psychology · **Topic:** Laptop vs. longhand notes	**Source:** APS news release on Mueller & Oppenheimer, *Psychological Science*
Who ran the research, and where was it published?	• Pam Mueller (Princeton University) and Daniel Oppenheimer ran a series of studies. • Published in *Psychological Science*, a journal of the APS.
What did students do in the first study?	• 65 college students watched one of five TED Talks in small groups. • Some got laptops (disconnected from the internet), others got notebooks. • Told to take notes the way they normally would.
How were they tested?	• Three distractor tasks first, including a taxing working memory task. • 30 minutes later: factual-recall questions and conceptual-application questions about the talk.
Facts vs. concepts: who did better?	• Facts: both groups did equally well. • Concepts: laptop note-takers did significantly worse.
Why did laptop notes fall short?	• Laptop notes had more words and more verbatim overlap with the lecture. • More notes helped, but verbatim overlap hurt: the benefit of more content was canceled out by "mindless transcription." • Likely reason: longhand note-takers process more and select what matters.
Did a "don't copy word for word" warning fix it?	• No. Similar results even when students were told to avoid verbatim notes.
What happened one week later?	• With a chance to review their notes first, longhand note-takers still beat laptop note-takers on recall. • More verbatim overlap was again linked to worse conceptual scores.
What does this mean for me?	• Be aware of both the medium and the strategy. • Stylus tools may give a digital record while still forcing you to process (Mueller's suggestion). • Whatever the tool: write in my own words, not word for word.

SUMMARY (WRITE AFTER CLASS, 2-3 SENTENCES)

Typing tends to turn into word-for-word transcription, while writing by hand forces you to pick and paraphrase, and in these studies that showed up as better answers on conceptual questions, both 30 minutes and one week later. Whatever I take notes with, I should summarize in my own words and then quiz myself from the cue column.

How to review this page: cover the right column, read each cue question out loud, answer from memory, then uncover and check. Source: psychologicalscience.org, "Take Notes by Hand for Better Long-Term Comprehension." Made by StudySim · studysim.ai/blog/note-taking-methods

STUDYSIM · BLANK CORNELL TEMPLATE

Blank Cornell notes page

During class: notes in the right column, skip a few lines between ideas. After class: write a cue question on the left for each idea, then a 2-3 sentence summary at the bottom.

Course: _____ **Topic:** _____ **Date:** _____

SUMMARY

STUDYSIM · NOTE-TAKING METHOD PICKER

Which note-taking method fits this class?

Match the way the class is taught to a method. Sources: University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Goodnotes, Coursera.

If the class...	Try	Why
Is a lecture you will be tested on	Cornell	The cue column doubles as a built-in self-quiz
Follows a clear outline or agenda	Outline	Indents record main points and how details relate
Is heavy, well organized, or you can't predict the format	Mapping / mind map	Shows how each idea links to the others
Compares items on the same features (dates, people, elements)	Charting	Less writing; easy review of facts and comparisons
Is fast and dense and you can't see the structure yet	Sentence	Captures each new point on its own line
Is over and you are revising a whole unit	Boxing	One labeled box per subtopic gives a one-page summary
Is about concepts you need to understand, not just record	Flow-based	Own words plus arrows force you to process ideas

After-class checklist (same day)

☐ Fill in gaps and finish half-written phrases
☐ Write one cue question per main idea in the left column
☐ Write a 2-3 sentence summary in your own words
☐ Cover the notes and answer each cue out loud, then check
☐ Mark anything you got wrong and review it again in a few days

Weekly routine

When	What to do	Method
In class	Take notes in your chosen format, in your own words	Cornell, outline, mapping, charting or sentence
Same day	Add cues and a summary	Cornell
A few days later	Cover the notes and quiz yourself from the cues	Practice testing
End of the week	Condense the week onto one page	Boxing or charting
Before the exam	Turn the condensed notes into flashcards or a practice quiz	Practice testing, spaced out