

ACE Quick Guide to Cornell Notetaking

What is Cornell Notetaking?

It is important that you can **take effective notes** throughout your apprenticeship to aid **comprehension** and **retention of new learning**. Cornell notetaking is a method of taking notes that enables you to **organise, condense, and review your notes effectively**.

It can be beneficial to use Cornell notetaking for both:



Live events

Discover activities
and further reading



To use this method, you should divide your page into **three** different sections:

Notes column

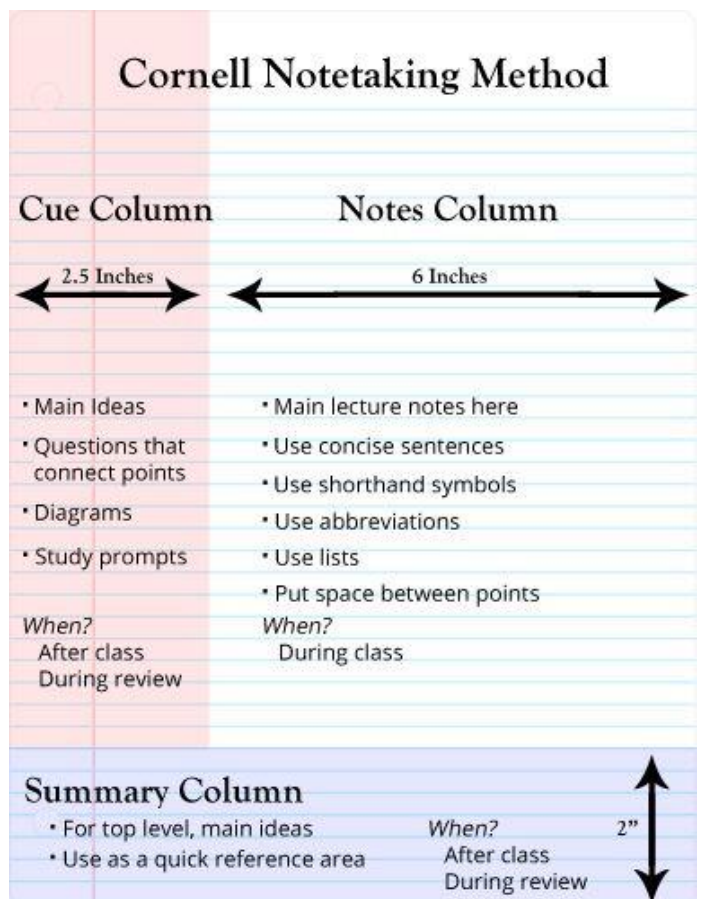
Cue column

Summary column

The **notes column** is where you **take your main notes** during the live event or whilst completing a Discover activity.

The **cue column** is where you review your notes. Once you have finished your main notes, here is where you **extract the main points** and **connect new learning to previous learning**.

The **summary column** is where you **summarise your notes** and **what you have learnt** in a few bullet points.



The Cue Column

It is important that you use the cue column effectively. Remember, this is where you review the main notes you have made. You should use your cue column to:

Extract **key words** and the **main points**.

Explore how **new learning links to previous learning**.

Make clear **links to your professional practice and organisation**.

Identify **areas you need to learn more about**.

Make a note of **anything you are unsure about and questions for your DLC and/or tutor**.

Top Tips for Cornell Notetaking



Use **headings, sub-headings, and bullet points** to organise your main notes column.



Leave clear spaces between each main idea and point.



Use your own words! Avoid simply copying and pasting information.



Include **colour** and **visual prompts** where possible, e.g. images, diagrams, mind-maps.



Allocate additional study time to review notes and develop the cue column.

(Burroughs, 2016)

Handwritten or Digital?

You can use Cornell Notetaking for **handwritten** or **digital notes**.

Popular notetaking apps such as Evernote have Cornell Notetaking templates. Or if you prefer to use a different notetaking app, you can simply create a table and use this as a Cornell Notetaking template.

Reference List

Burroughs, C. (2016) *How to choose the best note taking method*. Available at: <https://chloeburroughs.com/choose-best-note-taking-method/> (Accessed: 24 September 2026)

James Madison University (2023) *Learning success strategies: note-taking strategies*. Available at: <https://www.jmu.edu/studentaffairs/departments/deanofstudents/learning-success-strategies/strategies/note-taking.shtml> (Accessed: 24 September 2026)



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