

EPQ STUDY SKILLS GUIDE

EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING



What is the best way to take notes?

It's tempting to try to write down everything that looks important, but a little planning first will help you write much more effective notes.

- Read the chapter or article first before you write anything. This will give you a better appreciation of the main points and will guide your note taking.
- Mark direct quotes clearly using quote marks and colour.
- Record all the details needed to reference the source, including page numbers for quotes.
- Find a note taking system that works for you.

Cornell Notes (Pauk & Owens, 2012)

The Cornell note taking system was invented by Cornell University Professor of Education, Walter Pauk, in the 1940s.

The page is laid out in three sections designed to help you understand ideas and make connections between them, rather than just write down facts and figures.

Heading	Cue Section For questions based on your notes.
Notes Section Used to record content as short notes, bullet points and diagrams. This may be as text or as a concept map , showing lines of argument and connections between concepts.	
Summary Section For a single sentence summary.	

Using the system:

1. **Use your own words** rather than copying or close paraphrasing.
2. **Concentrate on connections** between concepts, rather than just listing facts.
3. **Think of questions** they raise. This strengthens your memory and helps make connections.
4. Cover the notes section and **try to answer your questions**. This will reveal any gaps in your understanding and show you what you need to follow up.
5. **Reflect** on the significance of your answers and how they connect with what you already know.
6. **Summarise** the page, ideally as a single sentence. This will help you organise your notes.

Further information

University of Oxford video on note taking:
www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/research?wssl=1

There are many online Cornell notes page generators, including this one:

<https://incompetech.com/graphpaper/cornellined/>

Reference:

Pauk, Walter; Owens, Ross J. Q. (2012). *How to Study in College* (10 ed.). Boston, MA: Wadsworth.



THE HELEN HAMLYN TRUST