Note-Taking Skills

**Overview:** This lesson adds to the learners’ note-taking skills. This is a lesson that can be repeated on Tuesday of Week Three or can be taught in two segments. Learners have been encouraged to take notes since their first day in class, during lessons, and with their readings. The “Thought for the Day” encourages the learner to take notes and use them for discussion purposes. This note-taking lesson re-enforces note taking during a speaking presentation, which will be practiced during the graduation presentations. It also presents the Cornell Note-Taking Method and Professor Walter Pauk’s five R’s of note taking. Finally, this lesson concludes by introducing the SQ4R study method, which is a systematic method of reflective study techniques.

**Educational Goal:** The goal of this lesson is for each learner to (1) comprehend the elements of note-taking techniques; (2) apply note-taking techniques to graduation presentations; and (3) value how note taking will help capture the wealth of information he or she is exposed to daily.

**Objective:** The learner will:
- **Cognitive:** — Explain the elements of note-taking techniques.
- **Affective:** — Appreciate how note taking will help capture the wealth of information he or she is exposed to daily.

**Skill/Standard Connections:** This lesson links to past lessons taught in *Learning Skills*. The lesson has connections to the Tennessee KSAs – *Writing* and *Listen for Understanding* and the EFF Standards – *Convey Ideas in Writing* and *Listen Actively*. (Appendix II)

**Teaching Strategy:** This note-taking lesson starts by introducing the Cornell Note-Taking Method and introduces a helpful form. The main point to this method is the refinement of class notes into key words and phrases, as well as adding reflection and summarization to the process.
Lesson Plan

Introduction

**Homework Review:** Workbooks, Independent Study

**Thought for the Day**
“If you really do put a small value upon yourself, rest assured that the world will not raise your price.” — Anonymous

Things do not get done when we continue to put them off. Prioritize what you need to do. Prioritizing means first things first. Don’t let others or yourself stop you from doing what should be done. Accomplishing and finishing the challenging things is half the battle

**Attention:** Let’s talk about note taking.

**Question:** Why do we need to take notes?

**Motivation:** Note taking is an important study skill that helps us do better. We need it to call up important information, to review information, and to store that information so we can use it later.

This lesson will briefly show you some more techniques to use with taking notes and studying.

Body of Lesson

We will learn an easy method of note taking called the Cornell Note-Taking Method.

You will actually get a chance to use the Cornell method. Learners have been encouraged to take notes since their first day in class, during lessons, and with their readings. The “Thought for the Day” encourages the learner to take notes and use them for discussion purposes.
Main Point 1: The Cornell Note-Taking Method

College study guides say that one of the most common and obvious deficiencies in learner’s study methods has to do with taking notes and the use of notes.

We would like to show you a method that will help you see the key elements note taking should include. It isn’t easy to change old habits so you will have to see whether this system, another system, or a combination of methods works best for you.

The Cornell method uses a simple three-step process. First, you need to take class notes: main ideas, supporting details, examples, etc. This may be what you already try to do, so this element is familiar to you. Secondly, you identify and pull out the keywords, key ideas, etc., that are the main focus. Finally, after the class is over, you should thoughtfully reflect on the meaning of what you learned, summarize it, and take action on the material. Taking action means to see how you can use the new insights.

This method is a step-by-step process that brings results because you are working with the information in several ways, not just writing it down and putting it away.

Notes do not have to be perfect; they belong to you. You get better with more and more practice.

The Cornell method is only one way of note taking; there are many. You may already have your own style of taking notes, or you may have not really settled on a method. You need to take a hard look at all the methods and use one that works for you. We offer this method to get you started.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cornell Note-Taking Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Keywords</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Class Notes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Key Ideas</strong></td>
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<td>(Main Ideas, Supporting Details, Etc.)</td>
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<td><strong>Etc.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reflections, Summary, and Actions</strong></td>
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Teaching Tip

Work with the learner responses and feelings about note taking. Reinforce the bottom line that note taking is an important study skill that will always be needed on a successful journey in education, work, and home, as well as throughout the rest of your life.
Main Point 2: Five R’s of Note Taking
Professor Walter Pauk of the Study Center at Cornell University describes five essential elements to note taking. He calls these elements the five R’s of note taking.

1. **Recording**: Writing down key words, phrases, facts, main ideas, and key concepts.

2. **Reducing**: This step reduces the learner’s notes into summary form for quick studying and preparation for a test.

3. **Reciting**: Learners should review and rephrase their notes as soon as possible after class putting the notes into their own words. This step makes notes easier to understand their own thoughts and meaning.

4. **Reflecting**: Something that many learners don’t grasp is that notes (concepts, ideas, and keywords) should be thought about. It is easy to fall into the trap of reciting notes by rote. The key is to think about the concepts, their meaning, and implications. Through this thoughtful process, learners are getting the most of out of note taking and classes.

5. **Reviewing**: Learners should periodically review to keep the information fresh in your mind. One real secret of successful studying is to know when, how, and what to review. Like an accomplished performer, it is the quality of the review that makes a difference. Reviewing is an intentional, intense, and active process, not a passive process.

Take a hard look at all these elements and use the ones that work for you. Again, we offer these five elements to help get you started.

Main Point 3: The SQ3R Study Method
Another popular technique, which matches the five R’s, is the SQ3R method. This method has five steps and must be done in the proper sequence for the best results. This approach is primarily for reading textbooks but can be used for classroom discussions.

1. **Survey**: This simply means to scan the written material. This quick review should reveal the general content and structure of the concepts. Scan the headings, subheadings, topic sentences of paragraphs, graphics, and pictures. This will provide a clear overview of the information to be covered.
2. **Question:** Develop questions concerning what the materials are about. As the learner scans the material, generate questions to be answered later by careful reading.

3. **Read:** Read all of the material carefully and look for the answers to the questions that were developed. Learners should take notes as they read the material, which expands on the concepts and answers to the questions.

4. **Recite:** Learners should rephrase notes into their own words as is done in the five R’s method.

5. **Review:** Again as in the five R’s, learners should periodically review their notes to keep the information fresh in their mind.

Again, there are many study methods and this method is only one of many. We offer it to add to your toolbox.

**Conclusion**

**Re-Motivation:** Note taking is an extremely important skill that is underestimated. It is critical for learners to master note taking for school, work, and life in general.

**Close:** A good reason to take notes is that you can never re-listen to a speech or a presentation. You must take every opportunity record and keep information so you can use it later.

**NOTE:** If students enter *Learning Skills* every two weeks, Lesson 27, “Graduation Day,” can be used at this time (i.e., on the last day of the second and fourth weeks of the four-week curriculum).