

# How to Take Cornell Notes

Cornell notes are a very specific note taking method. Research has shown that taking Cornell notes helps students learn, study, and retain information much more effectively than other note taking methods. Taking Cornell notes ensures review of notes each day, reinforces learning, encourages reflection, and provides a quick review of the material learned. In biology this year, all of your notes will be taken in the Cornell note format. Your notes will be neatly organized in a binder, which will make them easier to study. Your notes will be checked each day for completeness and accuracy.

There are four different parts to a page of Cornell notes: the format, notes, study questions, and summary. We will take a look at each part individually to build a set of Cornell notes together.

## Format

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Every time you take notes in class, you will use a printed template that will be passed out at the beginning of the period.

- The **Title** of the notes will always be printed across the top of the page
- Below the title there will be a section labeled **Today's Goals**. The goals for the day are questions that you should be able to answer in detail by the time we are finished with our notes. They will always be written on the front board and you will need to copy them onto your paper.
- The right hand side of the paper is labeled **Notes**, the left hand side of the paper is labeled **Questions**, and the bottom of the paper is labeled **Summary**. The requirements for each of these sections are discussed below.

## Notes

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The **Notes** section is reserved for the actual notes that you will be writing down about the topic being covered. Notes can be taken from a lecture in class, a movie, or from a textbook reading. Your notes should be written according to the following guidelines:

- Written on the right hand side of the page under the **Notes** label
- Written in outline format
- Ok to use abbreviations and/or shorthand

## Questions

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The **Questions** section is reserved for study questions that are written about the notes that have been taken. Questions should be completed for homework every time notes are taken. Writing questions helps you reinforce what you learned because it forces you to re-read and think about your notes. Questions can also be used as a study tool to help you quiz yourself before an exam. Your questions should be written according to the following guidelines:

- Written on the left hand side of the page under your **Questions** label
- Written directly next to the notes they are referring to
- Abbreviations should not be used
- Questions should address all of the topics covered in the hard notes
- Questions should be good quality study questions and possible test questions
  - Should be "thinker" questions
  - Should include a variety of questions – use your "question words" list to help you write more difficult, higher-level questions that make you think
  - DO NOT use yes or no questions, multiple choice, fill in the blank, or true/false questions

## Summary

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The bottom of your notes page is reserved for a summary. In the summary section, you should write a paragraph or two that summarizes all of the notes you took. Your summary should briefly address all major topics covered in the notes section without restating them word for word. Summaries should be formal but concise paragraphs written in clear and complete sentences. Writing a summary of your notes is beneficial because it forces you to re-read and process your notes a third time. This reinforces your understanding and retention of the material. Summaries should be completed for homework whenever notes are taken.

**EVERY** time notes are taken in class, questions and summaries automatically become homework for the night. Notes will be checked in class the following day to make sure all aspects of the notes have been completed.

## **LIST OF "QUESTION WORDS"**

Remember that the questions you write on the left hand side of a note page should be high quality study questions that really help you review each topic addressed in the notes. There are several different types of questions that can be written about a given topic. Some questions ask you to simply recall facts that you have learned. Although memorizing facts is often important, it does not require you to use higher-level critical thinking skills. Therefore, in order to function as an effective study tool, your questions should include a variety of question types to help you think about each topic on several different levels. Use the "question words" below to help you write a variety of questions.

### **Lower-Level Question Words**

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- How
- Know
- Define
- List
- Memorize

### **Higher-Level Question Words**

- Apply
- Analyze
- Compare
- Contrast
- Explain
- Diagram
- Summarize
- Organize
- Why
- How
- Should
- Could

**NOTE:** These are not the ONLY words that you may use to write questions. This is just a list to help you get started and to ensure that you are using a nice variety of questions!

**Remember that you should NOT use yes or no questions, fill in the blanks, true/false, or multiple choice questions.**

# Cornell Notes Example

## Class Notes: Infectious Disease

**Today's Goals:** What causes disease? How are infectious diseases transmitted?

| Questions  | Notes   |
|--|---|
| <p>Compare and contrast a disease and an injury.</p> <p>What are some things that can cause disease?</p> <p>Define Germ Theory</p> <p>Who developed Germ theory?</p> <p>Define pathogens.</p> <p>Explain some ways infectious diseases are spread.</p> <p>List examples of infectious diseases spread by coughing and sneezing.</p> <p>List and explain Koch's Postulates</p> <p>Discuss how Koch's Postulates help scientists determine if a certain microorganism is responsible for causing a certain infectious disease.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disease - a change that interferes with the normal way a body works, not an injury</li> <li>• Can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, agents in the environment, or can be inherited</li> <li>• Infectious disease - caused by pathogens</li> </ul> <p><u>A. The Germ Theory of Disease</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Germ theory of infectious disease - infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms</li> <li>2. Based on the work of Pasteur and Koch</li> <li>3. Not all infections create a disease, disease is when the pathogen destroys cells</li> <li>4. Pathogen = any disease causing agent (ex. bacterium, protozoan, other microorganisms)</li> <li>5. Organism infected with pathogen = a host</li> </ol> <p><u>B. How is Infectious Disease Spread?</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A lot of pathogens are in the environment</li> <li>2. Ways to spread pathogens               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Enter through skin (ex. Tetanus)</li> <li>b. Spread through coughing and sneezing (ex. Common cold, mumps, measles)</li> <li>c. Contaminated water</li> <li>d. Ticks and mosquitoes</li> <li>e. Sexual contact</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><u>C. Germ Theory of Infectious Disease</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Germ theory of infectious disease - infectious diseases are caused by microorganisms</li> <li>2. Koch's Postulates               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The microorganism should always be found in the body of the host organism and not in a healthy organism</li> <li>b. The microorganism must be isolated and grown in a pure culture away from the host</li> <li>c. When the microorganism is grown in pure culture and injected into a new host organism they produce disease</li> <li>d. The same microorganisms should be re-isolated from the second host and grown in a pure culture after which the microorganisms should still be the same as the original microorganisms</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |

### Summary

Diseases occur when the body does not work in the normal way excluding an injury. A person is infected with a disease when their body is invaded by a pathogen. Infectious disease can spread in many ways including entering through the skin, coughing and sneezing, sexual contact and other paths. Germ theory states that microorganisms spread disease. Koch's Postulates explain how scientists can determine a cause and effect relationship between a microorganism and an infectious disease.