



The Five Phases of the Focused Note-Taking Process

AVID's focused note-taking process has five phases. It is important to note that while *applying learning* is the last phase of the process, it is essential that it inform the first phase, as the note-taking format should be shaped by the note-taking purpose. When teaching the focused note-taking process, educators need to determine how students will use their notes and set up the format appropriately. It is crucial for educators to model and invite students to engage in this thought process so that note-taking becomes a powerful and portable learning tool students can carry with them throughout their educational experience.

Taking Notes 	Create the notes. Select a note-taking format, set up the note page, record the Essential Question, and take notes based on an information source (lecture, book, website, article, video, etc.), selecting, paraphrasing, and arranging information in a way that meets your note-taking objective.
Processing Notes 	Think about the notes. Revise notes—by underlining, highlighting, circling, chunking, questioning, adding, deleting—to identify, select, sort, organize, and classify main ideas and details. Evaluate the relative importance of information and ideas in the notes.
Connecting Thinking 	Think beyond the notes. Analyze the notes using inquiry to make connections and deepen content knowledge by asking questions and adding your own thinking to create greater understanding, identify gaps or points of confusion, and connect your new learning to what you already know.
Summarizing and Reflecting on Learning 	Think about the notes as a whole. Pull together the most important aspects of your notes and your thinking about them to craft a summary that captures the meaning and importance of the content and reflects on how the learning helps you meet the note-taking objective.
Applying Learning 	Use the notes. Save and revisit your notes as a resource or learning tool to help you apply or demonstrate what you have learned.

Planning for Note-Taking

Thoughtful preparation on the part of the instructor can ensure student success in the focused note-taking process. Educators can use the following questions prior to beginning a learning experience to clarify students' note-taking needs and provide guidance for them as necessary.

1. What are the overall learning goals for this lesson, activity, assignment, or experience?
2. How will I determine whether a student is successful? What indicators will I use to measure success?
3. Where will note-taking be necessary in this learning experience?
4. What will be the purpose of the notes? How will students use their notes to achieve success?
5. What questions or objectives can I provide the students to let them know how to focus their efforts?
6. What should the students' notes contain? Will all learners have similar notes, or will the content vary?
7. What resources might students use for reference when they revise their notes?
8. What type or format of notes will be most conducive to the note-taking purpose?
9. How much structure will I need to provide in advance for the students' notes?
10. Where are my students likely to encounter difficulty in the learning or the note-taking? What kind of assistance or instruction will I need to provide before or during the process? Is there a digital tool that could support this need?
11. When will feedback be useful to the students in the note-taking process? What kind of feedback will be most beneficial? How will I provide that feedback?

This resource is for educators to use to teach students how to set up their paper for Cornell notes. Students should be encouraged to set up their own note-taking format rather than use pre-formatted note paper.

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Two-Column Notes Ideas

Column 1	Column 2
Main Idea	Details
Claim	Evidence
Cause	Effect
Concept	Example
Term	Definition
Hypothesis	Results
Steps (in a process)	What the Step Looks Like (drawing or explanation)
Historical Event	Details
Character (in a story)	Traits
Philosopher's Name	Major Ideas and Works
Question	Answer
Vocabulary Word and Definition	Visual Representation, Sketch, or Example
Math Problem Solved (show work)	Explanation of the Steps to Solve It
Idea	Commentary (pros, cons, considerations)
Person	Accomplishments
Issue	Connection to Self, Another Text, or the World
Component (e.g., part of a cell, branch of government)	Function
Fact/Person/Term/Event/Work	Significance
Example	Non-example

Three-Column Notes Ideas

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3
First Source	Second Source	Connections
Differences of First Idea	Similarities	Differences of Second Idea
Vocabulary Term	Definition/Explanation	Visual or Sentence
Know	Want to Know	Learned
Description	Information	Importance
Something Being Observed	Observations	Conclusions
Name	Characteristics	Real-World Examples
Questions	Book Notes	Class Notes
Topic	First Source	Second Source
Cause	Effect	Importance
Pre-Reading Thoughts	Reading Notes	Post-Reading Thoughts
Person	Accomplishments	Challenges
Concept	Advantages	Disadvantages
Artwork and Artist	What the Book Says About It	Thoughts and Observations
Title	Summary	Themes
Claim	Evidence	Reasoning