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.

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](http://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/cornelllined/](https://incompetech.com/graphpaper/cornelllined/)

Reference: