Note
Taking
The Cornell System
Before you start

You don’t need to have studied other units in this series before taking this one, but if you want to learn how to find the best sources of information, Before studying this unit, you can find out more in the Oxlibris units on:

• Effective Online Searches
• Evaluating Online Resources
Plan first

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. This will give you a much better appreciation of the main points and will guide your note taking.
Tips on taking notes

• Use your own words rather than copying or close paraphrasing.
• Mark direct quotes clearly using quote marks or colour.
• Record all the details needed to reference the source, including page numbers for quotes.
• Find a note taking system that works for you.
This system was invented by Professor 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.
Using Cornell Notes

1. **Use your own words**. Don’t copy or paraphrase closely.

2. **Concentrate on connections** between concepts, rather than just listing facts.

3. **Think of questions** your notes raise. This strengthens your memory and helps you make connections.

4. Cover the notes section and **try to answer your questions**. This reveals gaps in your understanding and 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.
One morning, Little Red Riding Hood’s mother asked her to take a basket of food to her sick grandmother. Grandmother’s house was in the woods and Mother warned her daughter not to stray from the path.

Little Red Riding hood set off along the forest path, carrying the basket. Little did she know that The Big Bad Wolf was following her, hiding behind trees and bushes until they were deep into the forest. He then called out “Good morning little girl, where are you going with your basket?” Little Red Riding Hood replied that she was taking it to grandmother who lived in the woods. The Big Bad Wolf knew this house and hatched a plan. He said “Perhaps you could pick some flowers for your grandmother?” Little Red Riding Hood was a little worried about leaving the path to do so, but picked a nice bunch of wild flowers. Meanwhile, the wolf ran to Grandmother's house, knocked on the door and, mimicking the girl's voice, fooled her into opening it. The wolf then swallowed her whole!

Despite having just eaten a whole grandmother, the wolf was still hungry. He put on a nightdress and cap from the grandmother’s wardrobe, and climbed into bed, pulling up the covers to his chin. When Little Red Riding Hood arrived, she noticed something indefinably strange about her grandmother. "What a deep voice you have, Grandmother!" she says. “All the better to greet you with“ replies the wolf. “What big eyes you have!” says the girl. "All the better to see you with" responds the wolf, grinning. "What big teeth you have!" “All The better to eat you with!“ responds the wolf, leaping out of bed to seize the girl.

She ran from the house shouting for help. A nearby woodcutter heard her cries and leaped to the rescue. He cut the wolf open with his axe, enabling Grandmother to emerge whole and unscathed from the belly of the wolf!
Little Red Riding Hood

Mother asks LRRH to take basket to grandmother. Stay on the path.

Wolf follows LRRH then delays her - strays from path to pick flowers.

Wolf runs ahead, eats grandmother WHOLE. Assumes her identity to fool LRR: nightdress & cap in bed.

LRRH fooled yet realises something is amiss: Q: Defective vision?
- deep voice: Greet
- big eyes: See
- “What big teeth you have, Grandmother!”: EAT

W leaps; LRRH runs.

Woodcutter cuts W open with axe. Q: Woodcutter - from where???
G emerges unharmed Q: Possible?
Complete the Cues Section

Use your notes as a prompt for questions. Write these in the cues section.

**Little Red Riding Hood**

*EPQ study skills course unit 3. Note Taking, Bodleian Libraries 2020*

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G emerges unharmed *Q: Possible?*

**Which aspects are exaggerated?**

**Are events a consequence of straying from the path?**

**How are the consequences resolved?**
### Little Red Riding Hood (EPQ study skills course unit 3. Note Taking, Bodleian Libraries 2020)

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### Questions

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Finally, try to summarise everything, ideally in just a single sentence, and write this in the Summary section.
**Example Summary**

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Folk tale reinforcing listening to Mum, staying on the path, and not talking to strange wolves!
Note taking checklist

- Read the chapter or article through first.
- Record all details needed to reference sources
- Use your own words
- Highlight any direct quotes using quotation marks
- Concentrate on connections between concepts
- Think of questions and try to answer them
- Reflect on your answers
- Summarise your notes
Find out More

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

Try an online Cornell notes page generator, such as this one:
https://incompetech.com/graphpaper/cornelllined/

Use the handy study guide: EPQ Effective note taking

Reference: