



## Improve your memory

Use this Student Success Guide to improve your memory.

### Ten Steps to Help Your Memory

1. Pay attention while you are learning.
2. Get information right the first time.
3. Understand the information completely.
4. Try to see the significance of what you are learning. In order to remember it, you must have a reason for learning it.
5. See how the information/assignment relates to you. Making a personal connection strengthens the recall process.
6. Connect new material to facts/experiences you already know through association and visualization.
7. Organize the material into smaller groupings or subjects so that you can readily memorize it.
8. Review what you have learned often.
9. Reinforce what you have learned through repetition.
10. Recite what you have learned as often as possible.

### Visualization

Most of us remember what we see much longer than what we read or hear. Therefore, trying to visualize everything that you learn, no matter how abstract, will assist in your learning process.

Ask yourself:

1. Can I draw it?
2. Can I make it into a chart or graph?
3. Can I make a mental video of the process or procedure?

### Association

Remembering new information may be easier if you can connect it to information that you have already learned. By linking it to already learned material you should be able to remember and recall the new information with greater ease. Ask yourself:

1. Is this new information like something I already know?
2. Can I use the new information for something similar?

### Take short bites of time

- Most students memorize information best when they study in small periods over a long period of time.
- Memorizing facts from index cards that can be pulled out for a few ten-minute sessions each day will yield better results than sitting down with a textbook for an hour straight.
- You'll find that these short but regular practices will greatly aid your recall of lots of information.



**When you have a list to memorize, break it up**

- Students are able to recall an odd number of short lists better than an even number of long lists.

**Make associations**

- You memorize best when you can attach meaning to what you are learning.
- You can accomplish this by translating the information into practical examples that you can imagine in your own life.

**Create visual aids**

- Draw pictures that will act as mental cues when you recall the information for the exam.

**Say it out loud**

- Sit by yourself in a quiet room, and say aloud what you need to learn.
- Give your notes to someone else, and let that person ask you questions to be answered aloud.

**Use Mnemonics**

- Mnemonics, or memory tricks, are things that help you remember what you need to know.
- Acronym-a word created from the first letters in a series of words. For example: HOMES represents the names of the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
- Create a silly sentence made out of words that each begin with the letter or letters that start each item in a series. Example: Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally (Order of operations in math). Parentheses, Exponents, Multiply, Divide, Add, and Subtract.

**Sleep on it**

- When you study right before sleep and don't allow any interference-such as conversation, radio, television, or music-to come between study and sleep, there is better recall of material.

(See next page for Memory 'Tricks'.)



### **Memory 'Tricks'**

Sometimes we all need to use some "tricks" to help us remember certain information. Here are a few that may assist you in your learning.

### **Acronyms**

You form acronyms by using the first letter of each word in the group of words you are trying to learn, forming a new word in the process. Some common acronyms include NBA (National Basketball Association) or SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus). This is a helpful device for quick recall of words, but remember that this does not assist in comprehension of those terms. That comes through other learning processes.

### **Rhymes and Songs**

Rhyme, rhythm, and melody of certain songs may all be used to help recall information. After all, how many children do you think have learned the letters of the alphabet by singing to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"? Or Billy Joel's song "We Didn't Start the Fire" has been known to help many students quickly recall events in American Cold War History. These types of techniques can be fun, especially for creative people.

### **Grouping**

Organizing material by grouping it into similar concepts or related ideas will help your memory. The process of organizing information into groups helps you to understand the relationship between the concepts better.

### **Reviewing**

Reviewing the notes that you have taken on new material at the end of the day for 10 minutes will help you retain that information. Reviewing that same material at the end of the week will also reinforce the learning process.

### **Reciting Information**

Reciting works because:

1. When you know you are going to recite something in your own words you pay more attention to the information.
2. If you are able to explain something in your own words you understand it.

Here are some helpful hints for reciting:

1. Make use of flashcards for anything that you need to learn.
2. When you finish reading a paragraph or section of your assignment, stop and recite it. If you can explain it out loud, then you are on your way to learning that material.
3. Find someone who will assist you with either the flashcards or by asking you questions that you have to answer out loud.