



MEMORY TECHNIQUES



Forgetting is a natural process, with the greatest losses (up to 75%) occurring within the first 24 hours of learning – wow!

SIMPLE EXAMPLES OF MEMORY

- ❑ **SENSORY** is like a “while you were out” slip that you deal with and forget.
- ❑ **SHORT-TERM** (limited capacity lasting a few hours) is like an “in-basket” used to sort out the *important* from the *non-important* information.
- ❑ **LONG-TERM** (unlimited capacity and relatively permanent) is like a large filing cabinet for storing important information.

You have plenty of brain space to store information, but it must be organized and simple to access. AND, the more you ACCESS it, the easier it is to RECALL it!

MOVING INFO FROM SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM MEMORY

- ✓ Schedule mini-review sessions right after class
- ✓ Talk about the topics with another student
- ✓ Rework your notes into a user-friendly format
- ✓ Present information you’ve learned to someone else
- ✓ Skim your notes right before bed time
- ✓ Use it or lose it – browse your notes daily
- ✓ Your ultimate goal is to UNDERSTAND the ideas, not just memorize them!

TIPS FOR IMPROVING MEMORY

ORGANIZE IT:

- Determine your best method for assembling notes, handouts, etc.
- Get the big picture, then look at specifics
- Be selective – don’t drown in information that isn’t necessary
- Make it meaningful and relevant – how does it apply to you and your goals?
- Chunk information into sets of 5-7 concepts each
- Create associations – make them personal, sensory, and imaginative

The strongest associations are those that tie into information you already know.

Some examples of **ASSOCIATIONS** are:

Acronyms: Form a word from the first letter of each word in a series. For example, "**HOMES**" to recall the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

Acrostics: Make a nonsense phrase so that the first letter of each word is the information. For example, "**Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge**" to recall the E, G, B, D, and F lines of the treble music staff.

Poems and Rhymes: Create short catchy sayings that include the essential information. For example, "**I before E, except after C...**"

Word-Part Clues: Link parts of words together to help you remember ideas. For example, a stalag**g**mite grows from the **g**round and a stala**c**tite grows from the **c**eiling.

Visualize: Create vivid, clear, mental pictures – include yourself in them.

USE YOUR BODY:

- Learn it actively – move around, gesture, pace as you study
- Relax – helps you absorb and recall new information with greater ease
- Create flow charts, draw diagrams, doodle, etc. to anchor information
- Recite it and repeat it – talk through the points aloud AND in your own words
- Write it – flash cards or summary sheets – you remember best what you DO

USE YOUR BRAIN:

- ☞ Engage your emotions to spike the interest factor in the subject matter
- ☞ Activate your senses – eat an orange or peppermint candy while you study, then enjoy the same treat right before (or during) the test
- ☞ Over learn – answer more questions than assigned or try a different textbook
- ☞ Find out what your learning style** is and maximize it
- ☞ Study when you are in your peak state of mind
- ☞ Make a determined effort to find significance in each subject, chapter, etc.
- ☞ Avoid negative self-talk ("I'll never remember this") – have confidence
- ☞ Build up your memory skills – try to recall a few ideas from memory before referring to notes as often as possible
- ☞ Review the "middle material" often
- ☞ Concentrate on accuracy, not speed, when studying
- ☞ Take care of your brain!

** Stop by the Connect to Success Office for a learning styles questionnaire

Content adapted from *Becoming a Master Student* by Dave Ellis



CONCENTRATION TIPS

CREATE A GREAT STUDY SPACE

- ❖ Arrange the area to meet your study needs
 - ❑ Good lighting, ventilation, and temperature
 - ❑ Comfortable chair (but not too comfy!)
 - ❑ Desk or table large enough to spread out your materials
 - ❑ Adequate school supplies and resources handy
 - ❑ Post motivational pictures, articles or quotes if possible
- ❖ Control noise level and the visual environment to acceptable levels
- ❖ Steer clear from studying on a bed
- ❖ Commuter students are encouraged to stay on campus to study

DETERMINE YOUR BEST TIMES TO STUDY

- ❖ Study during your peak energy for the day – try to avoid late night hours
- ❖ Study when there are the fewest competing activities in progress
- ❖ Study when you are rested and attentive – not tired, anxious, or ill

TRY A FEW STRATEGIES

- ❖ **Intend to focus** – having a positive intention is a good starting point
- ❖ **Set study goals** before you begin (ex. number of pages, problems, etc.)
- ❖ **Switch it up** – avoid studying the same subject more than 2 hours straight
- ❖ **Keep a notepad handy** to jot down random thoughts that cross your mind
- ❖ **Study with a pencil in your hand** to take notes as needed
- ❖ **Start with short study periods** and gradually build to longer periods
- ❖ **Take a break** – an ideal ratio is 5 to 1 (study 50 minutes/break 10 minutes)
- ❖ **Reward yourself** after specific study goals are met, then jump back in
- ❖ **Make the most of your break** by returning a phone call or eating a snack – Remember to keep it brief to stay on target with your study goals
- ❖ **Maintain good habits** of diet, exercise, and sleep throughout the semester
- ❖ **Develop a strong motivation** – think of reasons why you WANT TO LEARN
- ❖ **Grab a study buddy** who will keep you on track with the task at hand
- ❖ **Set a timer** so you can monitor your progress without “clock watching”
- ❖ **Spread the word** – let family/friends in on your study plans so they can be an advocate, not a distraction, to your success



For more info on success tips, contact the Connect to Success Office
303.914.6317 or Office #1655 or dana.kobold@rrcc.edu