

Memorizing Information

Tips and strategies to help
you retain and remember information



- ▶ Do you have a hard time memorizing and remembering information for tests?
- ▶ Do the things you've memorized seem to get mixed up in your head?
- ▶ When you're taking a test, do you sometimes feel sure that you know the answer, but you just can't remember it?
- ▶ Do you wish you had better strategies to help you memorize and remember information?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, the memorization strategies presented here are sure to help you.

Whether you want to remember details for a history exam, the steps to solve a math problem, or the name of someone you just met, memorization is a skill that can be developed and improved.

Keep reading to learn a few simple strategies to help you improve your memory.

Strategies that Work

Give these strategies a try whenever you have information you need to remember.

Use all of your senses

The more senses you involve in the learning process, the more likely you are to remember information. For example, to memorize a vocabulary word, formula, or equation, look at it, close your eyes, and try to see it in your mind. Then say it out loud and write it down. *By looking at it, saying it, and writing it down, you are using your visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses.*

Look for logical connections

For example, to remember that Homer wrote *The Odyssey*, just think, *“Homer is an ODD name.”*

Use acronyms

The acronym HOMES can help you remember the Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior).

The acronym ROY G BIV gives you the colors of the rainbow.

Create unforgettable images

Take the information you’re trying to remember and create a crazy, memorable image in your mind.

- ▶ To remember that Pizarro conquered the Inca empire, imagine a pizza covering an ink spot.

Strategies that Work

Create silly sentences

Use the first letter of the words you want to remember to make up a silly, ridiculous sentence. For example, to remember the names of the eight planets in order (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune), create a silly sentence like this one: *My very elegant mother just served us noodles.*

Review often

When you have something to memorize, concentrate on learning it, take a break, and then go back and review it. Keep reviewing until you know it.

Review is the key to remembering anything. When you review, you move information from your short-term memory into your long-term memory.

Try this Memory Test

Get a piece of paper and a pencil. Give yourself 15 seconds to memorize the 12 items below. Then write down as many as you can remember.

*boat hot dog pencil fruit train car
phone ruler mustard trolley ants chair*

How did you do? Go to the square on the back for a tip on how you might have improved your score.

Memorization Tips

Here are some tips to help you retain and remember facts and information.

- ▶ Use 3 x 5 cards to memorize facts, formulas, and lists. Take these cards with you and go over them whenever you have a few extra minutes (e.g., while waiting for a ride, between classes, standing in line).
- ▶ Record yourself reciting what you need to remember. Listen to the recording while you walk to class, do laundry, clean your room, or get ready for bed.
- ▶ Make up rhymes to help you remember information (e.g., *"In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue," "30 days hath September, April, June, and November..."*).
- ▶ Before you go to sleep, review the material you want to remember. Your brain will commit it to memory while you sleep.
- ▶ Immerse yourself. If you're studying the Revolutionary War, imagine yourself as a soldier, and try to visualize the experiences you would have.

To help you remember a person's name, use his/her name in the conversation. "Nice to meet you, John."



Group and Organize

The human brain likes order. Our brains are therefore better able to remember information when it's grouped and organized.

The two most common ways to group and organize information are outlining and mapping.

- ▶ **Outlining** – Identify the main ideas. Under each main idea, list supporting facts, ideas, and examples.
- ▶ **Mapping** – Map information by putting the main idea in a circle. Then draw lines out to additional circles that contain more detailed information.

Memory Test (from third page)

Most people remember five or six items on the list. But when they group these same items into categories (as they are below), the items are easier to remember, and the scores are usually much higher.

Ways to travel – boat, train, car, trolley

Picnic items – hot dog, fruit, mustard, ants

Office items – pencil, phone, ruler, chair

Chunking individual pieces of information into groups makes things easier to remember.