



News & Announcements

Study Skills Boot Camps

Stay tuned for more information on Smart Tutor Referrals' study skills seminars, classes and boot camps...coming late spring!

Sites with Tips and Information on Memory

<http://www.mindtools.com/memory.html>

This site has an abundance of information on different mnemonic techniques and their applications.

<http://www.psywww.com/mtsite/memory.html>

This site also has an abundance of information on different mnemonic techniques and their applications.

http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/dont_forget/index.html

Online memory tests and games.

<http://www.wm.edu/OSA/dostud/moresski/memory.htm>

Several memory techniques are laid out for the visual learner on this page.

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/braindissection/index.html>

A brain is dissected before your eyes and some explanations of the anatomy of working memory, short term memory and long term memory are given.

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/makinggrade/mnemonic.html>

The University of Texas' page describing six key mnemonic techniques.

<http://olias.arc.nasa.gov/cognition/tutorials/index.html>

Five interactive cognitive psychology games from NASA.

<http://www9.biostr.washington.edu/da.html>

View an atlas of the brain and other pieces of anatomy.

Study Skills – Part Three: Making the Most of Your Memory

by *Dahlia Miller*

“Education is not received, it is achieved.”

Author Unknown

This issue on making the most of your memory is the third and final in our series on study skills.

Your mind is the most spectacular organ in your body! It is capable of incredible feats transcending time and space. It can link the taste of candy to October 31st, the sound of an ice cream truck to memories of summers long past, and a picture of a chariot to stories of the ancient Greeks. Actually, you don't even need to have a candy in your mouth to taste it and be reminded of Halloween, the idea just needs to be suggested to you and your mouth will begin to salivate.

Your brain observes and stores huge quantities of information everyday. If you learn how, you can access that information in the future and use it to your benefit.

When students consider learning techniques to develop their memories, they often think only in terms of cramming for tests – taking in information, holding it in memory only until the test date, then dumping what they've memorized on the test paper and walking out, leaving the information behind. It's true that memory techniques can help someone cramming for a test, but that is selling the brain short.

Memory techniques can help to create clear pathways in the brain for storing and retrieving information – all information. Imagine being able to recall nearly all of the information from a specific course during the final exam *and*

ten years later. If you are planning to be a doctor, it's easy to see how it would be beneficial to be able to remember what you learned in school a few years down the road!

Developing your memory and learning memory techniques (mnemonics) will increase your learning efficiency – you'll remember more, so you'll need to study less.

Your brain, as magical as it is, is a physical organ that operates in set ways. Information is observed, categorized and stored in predictable patterns. The more you know about the brain, the more you'll be able to use its filing system to your advantage. This article is too short to be able to go into any discussion of the brain and its methods of storing information in working, short and long-term memory banks. If you're interested in learning more (and the topic is fascinating), have a look at some of the websites listed in the side bar, or talk to a biology teacher (biology and psychology teachers love talking about the brain).

Memory Basics

- ▶ If you want to recall information more than 5 minutes down the road, it needs to enter your long term memory.
- ▶ The brain can only effectively remember what it pays attention to. If you're not paying attention, you're not going to remember. This is similar to the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing doesn't take energy, listening requires the active focus of the listener. Conclusion: memory requires active focus – you need

About Us

Our Mission Is:

► To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents of students through:

Superior private tutoring matched specifically to each student's needs *and* stimulating, small group classes.

► To enhance students' skills and increase their learning confidence through individualized support, recognizing each student's unique abilities.

► To improve quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. All of our tutors are carefully screened.

We will help you to reach your goals, no matter your level.

For more information, and free study tips, visit us on-line at: www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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to pay attention to what you want to remember.

► The more you engage your brain in the process of remembering, the more easily you'll recall information. Engaging the brain means using your imagination - creating pictures and sounds, or maybe making images to go with the information you want to remember. Engaging the brain can also mean making associations between new and old information (remember our discussion in last month's article on reading comprehension?) the more you link new information to what you already know, the more easily you'll be able to recall the new information.

Mnemonics

"Never confuse what is habitual with what is natural."

Gandhi

Mnemonics are simple and very effective techniques for memory, but they are not natural (in fact they can feel very unnatural at first). If you'll use them often, in class, when you read, when you listen, when you speak or recall information, mnemonics can help you to become a virtual walking library of information.

Journey Technique

This is my favourite mnemonic. It's quite versatile - it can be used to remember lists, sets of information that go together, logical sequences, and other types of information, as well, the same journey can be used again and again with new sets of information.

To begin, imagine a route that you are very familiar with: from your house to your school; from your front door to your bedroom; from your house to your friend's house; etc. Close your eyes and walk yourself through the route noting what you see along the way.

Walk yourself through the route again, attaching the information you want to

remember along the way. Keep in mind that the more absurd the mental picture you create is, the more easily you'll be able to recall it.

Now let's try an example. Imagine that for your socials class you want to remember typical pests that attack wheat. Your journey leads you from your front door to your bedroom. As you stand about to open your front door, you notice that the door is covered in thousands of aphids (they've got soft, roundish bodies with several legs and two tubes coming out of their bellies - yuck). Somehow you muster the courage to open the door and walk into your home. Inside you smell an awful stink and look to your right to see a beautiful 6-foot stink bug smiling at you. You shake your head and walk toward the kitchen. Sitting at the kitchen table eating cereal is a cereal leaf beetle. You keep walking toward your room and notice under your feet are gigantic slugs sliming their way down the hall with you toward your door.

What a gross journey! Actually, the grosser the better - it's easier to remember that way. All you need to do is walk yourself through this journey several times per day and you will definitely remember that aphids, stink bugs, cereal leaf beetles and slugs are all pests that attack wheat.

Linking Technique

This technique is quite simple to remember and apply. As you hear or read information (lists, historical events, new vocabulary, etc.) create a movie in your mind that links the pieces together.

To remember the list: dog, shoe, orange, plant, scissors, you could create this movie:

Picture a teeny, tiny dog (remember absurd sizing is easy to remember) sitting in a gigantic shoe. Suddenly an orange falls from the sky and lands on the toe of the shoe. A seed from the orange sprouts and a plant grows up from the toe of the shoe. A cute little boy comes along with a huge pair of scissors and cuts a leaf from the plant.

Play the movie over and over in your mind and you'll be able to recall ridiculously long lists of information easily.