

Study Skills

Using Memory Effectively

As you proceed through this list of techniques, try to think of strategies that would be useful to you! Some people use letters, images, and songs. Each depends on how comfortable you are with, or how useful they are to, your way of thinking!

1. **Acronyms:**

An acronym is an invented combination of letters. Each letter is a cue to, or suggests an item you need to remember.

PEMDAS, sequence in solving or evaluating math equations

Parenthesis | Exponents | Multiplication | Division | Addition | Subtraction

ROY G. BIV, the colors of the visible spectrum

Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet

IPMAT, the stages of cell division

Interphase, Prophase, Metaphase, Anaphase, Telephase

2. **An acrostic** is an invented sentence or poem with a first letter cue:

The first letter of each word is a cue to an idea you need to remember.

Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally (PEMDAS, above)

Sequence in solving or evaluating math equations

Parenthesis | Exponents | Multiplication | Division | Addition | Subtraction

Every Good Boy Deserves Fun

An acrostic for remembering a sequence of musical notes (G-clef notes on sheet music)--

E, G, B, D, F

See also: [Silva Rhetorical](#); [Acrostics for Children](#);

3. **Rhyme-Keys: (for ordered or unordered lists)**

First, memorize key words that can be associated with numbers.

Example: bun = one, shoe = two, tree = three, door = four, hive = five, etc.

Create an image of the items you need to remember with key words.

Four basic food groups-- dairy products; meat, fish, and poultry; grains; and fruit and vegetables

Think of cheese on a bun (one), livestock with shoes on (two), a sack of grain suspended in a tree (three), and a door to a room stocked with fruits and vegetables (four)

4. **The Method of Loci: (for approximately twenty items)**

select any location that you have spent a lot of time in and know well.
Good for kinesthetic learners!

Imagine yourself walking through the location, selecting clearly defined places--the door, sofa, refrigerator, shelf, etc. Imagine yourself putting objects that you need to remember into each of these places by walking through this location in a direct path.

Again, you need a standard direct path and clearly defined locations for objects to facilitate the retrieval of these objects.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Nixon, you could imagine walking up to the door of your location and seeing a dollar bill stuck in the door; when you open the door Jefferson is reclining on the sofa and Nixon is eating out of the refrigerator.

5. **The Keyword Method: (for foreign language vocabulary)**

First, after considering the foreign word you need to remember, select a key word in English that sounds like the foreign word.

Next, imagine an image that involves the key word with the English meaning of the foreign word.

For example, consider the Spanish word "cabina" which means "phone booth." For the English keyword, you might think of "cab in a" You could then invent an image of a cab trying to fit in a phone booth. When you see the word "cabina" on the test, you should be able to recall the image of the cab and you should be able to retrieve the definition "phone booth."

6. **The Image-Name Technique: (for remembering names)**

Simply invent any relationship between the name and the physical characteristics of the person. For example, if you had to remember Shirley Temple's name, you might ingrain the name in memory by noticing that she has "curly" (rhymes with Shirley) hair around her temples.

7. **Chaining: (for ordered or unordered lists)**

Create a story where each word or idea you have to remember cues the next idea you need to recall. If you had to remember the words Napoleon, ear, door, and Germany, you could invent a story of Napoleon with his ear to a door listening to people speak in German

"M.U.R.D.E.R."

A Study System

- **Mood:**
Set a *positive mood* for yourself to study in.
Select the appropriate time, environment, and attitude
- **Understand:**
Mark any information **you don't understand** in a particular unit;
Keep a focus on one unit or a manageable group of exercises
- **Recall:**
After studying the unit,
stop and put what you have learned **into your own words**
- **Digest:**
Go back to what you did not understand and **reconsider the information**;
Contact external expert sources (e.g., other books or an instructor) if you still cannot understand it
- **Expand:**
In this step, ask **three kinds of questions** concerning the studied material:
 - If I could speak to the author, what questions would I ask or what criticism would I offer?
 - How could I apply this material to what I am interested in?
 - How could I make this information interesting and understandable to other students?
- **Review:**
Go over the material you've covered,
Review what strategies helped you understand and/or retain information in the past and apply these to your current studies |