

Effective Memorizing

Before Memorizing

1. Create a positive affirmation about memorizing.
2. Choose to remember. Choose study techniques that fit your learning style and how you will be assessed.
3. Review and expand your notes within 24 hours after class.
4. Plan more than one session. Remember the 2:1 study ratio.
5. Relax. Engage your alpha state.

During Memorizing

Organize information in a meaningful way.

1. Create **associations**. Activate background knowledge. Associate something new with something you already know. Seek meaningful contexts and connections
2. Use the **loci technique**. *Loci* is Latin for “place,” so with this strategy, you associate a new item you want to memorize with a familiar place.
3. **Mnemonics**: (Greek word meaning “mindful”) study aids--rhymes or silly sentences that help you recall facts. Invent word/sentence acronyms/acrostics: HOMES—names of the Great Lakes; lines/spaces of the musical staff—EGBDF/FACE. Solar system planets: My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas. # of days in each month of the year: “30 days hath Sept, April, June, and Nov. All the rest have thirty one, except for Feb alone.”—Fist/knuckles approach.
4. **Assign a number**. Remember the 7(+/-)2 rule. Limit the # of items you are processing.
5. **Find a pattern**. . **Organize into categories**.
6. **Visualize**. Sketch from memory.
7. Create a **concept map**. This aids memorizing by combining the left brain’s verbal and analytical skills with the right brain’s spatial and creative abilities.
8. **Use flashcards**. Separate into two piles—know/don’t know.
9. **Recite aloud**.
10. **BEM strategy**: practice the middle, since the beginning and end times of study sessions are remembered best.

11. **Spread similar subjects apart.** Study each course on different days, or at least at different times of the day.
12. Create and listen to **audio recordings**, using 10-to-15-second pauses between questions, to allow you enough time to answer.
13. Use several senses. **Multiple modalities** enhance learning.
14. Memorize in **short sessions**, 10-15 minutes several times a day. **Repetition** is key.
15. **Recall under test conditions:** no music, no food/drink, no talking, no study aids (unless allowed), limited test-taking time.

After Memorizing

1. Repeat, repeat, repeat. Multiple rehearsals with distributed practice increase retention and recall.
2. Revisit visualizations.
3. Post memory cards.
4. Have others quiz you.
5. Go to sleep.

Memory Principles

- **Making an Effort**
 - Interest
 - Intent to Remember
 - Prior Background Knowledge
- **Controlling Amount and Form**
 - Selectivity
 - Meaningful Organization
- **Strengthening Neural Connections**
 - Recitation
 - Visualization
 - Association
- **Allowing time to Solidify Pathways**
 - Consolidation
 - Distributed Practice

Adapted from: Downing, Skip. *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life*. Houghton Mifflin, 2008, p. 205-7.

Reynolds, Jean. *Succeeding in College: Study Skills and Strategies, 2e*. Prentice Hall, 2002, p. 109-118.

Hopper, Carolyn. *Practicing College Learning Strategies, 4e*. Houghton Mifflin, 2007, p. 75-97.