

Study Skills Tips: Memory Techniques

Improving your memory requires only a few techniques. Once something is stored in your memory, it is there forever. You will be able to learn about the different types of memories, how to improve your memory by utilizing your long-term memory and some tips for improving your memory.

The different types of memory are defined below:

- Sensory memory is like a "while you were out" slip that you deal with and forget.
- Short-term memory (a few hours with limited capacity) is like the "in-basket" used to sort out important from non-important information. Non-important information is forgotten; important information may be transferred to long-term memory.
- Long-term memory (relatively permanent and unlimited capacity) is like a large filing cabinet for storing important information. This is where information that you want to remember should be stored.

Transferring Information from Short-term to Long-term memory

- Schedule mini-review sessions right after class. This is the first step to getting that information into long-term memory.
- Talk about the lecture with another student. The more ways you learn a subject, the more likely you are to remember it.
- Rewrite notes to incorporate lecture and textbook information the same day of lecture.
- Present information you've learned to someone else - your roommate, your fish, or your parents.

Tips for Improving Memory

Experiment with different memory techniques to discover which one works best for you. Here are several techniques to try:

- Association - Relate new information to something you already know. An isolated idea/fact is hard to remember. If you associate it with information that already makes sense to you, it will be more meaningful and easier to organize and remember. For example, you can remember that a cow's heart has four chambers by remembering that your heart has four chambers.
- Visualize - Organize information into a valid, clear mental picture. For example, to remember the necessary elements of a novel, form a picture of all the important characters dressed in the style of the period doing something representative of the character, etc.
- Mnemonic Aids - For information that defies association or visualization, adapt a memory technique. Some mnemonic devices include:

- Acronyms - Form a word from the first letter of each word in a series. For example, use "HOMES" for recalling the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
- Reciting- Recite terms and phrases by glancing at the key words on your summary sheets and then practice the ideas and principles until you know them inside and out!
- Acrostics- An acrostic is when you make a nonsense phrase so the first letter of each word represents an element in the phrase. For example use "Every Good Boy Does Fine" 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 try "in 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue."

Rehearsing Speeches

Trying to memorize facts for a test is much different than trying to memorize a speech. Everyone, at some point in their life will need to give a speech. It could be at school, at work or at your child's wedding. Below you will find some pointers to overcome the anxiety of public speaking.

- After your speech is prepared, divide it into one-to-two minute segments.
- Briefly review your notes for one segment.
- Deliver this portion of the speech from memory (without notes).
- Refer to notes to see if anything was omitted.
- Deliver the entire one-to-two minute segment from memory again.

Repeat this process until you can deliver each segment of your speech flawlessly. After you have mastered each segment, schedule several review sessions leading up to the presentation date. This helps to transfer the speech to long-term memory. On the day of the speech, repeat the core ideas from each segment in rapid succession. This helps your mind anticipate the next segment as you finish the previous one (like you anticipate the next song on a well-known CD.)