

IMPROVING MEMORY SKILLS



Concentrate

- Focus your attention with no distractions. Give your all to the task at hand.
- To counteract boredom or lack of interest, try to identify the cause: lack of background knowledge, lack of purpose for the assignment, difficult reading material, or personal problems.

Comprehend

- Be able to translate the information into a meaningful idea.
- When something does not make sense to you, it makes it very difficult to learn.
- Being able to differentiate between main points and details is vital to your comprehension.

Remember

- Remembering is a skill that takes some effort. Organizing information into a meaningful system can aid your memory.
- Your short-term memory is like the “in-basket” where you sort out important from non-important information.
- Your long-term memory is like large file cabinets for storing important information.

Experiment with several Memory Techniques to see which ones work best for you:

Associate - Relate new information to something you already know. An isolated idea/fact is hard to remember; but if you associate it with information that already makes sense to you, it will be more meaningful and thus, easier to organize and remember.

Visualize – Organize information into a vivid, clear mental picture. For example, to remember the necessary elements of a novel, form a picture with all the important characters dressed in the style of the period, doing something representative of each character.

Mnemonic Aids – For information that defines 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, “HOMES” for recalling the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.

Acrostics – Make a nonsense phrase so that the first letter of each word is the information; for example, “Every Good Boy Does Fine” for the E, G, B, D, F, lines of the treble music staff.

Poems & Rhymes – Make-up short, catchy sayings that include the essential information; for example, “In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”

Review and use information – As the saying goes, if you don’t use it you will lose it. Look for every opportunity to apply the information you have worked so hard to remember. Therefore, review class notes and textbook readings on a **regular basis.**