



Memory Skills—Tips to Improve Retention and Recall



The Keys to Remembering

You can learn to remember more effectively if you learn and use the following tips.

1. Decide to Remember

Choose to remember. Be interested. Pay attention.

How can you choose to remember? One way is to take a few moments to choose to learn. Sit calmly, take a few deep breaths, and tell yourself, “I choose to remember.” The key is to keep your mind focused on the lecture, the issue, or the details. Don’t let your mind wander. To choose to remember, you need to pay attention and be interested in what you are learning.

2. Visualize

We think in pictures. Visualize or picture in your mind, what you wish to remember. A mental picture is easier to remember than words are.

MNEMONICS—is the art of training your mind to work more effectively. The following mnemonics, if used properly, will aid in recall.

3. The Link or Chaining Method

One helpful way you can use visualization is with the link method. The link method is a mnemonic (ne-mon-ik) method. To use the linking method, you remember the 1st word in a list and picture it in your mind’s eye. Now you want to link the second word in the list to the first word.

Example:

basketball
lion
salami
star
gate
nose



The link you make may be as realistic as you want to make it or as foolish as you choose. **An example of linking** : Visualize a **basketball** rolling down a hill with a **lion** chasing it. The lion has a piece of **salami** in his mouth. As he tries to catch the ball, he has to jump over a **desk**; but he falls and hits his head and sees **stars**. Keep going until you have reached the end of the list. Cover up the words in the list and see how many you can remember.

4. Rhymes—Rhymes are little jingles we use to aid in remembering. You can make up rhymes as long as they are not more difficult than remembering the actual information.

Some popular examples are:

“In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.”

“I before E except after C, or as sounded as A in neighbor and weigh.”

“Twenty days hath September, April, June, and November.”

5. Acronyms—An acronym is a word that is made by taking the first letter from each word that you want to remember and making a new word from all those letters.

Example:

HOMES = 5 Great Lakes (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior)

SCUBA = Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus

6. Acrostics—Is a sentence that is made by taking the first letter from each word that you want to remember and then inserting another word beginning with the same letter.

Order of Operations:

- Parenthesis = Please
- Exponents = Excuse
- Multiply = My
- Divide = Dear
- Add = Aunt
- Subtract = Sally



Classification system of living things in biology

- Kingdom = King
- Phylum = Phillip
- Class = Came
- Order = Over
- Family = For
- Genus = Green
- Species = Stamps

7. Repeating (Memorization)

One good way to study is to repeat information (say it aloud) to yourself. When you say it aloud, you are forced to read it, speak it, and hear it. The more of your 5 senses you use, the more you are able to retain and recall the information.

Forms of Memorization

- **Rote**—This is simply going over and over items of information until they are memorized. This can be done through chaining or linking, with use of study cards, or simply repetition of information. Study cards are excellent for learning terms and definitions. They are small, can be shuffled to mix order, and can be studied easily while sitting in a doctor’s office or while waiting for a child to be dismissed from school, etc.
- **Association**—This can be done if one is able to set up a logical sequence to assist remembering. ¹

Words to Remember

1	tree	(trunk looks like 1)
2	light switch	(on/off, up/down)
3	stool	(3 legs)
4	car	(4 doors, 4 wheels)
5	glove	(5 fingers)
6	gun	(6 barrels, 6 shooter)
7	dice	(7 come 11)

Kevin Tradau’s “Mega Memory” has a set of 16 tapes to aid memory technique. The tapes are available for review at the Learning Center.

¹ Lesson #2 from “Mega Memory” by Kevin Tradau

8. Grouping and Numbering

When information is grouped, it is easier to remember. Grouping means to organize information so that details are brought together under the main idea or category that connects them. Adding a number to a group also helps memory.

Example List

pharmacy
spruce
gas
oak
office
density
fir
restaurant

heat
bakery
elm
friction
theater
maple
hotel

Regrouped and Numbered

(5) <u>Trees</u>	(6) <u>Businesses</u>	(4) <u>Science</u>
spruce	pharmacy	gas
oak	office	density
fir	restaurant	heat
elm	bakery	friction
maple	theater	
	hotel	

Tip—The use of a “To-Do” note pad will aid in memory retention by allowing you to jot down items that bombard your mind while studying. This will enable you to relax and focus on the task at hand. **Good Luck!**

