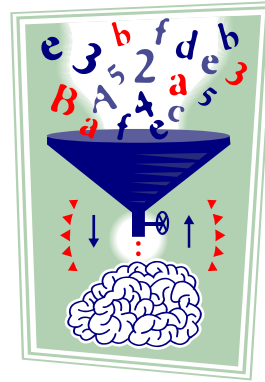


Mnemonics

Mnemonics are devices or tricks that help to **improve memory recall**. They can help in memorising large pieces of information, main topics or finer detail.

There are a number of different mnemonics. You might know or be using some already.

- Music, songs, lyrics
- Acronyms
- Phrases
- Rhyme
- Connecting known to unknown
- Spelling rhymes
- Models, pictures and images
- Note organisation
- Point form outlines
- Cornell System



To make Mnemonics effective they need to be **meaningful** to you, **memorable** and . Sometimes making something silly or corny is easier to remember, for example imagine two numismatists



(someone who collects coins) having a drink for 'old dimes sake'. Be especially

careful when practicing mnemonics as order is often important. Mnemonics are

helpful but they aren't suitable for all your notes all the time, be selective. Having too many mnemonics to remember can cause confusion, frustration and exhaustion. Like with all study devices they take time to create, learn and rehearse.

Music

What's your favourite song? Do you know all the words? You will probably still know those lyrics in a year's time, maybe even ten.

Lyrics to songs can be remembered for very long periods of time.

Ask your mom or dad about their favourite songs from their youth. Another

example of how music works with the memory is advertising jingles. They help to create an

impression of a product in the shopper's mind. Jingles and catch phrases can also be remembered

for many years. Music and songs can help you to remember school work too. By putting the words

or information to music not only is the information better retained but the **sequence** can be easier

to remember. When you **make up your own song**, whether to an existing song or to an **original tune**

it helps to make the information more memorable. Rehearsing tunes and songs can make studying



more interesting and interactive. Music mnemonics is especially good for learning long lists, e.g. “ABC” song or elements of the periodic table.

Acronyms

A list of items can be remembered by putting the **first letter** of each item into a **name** or a **person** or **thing**. The items can be rearranged to make a more memorable name, only if order is not important.

E.g. **ROY G. BIV** for the colours of the rainbow – **Red**, **Orange**, **Yellow**, **Green**, **Blue**, **Indigo** and **Violet**

RICE for **Rest**, **Ice**, **Compress** and **Elevate** the injured area

HOMES for the Great Lakes in America – **Huron**, **Ontario**, **Michigan**, **Erie** and **Superior**

Phrase or Word

This is the most common mnemonic. The **first letter** of each item to remember is used as the first letter of a word in a **memorable phrase**.

E.g. the order of operations for Maths is **P**arenthesis, **E**xponents, **M**ultiply, **D**ivide, **A**dd and **S**ubtract – **P**lease **E**xcuse **M**y **D**ear **A**unt **S**ally.

The categories in the classification of life are **K**ingdom, **P**hylum, **C**lass, **O**rders, **F**amily, **G**enus, **S**pecies, **V**ariety – **K**ings **P**lay **C**ards **O**n **F**airly **G**ood **S**oft **V**elvet.

The numbers in pi – May I have a large container of coffee? $\pi = 3,1415927$. The number of letters in each word equals the numerals in pi. (remember to include the ?)



Rhyme

Information can be made into a **poem**. The **rhythm** and **rhyme** help to make the information memorable.

E.g. the number of days in each month

30 days hath September,

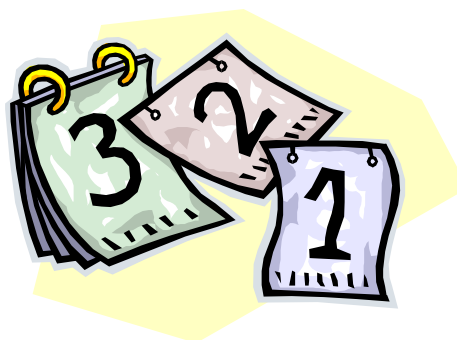
April, June and November.

All the rest have 31

Except February, my dear son.

It has 28 and that is fine

But in a leap year it has 29.

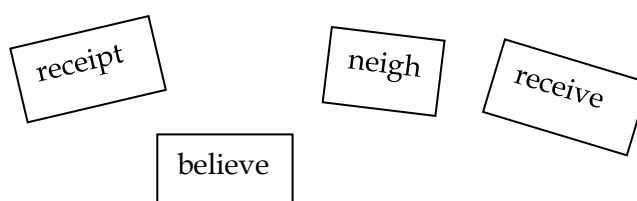


To remember spelling rules

I before e except after c

Or when sounding like ‘A’

In neighbour and weigh



I ate and I ate and fell sick on the floor

$$8 \times 8 = 64$$

For $8 \times 8 = 64$

Connecting the known to the unknown

Using a something **already known** to help remember . Trying to remember the direction of the lines of longitude and latitude can be tricky. By remembering that LONGitude lines must all be equally LONG they must run from top to bottom or from North to South. Therefore latitude line must run the other way, being from left to right or West to East.



Spelling rhymes

These can use **rhythm**, **rhyme** or **phrase** to remember spelling rules.

E.g. of rhythm to remember how to spell Mississippi – M-I-SSI-SSI-PPI.

Rhyme to remember rules

I before e except after c

Or when sounding like 'A'

In neighbour and weigh

Phrase – B E A U tiful

Arithmetic – **A** Rat In The **H**ouse **M**ay Eat Ice Cream

Dessert vs desert – I always want more dessert so it has more s's than desert.

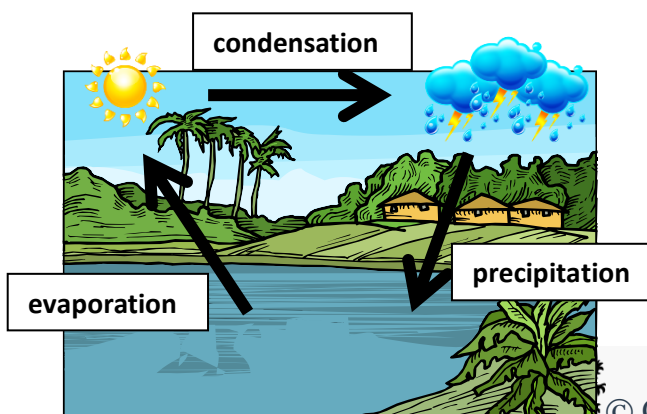
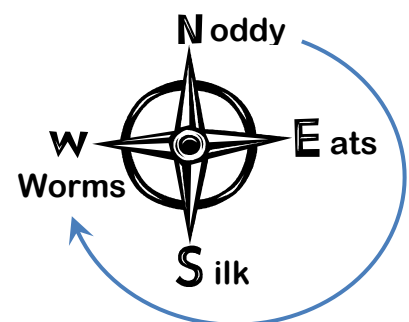
Separate – There's a RAT in separate.



Model, pictures and images

Using **shapes** and **structures** to create an image associated with information. The image is meant to give an **overview** of a large amount of information or to help remember the order or sequence of process.

E.g. Noddy Eats Silk Worms to remember the compass points.



Cyclic processes – circular sequence model

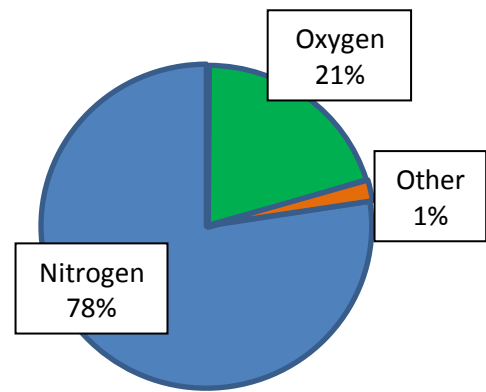
E.g. the water cycle of precipitation, evaporation and condensation



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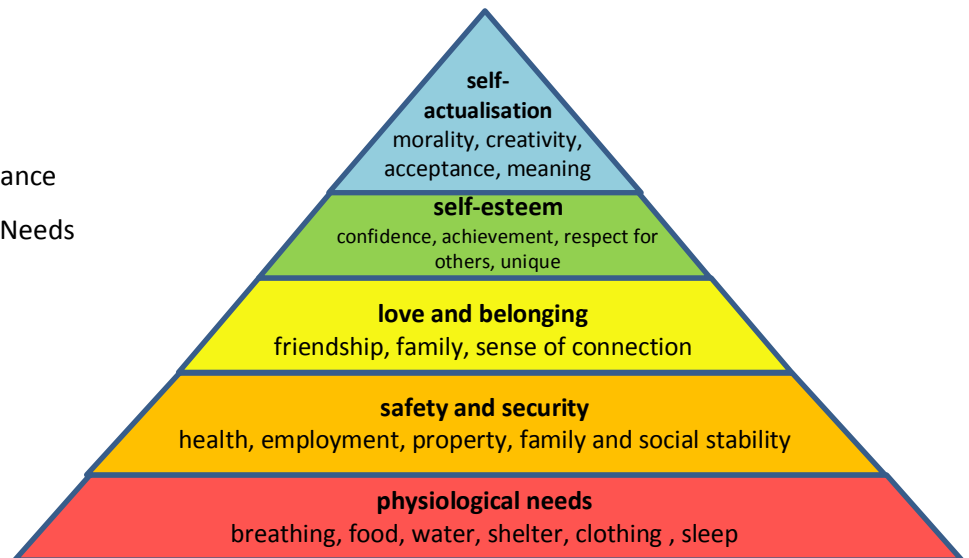
Pie charts – majority and minority factors

E.g. Composition of air being 78% Nitrogen, 21% Oxygen and 1% other trace elements and water vapour



Pyramids – order of importance

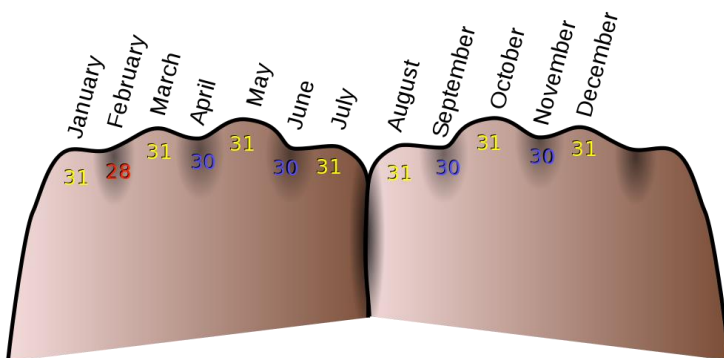
E.g. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



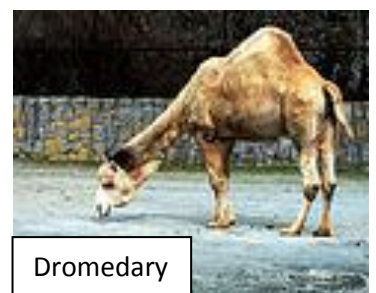
Images or imagery

Using an image or imagery can help to make information stick in the memory. You can draw your **own image** and attach a meaning to it or use some of the **common ones**.

E.g. Number of days in a month. Each knuckle peak stands for 31 days and each knuckle valley stands for 30 days, except February which has 28 days and 29 days in a leap year.



To remember the difference between a Dromedary and a Bactrian Camel look at the shape of the humps. The Dromedary has a hump shaped like a D and the Bactrian Camel has a hump shaped like a B.

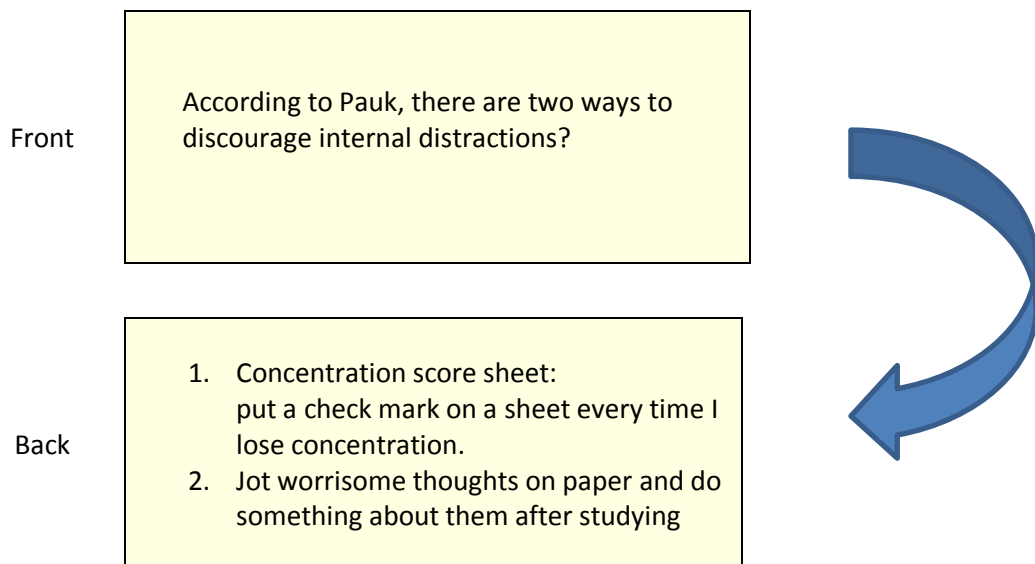


Note Organization

Notecards can be used to group **large chunks** of information into **smaller chunks**. Breaking the information into smaller more manageable chunks makes studying less daunting.

Notecards can also be used to **revise** information by posing a **question** on the front and providing an **answer** on the back. Creating questions and answers tests the understanding of the knowledge.

Answering the questions practices recall.



Outlines

An outline can clearly separate **main ideas** from **subsections** or details within the information. The layout helps to create an **overview** of how the information fits together.

1. Shapes
 - a. 3 sides - Triangles
 - i. Equilateral Triangle
 - ii. Isosceles Triangle
 - iii. Scalene Triangle
 - b. 4 sides - Quadrilateral
 - i. Square
 - ii. Rectangle
 - iii. Parallelogram
 - iv. Trapezium
 - v. Kite
 - c. 5 sides – Pentiagon
- Etc...



Cornell System

This is a form of **note organization** that can be used to practice recall of information. It is similar to the notecard technique but is laid out in a different format. On a sheet of note paper draw a vertical line about six centimetres from the left margin. Write **main ideas or questions** about the main idea in the left hand column and the **details or answers** to the questions in the right hand column. The right hand column can be **covered up** and **revealed** as you progress through the note.

<i>Planets in the Solar System</i>	<i>Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune</i>
<i>Dwarf planet</i>	<i>Pluto – no longer a planet. Considered too small and mostly ice.</i>
<i>Two asteroid belts</i>	<i>Asteroid belt (between Mars and Jupiter) and Kuiper belt (after Neptune, including Pluto)</i>

Some important thoughts

1. Before **making** a mnemonic make sure you **understand** the concept or information you want to use in a mnemonic.
2. Choose which mnemonic will **best suit** the piece of information. If order is important make sure the mnemonic keeps the correct order.
3. Play around with a few versions of the mnemonic until you are happy that it is **memorable**.
4. Mnemonics should be a **helping tool** or a **starting point** to remember information. For example, trying to put all of your studying information into songs or rhymes will take too much time to create and to revise. You will probably use a form of **note organisation, point form outlines** and the **Cornell System** to memorise your study information.

References:

Congos, D; "9 Types of Mnemonics for Better Memory", The Learning Centre Newsletter, January 2006. <http://www.learningassistance.com/2006/january/mnemonics.html>

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