

Strategies for Better Memory

Intend to Remember

If you do not choose to consciously intend to remember, it is normal not to remember what you read or study. On the other hand, if you choose to remember what you read or study, you will enlist the use of a powerful memory strategy. When you intend to remember, your mind begins the tasks needed to build a better memory.

Organize what you need to Remember

Make questions out of main ideas using details as a guide. Number steps, stages, characteristics, arguments, procedures, etc. Visuals such as sketches, diagrams, charts, etc. increase understanding, learning, and recall.

p. 79

3 major arguments of federalists for federalism?

1. Prevent tyranny
2. Use states as testing grounds for new policies & programs
3. Provide for increased participation on politics

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Use Mnemonics

Mnemonics increase recall. A mnemonic is simply a memory device. It may consist of a name, word, or phrase. Be sure to include a key word with the mnemonic from the main idea to reduce chances of confusion with other mnemonics.

Use Spaced Reviews

Cramming overloads the short term memory and for most people results in statements such as, "I thought I knew the material." There is a difference between recognition and recall. Recognizing something is not the same as remembering as many college students have discovered when taking a test. **Recognition** means one recalls going over the material and may even recall portions of details. Without clues, recall is incomplete or inaccurate. **Remembering** means that all or most of the details can be recalled by seeing a question on a test. One's ability to recall is increased after repeated reviews of material are spaced over time. Eight reviews spaced over 2 weeks are more effective than 8 reviews a day or two before a test.

Proper Sleep and Diet

While some students appear to survive on too little sleep and a poor diet, the vast majority of students suffer academic performance far below potential when there is not enough sleep or is an unbalanced diet. The average



college students needs between 7 and 9 hours of nighttime sleep to maximize learning. A poor diet can lower one's ability to think, reason, learn, remember, feel motivation, and interest in academics.

Self-Test Regularly

The worst time to discover if you have learned the material for a test or not is after a test is passed back. Little to nothing can be done about the grade then so students are out of control in this situation. Set up a study system where you can identify what you have learned and what you have not learned before you take a test when you can still do something about it. Making questions and answers out of main ideas and details provides a self-testing potential that puts you more in control of what you learn and test grades.

If you are using notecards, self-testing consists of looking at a question on one side of the notecard, saying an answer aloud as best you can, then turning the card over to see if you remembered the material or not.

Get Actively Involved with the Material

Passively reading, rereading, and rereading text or lecture material results in reduced recall at test time. This is normal in college. Smaller amounts of fairly simple material can be absorbed by rereading for some students. But a larger amount of knowledge with lots of detail is difficult to impossible to absorb and recall later by simply rereading over and over.

Quizzing oneself, rewriting notes, including visuals in notes, organizing notes more clearly, and helping others learn the material all entail active involvement with material to be learned and remembered. The result is better learning and recall.

For more information on memory go to the memory handouts on the SARC web site (<http://www.sarc.sdes.ucf.edu/studyhandouts.html>) or make an appointment with the Learning Skills Advisor in SARC at 407-823-5130.