

The key to learning new material is to **DO** something with it. For most people, it is not enough to passively read over class notes. Explore the methods below until you discover the ones that best suit your learning style(s). Depending upon the topic, you may find that it is easier to use some strategies rather than others, so experiment with a variety of techniques.

## Study cards



Sets of multi-coloured study cards are available for \$1 per set of 60 cards from Student Success reception. Cards can be used in a variety of ways, places and times:

- Write a question/term on one side and the answer/definition on the other. Test yourself or get someone else to test you.
- Draw a diagram leaving blanks for the labels and provide answers on the flip side.
- Make summaries of your summaries.
- Draw mini-mind maps.
- List key words (using a different colour card for each topic).

## Mnemonics

A mnemonic uses the first letter of words, or the first word of sentences as 'triggers' to help you retrieve information. Select and rearrange information to make a story/rhyme/sentence/word. A good mnemonic uses humour, exaggeration, or association. Being silly sometimes makes it easier to remember.

### Example 1

List of terms to be learned: **A**ntigens, **P**athogens, **T**oxins, **V**accines, **T**oxoids

Story acrostic: **A**unty **P**at **T**ook **V**al's **T**emperature

Acronym: **TAP TV**



### Example 2

The order or sequence in which operations are carried out in algebraic and numerical expressions

List of terms to be learned: **B**rackets, **M**ultiplications, **D**ivisions, **A**dditions, **S**ubtractions

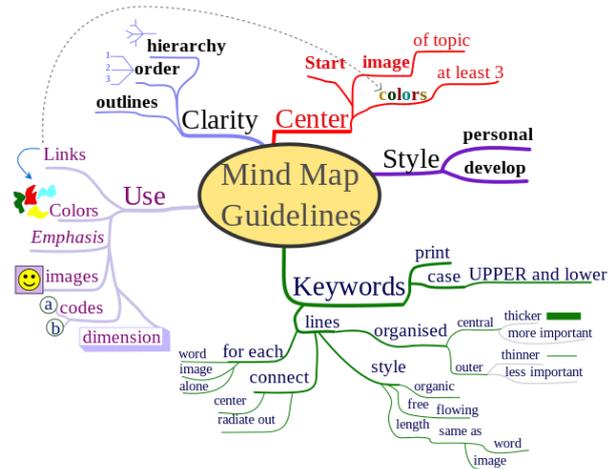
Story acrostic: " **B**less **M**y **D**ear **A**unt **S**ally!

Remembering the first letter of each word helps you to make a connection to your memory.

## Mind maps

A mind map is a method for visually organising information using a combination of words, symbols, patterns, colours and shapes. Mind maps are useful for brainstorming essay/assignment material, note taking in lectures, summarising study notes and remembering information.

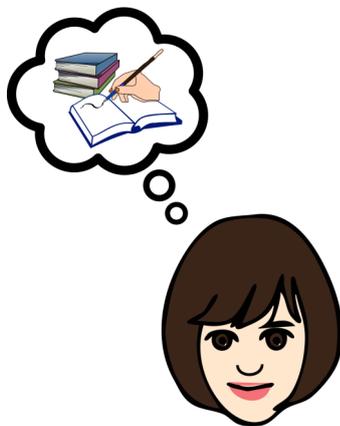
There is no set way for creating a mind map, but generally you start at the centre of the page and related information is arranged systematically



Mind map of the mind map guidelines. [Nicoguaro](#). (2011). Via Wikipedia Commons. Used under the [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic](#) license.

## Use your senses and your imagination to help you remember

We use our senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) to take in information about the world around us. So if you want to understand and remember what you're studying, make use of your all senses and your imagination - the more you do, the better you'll remember.



Our brains like pictures: we think in pictures, we dream in pictures, so use pictures and visualisation to help you remember. For example, look really hard at what you are studying, then try to see it as a picture in your mind's eye. If it's a page, you could try to see the headings and where the different bits are on the page; if it's a picture or diagram, try to reproduce it in your mind or look at it and copy it. You could also try to create a picture, or series of pictures, in your mind or on paper, to illustrate what you're learning.

Recite your work aloud and listen to yourself; alternatively you could record yourself and play it back.

Walk around while studying and recite your work aloud to the rhythm of your footsteps, for example, imagine you're marching in a parade, recite your work and walk in time with your words. (It might be a good idea to make sure you're alone first!)



Have you ever had the experience of a faint scent taking you right back to something that happened long ago and thought you'd forgotten? Make this work for your studies: for example, suck a lemon lolly while studying something you just must remember, try to associate the taste and smell with what you have to remember. Then take a similar lolly into the exam room and use the taste and smell to jog your memory.



Our imagination uses things like stories, humour, symbolism, colour, and exaggeration, so use them to help you remember what you're studying. For example, make up some private jokes about your studies, or turn them into comic strips. Use symbols like a big ! next to something you must remember or } to show things should be linked, or an → to show progression, etc. You can make up any number of visual symbols, but make sure they're meaningful to you and serve as cues to help you remember. Use **different colour pens** or highlighters to make things stand out. Use **larger letters** than usual or **CAPITALS** for very important facts.

## The story technique

A story which links a number of facts is much easier to remember than a list of facts. This is because as each part of the story leads on to the next, each fact you remember serves as a cue to help you remember the next fact: the story links them together and helps trigger your memory. The more memorable the story, the easier it is to remember the things you have to learn. And to make your story even more memorable, include visualisation: Try to see the events and interactions in your mind's eye as you're telling yourself the story.

Say you have to remember the names of the Seven Dwarfs in the fairy story, Snow White.  
Make up a story to help you:



I'm usually still **Sleepy** at seven o'clock in the morning but when I woke up today I was immediately wide awake and **Grumpy**. This was because I knew I had to visit the **Doc**. I'm normally quite **Bashful** about going but a friend told me not to be so **Dopey** as I had an allergy that was making me very **Sneezy**. After I'd been given an antihistamine I felt much better and was really very **Happy!**

## The rhyming peg system

The rhyming peg system uses a picture that rhymes with a number word from one to ten. This picture is the peg that never changes.



1-gun	Visualize the first item being fired from a gun.
2-shoe	Visualize an association between the second thing and a shoe.
3-tree	Visualize the third item growing from a tree.
4-door	Visualize the 4th item associated with a door.
5-hive	Visualize the fifth item associated with a hive or with bees.
6-bricks	Visualize the sixth item associated with bricks.
7-heaven	Visualize the seventh item associated with heaven.
8-gate	Visualize the 8th item associated with a gate.
9-wine	Visualize a glass containing the 9th item.
10-hen	Visualize the 10th item associated with a chicken.

For example, to remember the following shopping list of 10 items:

- **Apples:** Picture an apple being fired from a gun.
- **Butter:** Picture yourself stepping on a stick of butter.
- **Razor blades:** Picture a tree with razor blades for leaves.
- **Soap:** Picture a door made from soap.
- **Bread:** Picture bees flying from a loaf of bread as if it is a hive.
- **Milk:** Picture a house using milk bottles as bricks.
- **Cat food:** Picture an open can of cat food with angel wings and a halo.
- **Bacon:** Picture bacon on a plate.
- **Batteries:** Picture a wine glass filled with batteries.

Wikipedia. (2 August 2016). Mnemonic peg system. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> Available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#)

## Teach it to someone else

There is no better way to understand and remember something than to try and teach it to someone else. That person can be a fellow student, a family member, or even your teddy bear.



For tips on how to study, concentrate and remember what you've learnt go [HERE](#)



To watch a video on how to remember numbers go [HERE](#)

### References

Open Polytechnic. (n.d). Improve your memory. Retrieved from <https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/current-students/study-tips-and-techniques/study-concentrate-and-remember/improve-your-memory/>



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