

SOME MEMORY TECHNIQUES

+ Initial-letter words -

Make up a word by using the initial letters of a series of other words. This gives a useful structure to a set of ideas. Examples:

WYSIWYG: What You See Is What You Get

HOMES Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior (Great lakes of America)

SMASHING SCOPE (see handout)

+ Initial-letter alliteration -

This involves a repetition of the same sounds. Important concepts are made memorable by shared initial letters because alliteration (repetition of similar sounds) can improve memory.

EXAMPLE:

Communicate with the Five Cs: be concise; clear; courteous; complete and correct.

The 5 Ps of Presentations: Positivity, Preparation, Practice, Performance, Postmortem

+ Initial-letter sentences -

Every Good Boy Deserves Favour - notes on the lines of a musical stave EGBDF

Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain - gives you the colours of the rainbow (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet). Remember this as ROY G BIV?

You can use these techniques to help you remember the order of points that you want to use in an exam. Assuming you have organised your ideas effectively during revision, take the first letter of each point and make them into a silly word or phrase. Once you remember a point this will function as a trigger to help you remember what it is you want to say about that point.

Let's say you want to write about . . .

The main **T**hemes that relate to a particular topic; then the **M**arxist aspect; then the **F**eminist aspect; and **M**odernism.

This gives **T - M - F - M**

Titanic **M**eals **F**uel **M**onsters or **T**iny **M**inds **F**or **M**orons



+ **Funny Stories -**

This is sometimes referred to as the Chain-Link method.

Use as many of the ideas in SMASHING SCOPE as you can to make up a story and involve all the people or things you want to remember. Make these items *do funny things!*

Imagine trying to remember a list, without writing it down.

Let's say . . . milk, broccoli, orange, cottage cheese.

Using any list of objects, visualize the first two and forge a link between them using a visual image or event. To remember milk and broccoli you might visualize a bath full of milk. Suddenly a huge head of broccoli crashes through the roof and falls in the milk with a terrific splash. Okay, this is silly – but it works!

Now for oranges – as you are looking at the broccoli in the bath of milk, the door opens and four giant oranges march into the room, singing at the top of their voices. The oranges stop, staring at the broccoli floating in the milk. They reach into their backpacks and pull out containers of cottage cheese and start pelting the broccoli. Play this film through a few times and you will remember your list.

+ **Use sounds to help you develop your memory -**



Be multi-sensory. Repeating words aloud is an excellent memory aid – hear the sounds, feel the movement of your tongue and breath, sense the rhythm of the words. This reinforces the sounds and the sense of the sounds – but you might have to mutter in front of people!

+ **Remembering Names -**

Try repeating a person's name as soon as you are introduced. In conversation try to use the other person's name as often as you can. Each time you repeat the name it will help you remember them better.

Later that day, review all the new people you have met and repeat their names aloud as you visualize their faces. This technique will also help with learning new words or numbers.

Visual Names

As well as repeating the names aloud, try to find images in the names which you can link in your imagination to the memories of the faces. Chris = imagine him with a red hood.

Look up the names of 2 or 3 people whose names you want to remember. Can you think of any visual associations?

+ **Try using rhyme -**

Remember, remember the fifth of November

In fourteen-hundred-and-ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue

Try adapting songs to include the information? – Use some memorable nonsense.

Techniques for organizing information

+ Chunking

Divide a long list into several chunks- use groups of seven (maybe plus or minus two). This applies to words, numbers, images, ideas, or anything. Chunking is good because it makes you think about relevant categories – you are processing the info on a deeper level.



+ Family Trees



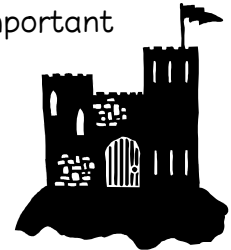
If you use chunking to divide a long list of around 50 items into about 7 groups, you have sort of gone back up a family tree to the previous generation. So, instead of listing all the items in a shopping list you can use the family tree technique to just list groups of related items. For example: fruit; vegetables; dairy goods; frozen goods.

This is a really important technique for organising the results of a brainstorm. If you have a list of 40 things you want to put in your assignment, you need to think of the family tree idea in order to come up with categories so you can order your information.

+ Memory Palace



This is a special place where you put important things you need to memorise. Maybe it is a real place, maybe you ‘build’ it from scratch. The idea is to build a memorable structure in which you can imagine the items you need to remember. So, if you have an important shopping list, but no pen or paper, imagine putting each item you want to buy in a different room in your palace. You are looking to imagine ‘startling’ images – this is necessary because they need to be memorable – but they are also under control because they are kept within the confines of the house.



Your memory palace can be very ornate and sophisticated, or it can be very simple and practical.

It can even be one particular room that you know well, perhaps your bedroom?

Whatever kind of palace you have it must feel solid, be well visualized and, most importantly, have plenty of places in it where you can lodge mentally the things you have to remember.

You can place the main points for a speech/presentation in your memory palace – you can use actual objects, or objects that suggest ideas. You can ensure that you remember all the parts of your speech in the correct order by looking around mentally or walking through your memory palace in a particular sequence. If you want to stay in a small space, then shrink down the objects. You are in control!

One suggestion – use your bedroom.

1. Starting with your bed, go round the room clockwise, picking out ten places. For example, bedside table, then a chair, then a dressing table, then a window, etc.
 2. Once you have picked out ten places, go over them again until you are sure you will remember them every time you think about your room.
 3. To remember 10 objects, or ideas, mentally place the first object or idea on the first place, your bed. Then place the second object on the second place, etc.
- When you now go through the places in your room mentally, you will be able to recall the objects you have placed in your room.

You can also use this to remember points you wish to make in a presentation or a speech.

- You want to
1. Thank the bride's parents.
 2. Toast the bride and groom.
 3. Tell a joke about the groom's car, etc



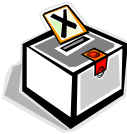


- You might
1. Picture the bride's parents in **your bed**
 2. Imagine the bride and groom on **your table** next to your bed
 3. Imagine the groom's car crashing through **your window**.

Okay, so it is not always as easy as this. If your points are more abstract, then try to turn them into something which is easy to picture.

Suppose you want to talk about

1. The evils of dictatorship.
2. The value of democracy
3. The need for a social conscience.

You might picture:

1. EVIL as Adolph Hitler  
 2. DEMOCRACY as a ballot box 
 3. SOCIAL CONSCIENCE as a political figure that you admire. (Desmond Tutu, or Nelson Mandela) 
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N. B. If you have more than ten points to remember, you can place more than one in a particular location. But you must link them. For instance, on your bed you might have HITLER, smashing up the ballot box. This links the evils of dictatorship with the value of democracy.

Peg word memory system

This is a mental filing system that can help you remember things.

First, learn these rhymes.



Let's assume that you want to remember the following items:

- | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1. Table | 2. Feather | 3. Cat | 4. Leaf | 5. Student |
| 6. Orange | 7. Car | 8. Pencil | 9. Shirt | 10. Poker |

✦ Now, using the ideas in SMASHING SCOPE, associate images to the numbers.

1. bun – imagine a huge bun on a weak, fragile table. Smell it?
2. shoe – imagine your favourite shoe with a huge feather sticking in it. It tickles you when you try to put it on.
3. tree – imagine your pet cat stuck in the top branches – listen to it.
4. door – imagine your bedroom door is one giant leaf – hear it crunch
5. hive – think of a student, dripping with honey (as a bee)
6. sticks – imagine large sticks bursting the skin of an orange that is huge – see the juice, smell it
7. heaven – imagine all the angels sitting on cars, rather than clouds
8. gate – imagine yourself slamming a gate shut, hear it bang and rattle, imagine it is made of pencils, pencils which catch on the ground and make amazing patterns.
9. wine – imagine huge bottles of wine – wash your shirts in the wine that is flowing out of the bottles.
10. hen – imagine an enormous poker and . . . well, .you work it out.

Remember, the numbers are hooks – you can hang anything on them.

Remembering ideas, rather than specific things

This system becomes more useful if you use it to remember ideas.

Let us imagine you need to remember 3 things: you need to visit your tutor, get money out of the bank and phone up about a passport.

The first three pegs are 1. BUN, 2. SHOE and 3. TREE.

1. Develop a mental image of your tutor being attacked by buns.
2. Develop a mental image of your shoes being full of money.
3. Develop a mental image of a passport made out of tree bark, perhaps wrapped around a telephone.

A useful way to remember numbers

+ Sentences for Numbers

Numbers are usually harder to remember than words. This is a useful method for remembering long numbers such as bank account numbers.

Example:

The value of pi is usually given as 3.14 or 3.142. But mathematicians often need more than three decimal places. How might you remember the value of pi to 20 decimal places? Try a rhyme! (N. B. you need to count the number of letters in each word, the first line is 141592).

I wish I could determine pi
Eureka! Cried the great inventor
Christmas pudding Christmas pie
Is the problem's very centre

+ Try to find a sentence to remember a phone number.

For example: 316644. Example: – Now I wander lonely, half-born.

+ Try to find a sentence to remember a PIN number.

For example: 5984. Example: – Peter Robinson's somewhat daft.