

Steps for Improving Your Memory

Start with the right attitude: You have to want to concentrate, understand, and remember. Since wanting to remember is the basis for remembering, your intentions are crucial. If you do not plan to remember something, you will not remember it very well. Keep your mind on what you are studying and do not permit yourself to be distracted. Set your goals and stick to them.

- ❖ Make the topic interesting for yourself! Use bright colored pens to take notes, organize topics by color, make a small rhyme in your head, be creative!

Learn in an organized way: You will remember much more easily when you have a systematic, orderly overview of what you have learned. If you study each event as being isolated and never see the relationships between them, you will forget more quickly. Work to understand the overall significance of each course topic and realize that the section being studied is part of a whole part of the big picture.

- ❖ After class, call a study buddy, a friend, or a significant other and talk about what you learned. Being able to explain something means you understand it.

Review immediately after learning: Summarize lecture notes and textbook reading. More than half of what you have learned is forgotten within 24 hours so review immediately while the material is still fresh in your mind, even if you only review for a few minutes.

- ❖ When you go back to your dorm, apartment, or home, open your notes and write what you remember! Then review your notes and identify topics you don't remember. Put a star next to them and then re-write the topics you forgot three times on a sheet of paper!

Learn actively: Most learning time should be spent actively in self-testing and practice rather than passive rereading. While you read, underline important points and make marginal notes and summaries. Recite your notes out loud, use flashcards, visualize, and associate new material with things you already know.

- ❖ If you use flashcards, then organize topics, chapters, definitions, and lessons by color! For objects that can be identified, printed visuals of topics can make memorization easier.

Take your time: Complex learning, like understanding new relationships or learning how to solve a problem, requires longer periods of time for efficient learning. Reading the material and comprehending it are two different things, so take your time and read carefully. Have a daily schedule for study and stick to it.

- ❖ Stuck? Ask a tutor, professor, or roommate for help! If it's the night before a due date, watch a YouTube instruction video! Many professors post instruction videos on a wide range of topics!

Mechanical or rote memorization: Anything you have to memorize and simple tasks are better learned in short frequent practice sessions.

- ❖ Take a classmate to the library with you and go through flashcards together. Make it a game; whoever gets the most flashcards correct wins a snack or beverage. If you don't have a study buddy, make up rhymes or sentences to help you remember.

Practice what you learn: Most forgetting takes place because people have not periodically practiced or reviewed what they have learned. Look for ways to apply what you're learning to your daily life.