

# How to Memorize Anything

Memorizing facts is very different from learning concepts or processes, but it can be relatively easy to those who know the basic principles.

If you want to increase your efficiency at memorizing or decrease the amount of time, effort or frustration, then read on.

## Steps

1. Identify the material of interest and record it in the desired form.
2. Accept it and do not be intimidated by it. Tell yourself that you are easily able to work with the material of interest.
3. Look for patterns, familiar elements, and other ways to break the material into groups of three to four familiar elements (if possible) and annotate these observations as you go. Do not force any patterns and stop looking before substantial effort is required for this step. Forced familiarity is compulsory learning; see the tips section below.
4. Investigate and note intuitive relationships between the elements and your own experience. The relationships need not be rational, only memorable (interesting, funny, enjoyable) and inspirational.
5. Remove the material and all notes from one's mind for a 3-30 seconds by engaging in unrelated activities (including memorization of unrelated material). This escapes sensory memory and exercises short-term memory.
6. Recall as much of the material as possible "on the record," and do not erase anything which is recalled. Peacefully accept whatever is or is not recalled (however little or however much is in error).
7. Record all differences and similarities of your recollection with the material of interest using simple and intuitive "annotations." These are notes on the material of interest. Accept and note the errors peacefully.
8. Repeat steps 5 through 7 until the material is perfectly recalled 3 times consecutively.
9. Repeat steps 5 through 8 using incremental wait times of 10 min, 1 hour, 1 day (12 hours), 1 week, 1 month, 1 year and 1 decade. Do not increase the wait times if recall is completely impossible at those longer durations.

## Tips

- Stress and mental "work" are counterproductive to learning and memorizing. Consider Plato's wisdom: 'Because a free man ought not to learn anything under duress. Compulsory physical exercise does no harm to the body, but compulsory learning never sticks to the mind.' 'True' 'Then don't use compulsion,' I said to him, ' but let your children's lessons take the form of play. You will learn more about their natural abilities that way.' (Plato, 380BC, <http://www.spaceandmotion.com/Philosophy-Plato-Philosopher.htm>)
- Remember that you are human and err as do all other humans. Human error is perfectly natural. The task is to recognize the errors unique to you. Increased familiarity with your own errors empowers you to more easily and quickly discover

your errors and correct them (even before they happen). Your errors will gradually disappear as they are recognized and accepted, though they may relapse later.

- Look for reasons to be interested in the material of interest. Learn how to enjoy and appreciate the material. Explore and even pioneer the potential, real applications of the subject in your own life/activities.
- Studies show that you remember 30% more when you're standing up. If you're trying to memorize a poem, recite it standing up.
- Your brain will be able to recall notes better if they are in colour. You might want to invest in a 4 color pen.

## Warnings

- Do not push yourself. If you are tired or frustrated, then rest your mind and body for a few moments.
- Avoid setting expectations or deadlines for memorizing. These tend to frustrate the learner and thus slow/impede the learning/memorizing process. Instead, allow the process to happen as you follow the process.
- Don't limit yourself with declarations of inability. Don't chastise or threaten yourself. Telling yourself that you are incapable of the task will undermine the process and "fulfill the prophesy." Attacking yourself with chastisement or threats creates "mental-health" problems and "spiritual-health" problems. These problems (usually associated with bad stress, oftentimes called distress) undermine learning and memorizing, and many feel that they also undermine physical (bodily) health, too. Your best supporter is yourself, so be especially proactive in it.
- Strengthening the power to memorize does not inherently strengthen the power to learn, though easier recall does assist with the recognition of patterns, associations and dissections (complex concepts separated into simpler concepts) typical of the learning process.
- If you happen to have little brothers or sisters make sure they are in a place where they will not disturb you.