

## STUDY SKILLS

# BREAK

To help me remember information for tests.

**B**reak memorizing into short time periods.

- Never try to memorize a lot of information at one time. This leads to overloading and your mind won't let you memorize any more information. Or it leads to boredom and you can't get motivated to keep working on memorizing.
- Try to arrange short, frequent blocks of time for memorization. Spend a certain amount of time working on methods to memorize some information and then review these methods at certain times throughout your studying time. For example, you may devote 10 minutes to memorizing your Spanish vocabulary at the beginning of a two hour block of studying, and then 10 minutes in the middle and another 10 minutes at the end. This will give you 30 minutes of studying your Spanish vocabulary. It is less effective to spend 30 minutes at one time working on the vocabulary because of overloading and boredom. It's easier to work on it in short time periods spaced out over time.
- Never cram! Don't try to memorize information you haven't worked on right before a test. If you do, this will make you anxious. However, before a test you should review memorization techniques that you have been using while studying.

**R**ecite information aloud.

- Read aloud the note cards you are studying from. Read the questions on one side and then the answers on the other side.
- After reading aloud, test yourself on the information by shutting your eyes and asking and answering the questions again.
- If you get the answer wrong, write it several times as you say it over and over.

**E**stablish mnemonics to help you remember information.

- Mnemonics are words and letters that help you remember information.
- To make up a mnemonic, make a list of the important facts you need to remember. Use the first letter of each fact to make up another word that will help you remember the ideas to be memorized. For example, the mnemonics HOMES was created to help students remember the names of the Great Lakes.
- First the Great Lakes were listed: Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario.
- Next the first letter of each word was written separately: S, M, H, E, O.
- Then, the letters were moved around to create a key word that would remind you of the names of the five Great Lakes.
- The word HOMES was created using H (Huron), O (Ontario), M (Michigan), E (Erie), and S (Superior).
- Another type of mnemonics involves using the first letters of the words or ideas to be memorized to create a "catchy" sentence. The sentence does not have to make

sense as long as it sticks in your mind and you can remember it when taking a test. Using the first letters of the five Great Lakes: M (Michigan), H (Huron), S (Superior), O (Ontario), E (Erie), the following sentence can be made: "Monkeys have seven orange ears".

- It is very important that you can recall these mnemonics techniques when taking a test. Write down the key word (HOMES) or catchy sentence (Monkeys have seven orange ears) in the margin of your test and then analyze the letters as an aid to recalling the facts.

**A**lways try to picture in your mind words or pictures to help you remember.

- As you study, try to visualize (or picture in your mind) words and pictures that will help you remember. For example, if you are trying to remember the parts of an animal cell, you may picture in your mind the diagram from your science book where the different parts were shown. If you used graphic organizers to help you learn, picture the graphic organizer in your mind and then recall each of the parts.
- After looking at the picture or graphic, shut your eyes and try to recall as much detail as possible. If you can't recall all the details, study the picture or graphic again, and then shut your eyes and repeat the process. Do this until you can recall all parts to be memorized.
- When answering a test question involving material you visualized, shut your eyes for a second and try to recall all aspects of the picture or graphic in your mind.

**K**ey words help.

- If you have to memorize words or facts that are new or hard for you, it may help to associate these with key words. For example, if you can't recall the meaning of the word ziggurat (a temple built in a series of terraces with each terrace smaller than the below with a staircase and a shrine on top) for a world history test, look at the word to find something related to the meaning. The small word zig appears in the word and the series of terraces zig-zag up.
- It is best to combine key word approach with visualizing. Once you identify a key word, picture in your mind a relationship between the keyword and the original word (picture the zig zag pattern of the ziggurat).