

1st STOP

To help me organize information sequentially.

When studying information that can be organized sequentially, decide if the information can be arranged by putting it in a spatial order, putting it in a time order, ranking items by their importance, or ordering steps in doing a process. Then use the step that corresponds to the type of organization you selected. For all types of sequences, use two techniques to help you organize the information. First, use visualization where you try to picture the sequence in your mind's eye. Secondly, use self talk where you read the items in the sequences and explain to yourself WHY they are in this order.

1st decide on the sequence to use.

- Look over the information you are studying and ask yourself if this information can be organized on the basis of space, time, order of importance, or process sequence.
- After you have decided which of the four types of sequences is involved, go to that step.

Spatial sequences.

- Spatial sequences involve analysis of how things look (e.g., the location of the planets from the sun, the four time zones in the US, the relationship between weather and distance from the Equator.).
- To help understand and recall spatial sequences, try to visualize in your mind's eye how the information looked when you saw it. When studying, look at the spatial sequence, then shut your eyes and try to visualize it. For example, when studying the four time zones, look at the map with the time zones, then shut your eyes and picture the map in your mind's eye. It might also be helpful to draw a simple picture to show the information.
- You should also use self talk to identify meaningful associations between the items in the sequences (e.g., *"The east coast is on the right side of a map and the west coast is on the left. I know that New York is in the eastern time zone and that is later than the time in the rest of the country. I know that Chicago is in the middle of the country and that it is in the central time zone. Then the Rocky Mountains are in the mountain time zone. California, which is on the west coast, is on the Pacific Ocean and that is in the pacific time zone. If you start with the eastern time zone, each of these time zones is one hour later than the next one. If it's 10 p.m. in New York, it's 9 p.m. in Chicago, 8 p.m. in the Rocky Mountains, and 7 p.m. in California."*

- Another helpful strategy for recalling and understanding spatial sequences is to use color or other visual cues (e.g., "*I am going to color each of the countries nearest the Equator red to show that they are hot because of their location.*").
- Use of mnemonics may also help with recalling and understanding spatial sequences (e.g., to recall the names of planets in order from the sun, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, use the sentence, My very eager mother just set up new pickles.).

Time sequences.

- To help understand time sequences, use a time line or a visual organizer.
- Draw a line and write important dates on one side and corresponding events on the other side. Or, you can make a time line or visual organizer with just the events in order. Numbering the events may help you remember the order.
- For example, for a time line on the events surrounding Pearl Harbor, write December 7, 1941, and Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, then December 8, 1941, and US declares war on Japan, and then December 11, 1941, US declares war on Germany and Italy.
- As you write each event on the time line, say the date, the events and explain the relationship between each of the events on the time line. This will keep you from just trying to memorize, without understanding the basis for the items in the sequence.

Order of importance

- Sequences with order of importance involve analyzing concepts and rating them from the most important to the least important.
- To create sequences of items that are ranked by importance, make a list and number the items, #1 will be the most important and each item will be less important than the one before.
- Rewrite your list in the correct order.
- Read the list aloud and explain to yourself why the first item is most important, the second less important, and so forth.
- For example, to recall the names of the presidents in terms of their importance, make the following list: 1. George Washington, 2. Abraham Lincoln, 3. Thomas Jefferson, and 4. Franklin Roosevelt. Use self talk to describe the way this ranking has been made. "*George Washington is ranked first because he was able to bring the country together at the time of independence. Without him, the country may not have been successful in breaking away from England. Abraham Lincoln was ranked second in importance because he was able to bring us through the Civil War and prevent the country from breaking into two separate countries. Thomas Jefferson was important because he doubled the size of the country by buying the Louisiana Purchase. Franklin Roosevelt was important because he got us through the Depression and World War II.*"

Process sequences

- Analyze the steps in a process and write them in order as you verbally describe each step to yourself. Make sure that you describe the relationships of the steps to each other.
- Show the relationships by using arrows, numbers, or lines.
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- For example, to recall the steps in the digestive process, make a list like the following and say what happens at each step.

1. Mouth-digestion of food begins.
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2. Esophagus-food passes to stomach.
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3. Stomach-digestion continues.
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4. Gall bladder-emulsion
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5. Small intestine-digestion and absorption of nutrients.
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6. Large intestine-digestion and absorption of water and minerals.
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7. Rectum-undigested food.
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8. Anus-exit for undigested food.

