

{21 EFFECTIVE
STUDY SKILLS} + {2 SUPER LEARNING
STRATEGIES}

TO HELP YOU SUCCEED
IN TESTS & EXAMS

1. Flashcards

Flashcards hold a popular role in education, revision and preparation for tests for the simple reason that they can be extremely effective as a memory tool as well as creating opportunities for shared learning with family and friends.

You can buy packs of ready-made flashcards or make your own.

Each flashcard contains a picture or symbol of something in the curriculum you need to remember. Flashcards can also include keywords, phrases, quotes, facts, formulas and statistics you need to remember. However, they do NOT contain long sentences and paragraphs.



2. Mapping Techniques

Including *mind maps*, *memory trees* and *flow charts*, mapping techniques not only map out information but also aid in creating links to connect the main points of learning in any topic or subject.



3. Presentations

Creating *PowerPoint*, *Keynote* or *Prezi* presentations of learning material is a useful way of recycling vital information into a visual format, which can then be kept on a device for easy access and continued revision and practice.

You don't have to share your presentation with anyone else. Just creating the presentation and watching it from time to time will help you succeed.



4. Images & Icons

Matching key words, phrases and concepts to a visual picture (such as a cartoon image) means the image will help with recalling a concept.

For example:



Independence Day

4th of July

Federal holiday in USA

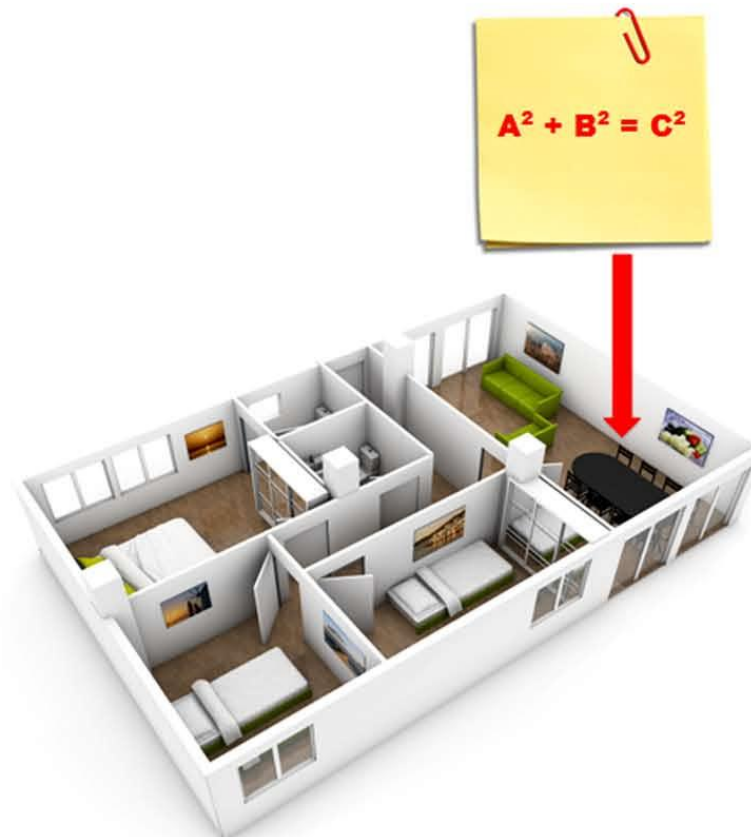
Declaration of Independence (from Great Britain)

July 4, 1776

5. Roman Room Memory System

The exercise of pretending to place vital information in the different rooms of a house is a useful memory aid. Essentially, you use your imagination to put things you need to remember in locations you already find easy to remember.

For example, you could visualize yourself painting $A^2 + B$ on the dining room table (don't actually do it!). Whenever you think of the dining table (including when you're sat in an important test or exam), you can immediately recall the formula that you pretended to paint on it



6. Colour

The brain loves colour! So use different colours when writing and note taking. This includes:

- Different coloured pens and pencils
- Felt tip pens
- Highlighter pens
- Marker pens
- Different coloured paper and card
- Post-it notes, etc.

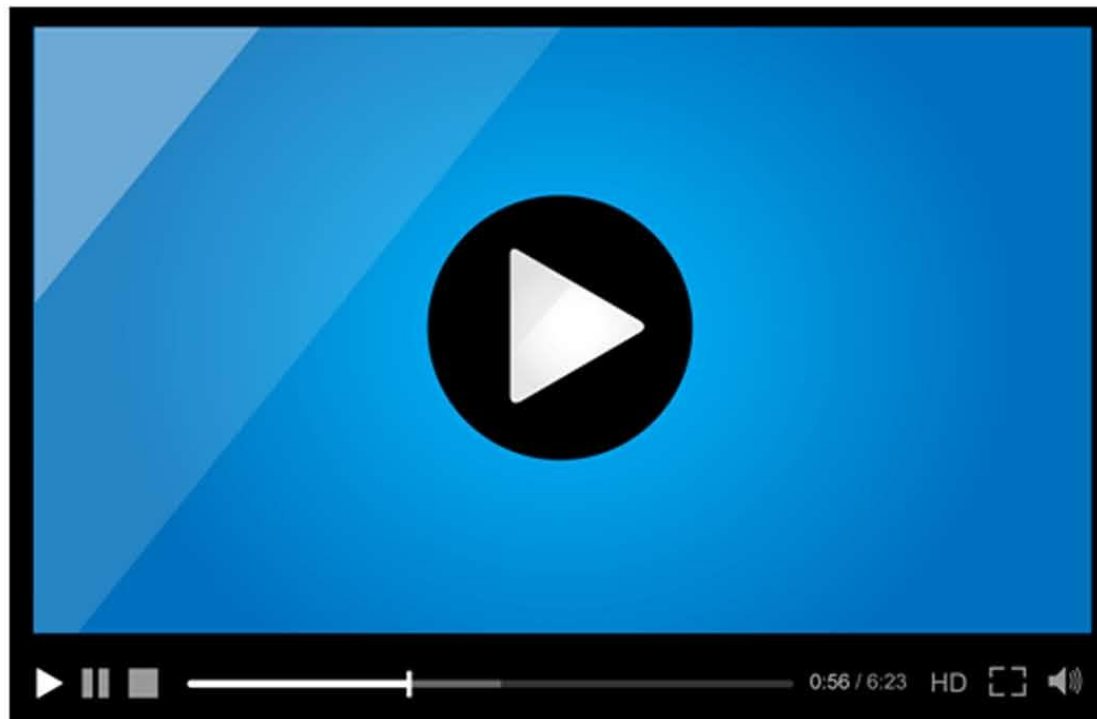
Using a code for what each colour relates to can really help when learning complex concepts or key words.



7. Videos

Every day brilliant new educational videos are being loaded onto the Internet that you can access for free. The danger with this strategy is that you can end up wasting hours of your precious study time because you can't find the educational content you're looking for or you get caught up watching funny videos of random people doing crazy things!

If you find your brain learns well from videos, be sure to invest your study time wisely by being disciplined and only watching videos that are linked to the subjects you're studying and recommended by experts (e.g. your teachers) who know what's likely to show up in the tests and exams you're going to be doing.



8. Talk It Through

It can be very helpful to talk about the subject you're studying, even if the person you're talking to doesn't have a clue what you're talking about!

Just talking aloud about a topic can help you clarify your thoughts on that topic and deepen your understanding of the subject.

Even if you're studying alone, you can read aloud when working through your notes. Try putting information into your own words, until you understand and express concepts clearly and accurately.



9. Q&A Sessions

I encourage you to create Question & Answer opportunities by recording questions (to use alone) or by writing questions (for someone else to ask you) about the topics you're studying.

You could create your own quiz or copy a game show format you've seen on TV – this can make the process more enjoyable .

Offering an answer and asking what the question might be (like they do on Jeopardy!) is a really thorough way to apply this strategy and helps deepen your learning too.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6UELT_qBQM



10. Word Play

Create rhymes and mnemonics as memory aids and recite them. Commonly used mnemonics include short poems, acronyms, or memorable phrases.

Example #1 – A short poem about the number of days in each month:

*Thirty days have September,
April, June, and November
All the rest have 31,
Except for February.*

Example #2 – Here's a well-known acronym:

UFO = Unidentified Flying Object



11. Sing It!

Putting revision information to your favourite tunes or turning information into lyrics or raps is a great way for auditory learners to learn and understand vital information.

Teacher uses rap to teach mathematics



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4RaYz6t5y8>

12. Create Characters

Using a range of voices to reflect different topics can be useful in assisting memory and recall.

For example, you might read your Science notes using a Scottish accent, or pretend to be the Queen whilst reciting your notes from Geography lessons.

It sounds silly but it can really help your brain remember important facts for tests and exams. Using exaggerated voice qualities to add emphasis on key words is incredibly useful.

For example, you might shout a key phrase over and over again at the top of your voice, or whisper content so quietly it's difficult for anyone else to hear what you're saying.

You can also say key words and phrases 5 times quicker than you'd normally say them, or 5 times slower than you'd normally say them.

Experimenting with these ideas can help important ideas become get embedded in your brain :-)



13. Soundtracks For Learning

Having conducive types of music playing gently in the background whilst studying can be beneficial to auditory learners.

This is a very personal thing. In other words, some people like to listen to hip-hop when learning, whilst others prefer classical music.

What's important is that you pay attention to whether your background music is helping or hindering your concentration.

Once you've figured out which music helps you focus and work well, I recommend you put together playlists of music so you can efficiently go to those lists when it's time to study.



14. Audio Anchor

This is a similar idea to visual learners associating images or icons with topics and facts. You can associate the main point of a subject you're studying with a particular sound.

Advertisers use this technique in TV commercials all the time, but you can also use it to improve your grades in school.

All you need is a uniquely specific sound (this can be a song, a ring tone, or any other sound) that you play in the background every time you're studying the main point of a subject.

That sound then becomes a mental trigger that helps you recall information in the future.

For example, I played Queen's *Don't Stop Me Now* song every time I sat down to write my *No Limits* book. That tune became the daily trigger that got my mind focused on writing. Many years have passed since I wrote *No Limits*, but every time I hear *Don't Stop Me Now* my mind goes straight back to the exact time and place when I was writing the book!



15. Grouping Games

Flashcards aren't just for visual learners – they're for kinaesthetic learners who learn by touch and doing things too.

Ranking cards, making match-ups between corresponding cards and grouping cards by concept are all ways to add the feel-factor when learning.



16. Extra Sensory Scribing

Translate the main points of the content you're learning into something that can be touched or followed with your hands.

For example:

- i) Use chalk to draw the key points on the floor in your yard,
- ii) Use a mini whiteboard and dry-wipe pens in a range of colours, or
- iii) Sew key words and phrases into a fabric. You could even create your own quilt with different sections for different subjects.



17. Extra Sensory Scribing

Associating different areas of your body with different aspects of a topic can be a great aid for recall and offer an ideal way of ensuring that all the memory triggers you need are in the exam room with you!

Experiment with these steps:

- i) Start by writing important information on post-it notes.
- ii) Then you can peg those post-it notes to different parts of your body.
- iii) Take your time to look at the notes on your body, recite the words and get a feel for the information.
- iv) Then remove the post-it notes, and simply by looking at the spot where the post-it used to be your brain will find it easier to recall the information that was on the post-it.



18. Pinkie Puppets

Similar to body pegs, but this time you associate each finger with different information.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this is childish. Kinaesthetic learners can gain a great deal of understanding about any subject by acting things out.

You can make different puppets for different fingers, each with a unique accent and personality – even making up stories or rhymes incorporating the main ideas of the subject you're studying.

In this way, finger puppets can be extremely useful because they make the most of the fidgety fingers that kinaesthetic learners are famous for having.



19. Pace It Out

Walking around the house or neighbourhood whilst listening to recorded revision materials or reciting information to match the pacing is a good way to help retain information.



20. Just Do It!

Since practical experience helps kinaesthetic learners understand and remember information, it makes sense for them to practice routines and methods in a hands-on way.

For example, actually do scientific experiments rather than just reading about them, or act out the scenes in Shakespeare rather than simply reading them.



21. Spatial Note Taking

Kinaesthetic learners can benefit from spatial note taking when working through revision materials.

You can do this by turning long swathes of text into smaller knowledge blocks in the form of:

- Lists
- Bullet points
- Typed notes
- Sketches
- Thought bubbles around a central idea
- Re-writing notes onto post-its and physically moving them around into groups of ideas



Now it's time to give you two SUPER learning strategies. These are multi-sensory study techniques that involve the full range of Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic styles at the same time, which means they offer great ways to learn any type of information effectively.

1) Record It

Making video and audio recordings of study notes using a video camera, smart phone, MP3 player or other portable device involves all elements of VAK. This includes:

- a. Writing your script, listing or noting the information you're going to record.
- b. Reading the content aloud, acting it out and recording it.
- c. Listening to, or watching the recording over and over again in a range of appropriate situations, such as on journeys, whilst exercising or even soaking in the bath!

This method works brilliantly when:

- Learning languages
- Practising mnemonics
- Recording songs & rhymes that make information memorable
- Capturing the main concepts in any subject
- Recording questions to test your own knowledge



2) Teach It

The ultimate way to learn anything is to teach someone else. The process of passing on what you're learning and explaining it to someone else prompts a much deeper learning experience for you that will be far more valuable than a simple memory exercise.

So I encourage you to share what you're studying with your family and friends. I think teaching others is the best way to master any subject. Be sure to use the techniques in this document to help your family and friends learn with you.

