

# Student Success Guides: Improve your Memory

SAINT JOSEPH'S  
ONLINE



## 1 Visualize It

Most of us remember what we see much longer than what we read or hear. Therefore, trying to visualize everything that you learn, no matter how abstract, will assist in your learning process. Ask yourself:

1. Can I draw it?
2. Can I make it into a chart or graph?
3. Can I make a mental video of the process or procedure?

You may even want to consider creating visual aids, or pictures that will act as mental cues when you recall the information for the exam.

## 2 Associate New Information With What You Already Know

Connect new material to facts/experiences you already know through association and visualization.

Remembering new information may be easier if you can connect it to information that you have already learned. Ask yourself: Is this new information like something I already know? Can I use the new information for something similar?

## 3 Take short bites of time

Most students memorize information best when they study in small periods over a long period of time. Memorizing facts from index cards that can be pulled out for a few ten-minute sessions each day will yield better results than sitting down with a textbook for an hour straight. You'll find that these short but regular practices will greatly aid your recall of lots of information.

## 4 When you have a list to memorize, break it up

It is easier to recall an odd number of short lists better than an even number of long lists. Organize the material into smaller groupings or subjects so that you can readily memorize it.

## 5 Focus

Don't let your attention fade while you are studying. Make sure that you get information right the first time and understand the information completely.

## 6 Say it out loud

Sit by yourself in a quiet room, and say aloud what you need to learn. Give your notes to someone else, and let that person ask you questions to be answered aloud.

## 7 Use Mnemonics

Mnemonics, or memory tricks, are things that help you remember what you need to know.

- Acronym—a word created from the first letters in a series of words. For example: HOMES represents the names of the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior.
- Create a silly sentence made out of words that each begin with the letter or letters that start each item in a series. Example: Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally (Order of operations in math). Parentheses, Exponents, Multiply, Divide, Add, and Subtract.

## 8 Sleep on it

When you study right before sleep and don't allow any interference—such as conversation, radio, television, or music—to come between study and sleep, there is better recall of material.

**GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**  
**SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE OF MAINE**

(800)-343-5498

[sjcme.edu/online](http://sjcme.edu/online)

## Memory 'Tricks'

Sometimes we all need to use some "tricks" to help us remember certain information. Here are a few that may assist you in your learning.

### Acronyms

You form acronyms by using the first letter of each word in the group of words you are trying to learn, forming a new word in the process. Some common acronyms include NBA (National Basketball Association) or SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus). This is a helpful device for quick recall of words, but remember that this does not assist in comprehension of those terms. That comes through other learning processes.

### Rhymes and Songs

Rhyme, rhythm, and melody of certain songs may all be used to help recall information. After all, how many children do you think have learned the letters of the alphabet by singing to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"? Or Billy Joel's song "We Didn't Start the Fire" has been known to help many students quickly recall events in American Cold War History. These types of techniques can be fun, especially for creative people.

### Grouping

Organizing material by grouping it into similar concepts or related ideas will help your memory. The process of organizing information into groups helps you to understand the relationship between the concepts better.

### Reviewing

Reviewing the notes that you have taken on new material at the end of the day for 10 minutes will help you retain that information. Reviewing that same material at the end of the week will also reinforce the learning process.

### Reciting Information

Reciting works because:

1. When you know you are going to recite something in your own words you pay more attention to the information.
2. If you are able to explain something in your own words you understand it.

Here are some helpful hints for reciting:

1. Make use of flashcards for anything that you need to learn.
2. When you finish reading a paragraph or section of your assignment, stop and recite it. If you can explain it out loud, then you are on your way to learning that material.
3. Find someone who will assist you with either the flashcards or by asking you questions that you have to answer out loud.

Check out more tips in the GPS Student Orientation

Saint Joseph's College of Maine  
(800)-343-5498      [sjcme.edu/online](http://sjcme.edu/online)