Memorisation techniques

During your studies, you may need to memorise information like facts, processes, formulas or diagrams.

Memorising is a skill that relies on active learning. Simply reading the same notes over and over again doesn't work very well, as you are not sufficiently engaged in the process.

Be mindful, though, that direct use of memorised texts or subject handouts in exams is considered plagiarism.

Strategies to memorise

Here are 10 techniques you can use to lock information into your brain.

Strategy 1

Visual notes

Write the notes out, using different colours and annotation techniques (underlining, circling, highlighting, etc.) so the visual image is memorable.

Strategy 2

Decorate your surroundings

Put the notes on the wall above your desk, on the fridge, in the car, etc.

Strategy 3

Read aloud

This involves both speaking and listening – two channels to your brain!

Strategy 4

Re-write

Try to re-write the notes unseen.

Strategy 5

Mix up the format

Re-write the information in the notes in a different way (e.g., as a mind map, with different headings for lists, or in date order).

Strategy 6

Recall

Read the information you need to memorise, close the text and recall what you can, reopen the text and assess the accuracy of your recall.

Strategy 7
Make flash cards

Write the facts on to flash cards using a different coloured card or pen for each category.

Strategy 8
Make a game

Use the flash cards to play games like 'Concentration', 'Snap', etc. The aim is to look at the information as often as you can without becoming bored and disengaging from the task.

Strategy 9
Record and listen

Record the information then replay it when you are driving, cooking, or about to go to sleep.

Strategy 10
Study with a mate

Study with a peer and test each other on the information you need to memorise and revise where necessary.

Reach out for help

The Charles Sturt Academic Skills team is here to help you develop your learning skills. You can also:

- ask a question on our Ask an Academic Skills Adviser forum,
- join one of our Academic Skills workshops, or
- access further information about all of our available services and learning resources, including assignment writing feedback, at csu.edu.au/academicskills.