

## MEMORY AIDS

*It is more natural to forget something than to remember.*

**To remember something, apply as many of the following techniques as possible.**

1. **Be flexible.** Experiment with many learning procedures. Be willing to abandon outmoded and faulty learning procedures so you will be free to acquire new and more efficient methods.
2. **Overlearn.** In order to retain anything learned, you must relearn it and reorganize it into current ongoing activity. One way to do this is to incorporate the learned material as part of your present habit system. Use it in speaking and writing. Act out the material as a rehearsal of a part in a play--a process known as role-playing. This is especially helpful in learning a foreign language.
3. **Schedule.** Schedule your study time so that the time at which something is learned or relearned is close to the time at which it will be used.
4. **Rephrase and explain.** Try a little role-playing.  
Take the point of view of the instructor for a change. Rephrase and explain the material in your own words to a classmate. Allow him to criticize your presentation. Then let the classmate be the instructor while you criticize. If you can't explain something, you really don't know it.  
Many students adopt the so-called *warm-body* attitude toward learning. A *warm* feeling toward one particular answer becomes the basis for its selection, regardless of whether one really knows why the answer is correct. This attitude is the result of classroom examining procedures in which true/false and multiple choice items are used exclusively for testing. Testing in this manner encourages the attitude that mere recognition of the most probable answer constitutes learning.  
Even though a particular course may not require adequate recall by using more penetrating recall-type questions, don't allow yourself to fall into this *warm body* learning trap. Insist on testing yourself! If you can explain the material, most certainly you can pass any objective test calling for superficial recognition. However, the reverse is most certainly not true. Learning only to a point of recognition and depending upon your ability to ferret out the correct response is insufficient for total-recall kinds of tests. Sooner or later this habit will result in total failure in a demanding test situation.
5. **Eliminate as many distractions and interruptions as possible during an intensive study period.** Breaks in concentration interfere in the study situation.
6. **Eliminate previous mistakes.** Take note of all previous mistakes and make every effort to eliminate them from future practice. It has been shown experimentally that consciously reviewing mistakes, taking note of exactly why they were incorrect, helps to reinforce the correct response. This process is sometimes referred to as a negative practice.
7. **Decide on an order of importance.** Some things are more important than others. In a particular study unit, decide what these are and organize the important material into an outline or framework. *Overlearn* this particular framework.
8. **Become emotionally involved.** Assume the attitude that you fully believe the viewpoint of the author. If the author can deal with this material, you are then at least as smart as he is! Strive for perfection. You may never achieve it, but you will most certainly improve your performance. Learn to discuss your current beliefs calmly with people holding different attitudes. Cite authorities to back up your position.
9. **Use mechanical memory aids.** This procedure is known as a mnemonic (memory) device. (See Handout "Mnemonic Devices")