

## IMPROVING YOUR MEMORY

Subject: Memorization Techniques

Purpose: To inform the audience about organization, association, and mnemonics so that they can use these effective memory techniques to enhance their memory.

### INTRODUCTION

I. Phone numbers, addresses, tests, and driving directions: what do all of these things have in common?

II. Throughout life, there are tons of things we are asked to remember.

A. Remembering and forgetting ideas are parts of our everyday lives.

B. “Experts say that we forget ninety-nine percent of everything that enters our heads” (Kelly, 1994, p.7).

i. I don’t know about you, but I find that depressing.

ii. Forgetting ninety-nine percent of what you studied for your math final can’t be good.

III. The good news is that we can enhance our memory by practicing great memorization techniques and skills.

IV. Organization, association, and mnemonics are three principles that will help you remember important information.

Transition: The first principle you need to understand is organization.

### BODY

I. Organization is a founding principle for obtaining an impressive memory.

A. The goal of organization is to arrange the information in a meaningful pattern (Higbee, 1997).

B. A study was conducted with two groups of people who were given a list of 112 words.

i. Group 1 was shown 112 words listed in organized categories and was able to remember sixty-five percent of the list (Higbee, 1997,p.43).

ii. Group 2 was shown the same 112 words in a random order and was only able

to remember 19 percent of the list (Higbee, 1997, p. 43).

iii. This study allows us to see the effects of organization on the effectiveness of memorization.

C. Chunking is an effective type of organization (Higbee, 1997)

i. Chunking is organizing words into groups based on their similarities (Higbee, 1997).

ii. This can also come in handy when remembering lists of numbers.

D. By learning to organize when studying, the information will gain more meaning to you and become easier for you to retrieve.

Transition: Now that I've explained organization, let's move on to association.

II. Association is another important technique that can be used to enhance the efficiency of your memory by making the material become more meaningful to you.

A. Association refers to taking the material you want to learn and relating it to something you already know (Oregon State Department of Education, 1989, p. 45).

B. One example of the way association works is when people want to remember where the country of Italy is on a map.

i. You associate the country of Italy with a shape of a boot.

ii. This allows you to remember where the country is by remembering a familiar item – a boot.

C. Another very familiar way that association is used is when parents are teaching their children the difference between left and right.

i. Most children know that left starts with the letter L.

ii. By raising both hands and trying to form an L, children can tell which hand is their left by spotting the correct shape of an L, and thus will associate L with left.

D. Association can be accomplished through many techniques, some of which include analogies, metaphors, and examples (Higbee, 1994). Everyone's memory can greatly benefit from using association techniques.

Transition: The last of the three memorization techniques is mnemonics.

III. Unlike organization and association, mnemonics are a more specific approach to memorization.

A. The goal of a mnemonic is to “bridge the gap from short term to long term memory by creating a selective focus” (Kelly, 1994,p.5).

i. It combines both organization and association.

ii. By remembering the specific mnemonic, it allows the information to be retrieved easily.

B. Mnemonics actually have a history in Greek oration (Oregon State Department of Education, 1989).

i. The Greeks would imagine that they were in a familiar area like their home (Oregon State Department of Education, 1989).

ii. By associating specifics in their speech to items in their home, the Greeks were able to remember their speeches (Oregon State Department of Education,1989)

iii. When giving their speeches, they would mentally view the house and recall the lines associated with each item they viewed in their minds (Oregon State Department of Education,1989).

C. A mnemonic that I used when I was younger to remember the order of operations in math was: please forgive my dear aunt sally.

i. Of course, this stands for parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction.

iii. By focusing on this single sentence, you are able to remember six items of information.

D. As you can see, mnemonics can be a very efficient way to remember large quantities of information.

Transition: So next time you are faced with a big test, just remember these three principles.

## CONCLUSION

I. That way, that big math final you were studying for, won't become part of that ninety-nine percent of the information that you forgot.

A. By organizing the things you are going to study, you will be able to memorize information more efficiently.

- B. Association will help you add more meaning to the information you want to remember.
  - C. By combining both association and organization in mnemonics, you can create a way to remember a lot of information through a small amount of information.
- II. These memorization techniques will help you not only in your college career, but also throughout your life in both your professional career and personal life.
- III. Practicing effective memory techniques is definitely a very rewarding endeavor.

**Works Cited (this normally would be on a separate page)**

Higbee, K. L. (1997). *Your Memory: How it Works and How to improve It*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Kelly, E. B. (1994). *Memory Enhancement for Educators*. Northridge, CA.: Educational Resources Information Center. CSA Illumina, 1-36.

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