

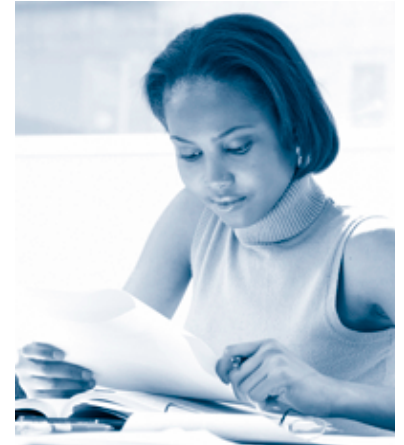
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## MAKING IT THROUGH SCHOOL: *Improving Your Memory*

A good memory is something every student needs to succeed at school. There's so much to learn and then you have to demonstrate that you've learned it by passing tests. Here are some tips to help you:

1. **Attention and Intention.** Be an effective listener and a focused reader. Pay attention to what you are learning, and decide to remember it. We learn and retain information best when we have a strong motivation for committing the material to memory.
2. **Relate to what you know.** How does the new information relate to concepts with which you're already familiar? Decide whether to emphasize memory devices such as rhymes, association, visualization, or recitation when you are trying to commit something to memory. Also, memory storage seems to increase if we pronounce the names of items or specialized terms out loud – especially if they are grouped rhythmically. Grouping items into threes or fours also seems to aid recall.
3. **Become the Teacher.** Grasp the basic idea and explain it to someone else in your own words. If you can make someone else understand the material, it shows that you've grasped the concepts and made them your own.
4. **Organize.** Make notes, and remember that 7 items is the maximum your short term memory can hold at one time. Categories with 7 or fewer items will work best.
5. **Visualize.** Your brain thinks in both words and pictures, so give it both: visualize diagrams and charts, as well as pictures of what you need to know. Make up images that will help you remember. For example, if you are trying to remember the year Abraham Lincoln was born, imagine a log cabin with the Lincoln's birth year over the cabin door.



### **The Bottom Line:**

*Improving your memory,  
even if it's pretty good  
already, could help you  
show how much you really  
know and could lead to  
even better grades.*

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6. **Talk to yourself.** Reciting as you read and reviewing notes out loud increases attention and motivation, and creates a stronger neural trace of memory by using more than one of your senses. The more senses you use, the better you remember things.
7. **Review material ASAP.** If you go over what you've learned in your lecture class or through your reading for just 5 minutes immediately after you've learned it, your retention will be far higher than if you skip this valuable step. If you can review it out loud by discussing it with a classmate, even better.
8. **Create Acronyms.** If you have to remember a list of things, try making up an acronym to represent the items in your memory. For example, if you had to remember the colors of the rainbow, you'd memorize "ROY G. BIV" (red-orange-yellow-green-blue-indigo-violet). The same technique will work for any list you need to remember. Be creative!
9. **Singing.** Make up a tune for the information you need to remember or sing the information to music you know and love. If it rhymes, so much the better.
10. **Maintain Good Health.** Eating healthy foods along with getting enough sleep and exercise are all important for supporting your memory, staying focused, and being alert.

If you employ some or all of the tips provided above, there is only one other thing you should do: Relax and be confident when you are trying to recall information. Stress interferes with your brain's ability to respond efficiently. If you've studied hard, reviewed all the material, and read all your assignments, your brain has the information you need. Take a deep breath, work on other test items that you readily know the answers to, and come back to the one you are having trouble remembering. The information will probably come to you if you don't fret over it too much. Improving your memory is like developing your muscles: practice, repetition, and good techniques build strength and rigor.

*These tips were taken primarily from [www.helpguide.org/life/improving\\_memory.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/improving_memory.htm):*