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Study Skill Workshops

Acing your Exams: Memory and Test Taking Strategies

Presented by Meaghan Michaluk
Student Success Advisor

The University of Winnipeg is in Treaty One territory and the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.



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Agenda

- Memory
 - Theory
 - Techniques
- Tests & Exams
 - Preparation
 - Strategies

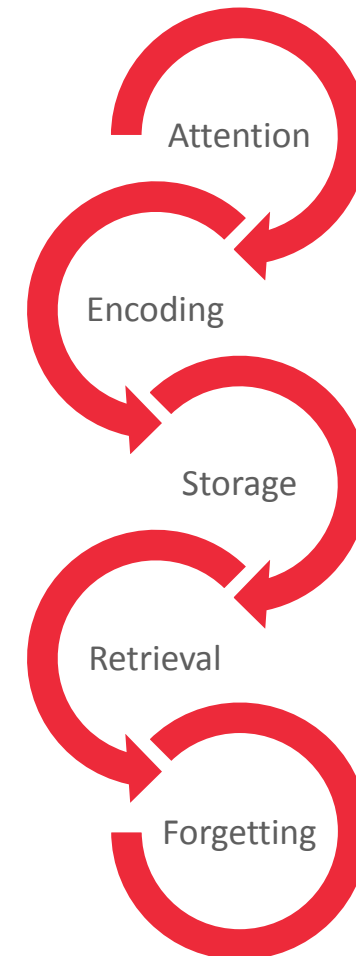


Memory Theory

Attention: Selectively process information allows for information to be taken in

Listening: involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences

- Functional space to listen to lectures
- Limit your distractions around you
- Refrain from judgment



Memory Theory

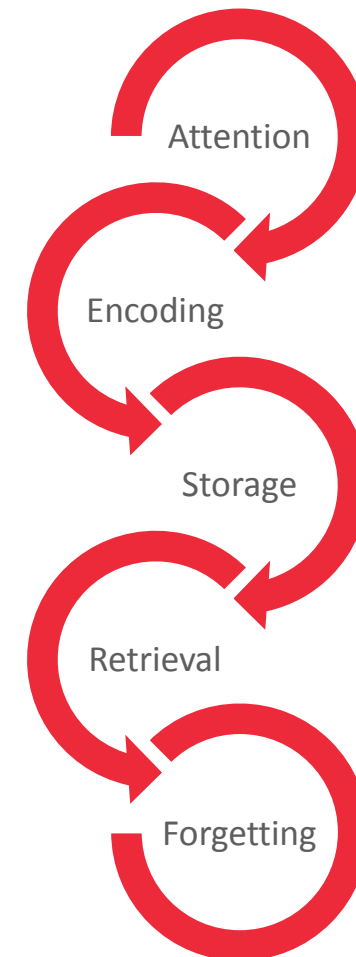
Encoding: the process of converting information into a memory

Storage (memory):

- short-term(working memory): limited space; 7 +/- 2 pieces of information
- long-term: unlimited space

Retrieval: encoding affects retrieval

Forgetting: revision reduces forgetting



Improve your memory by...

1. **Organizing:** outlines, mind maps
2. **Making meaning:** making choices, grouping, creating associations
3. **Learning actively:** using visuals, writing it down, reciting & repeating, teaching
4. **Recalling:** remember something else, notice when you remember: what strategy works best for you?
Stay positive: “It’ll come to me.”

Mnemonics

Encoding Methods

1. ACRONYMS

2. Loci

- Pegward Method
- Memory Palace

3. Chunking

4. Self referencing

5. Preparing to teach



Memory Palace

Word List:

- 1. tree
- 2. shoe
- 3. marbles
- 4. fireworks
- 5. books
- 6. orange



Chunking

Hawk

Chevy

Sand Piper

Pad Thai

Sparrow

Subaru

Sticky rice

Yom Kippur

Blue jay

Toyota

Easter

Ford

Beef Pho

Loon

Passover

Echo

Eagle

Saturn

Macaw

Robin

Ramadan

Chow Mein

BMW

Christmas

Gull

Volkswagen

Porsche

Spring Rolls

Crow

Audi

Grouping/making meaning

Cars

Chevy
Ford
Saturn
Echo
Toyota
Subaru
BMW
Audi
Volkswagen
Porsche

Birds

Eagle
Robin
Loon
Sparrow
Macaw
Blue Jay
Hawk
Gull
Sand Piper
Crow

Asian Food

Spring Rolls
Sticky Rice
Beef Pho
Pad Thai
Chow Mein

Religious Holidays

Ramadan
Christmas
Easter
Passover
Yom Kippur

Improving your concentration

- have a plan:
 - consider time, content, process
- use various encoding methods
- notice your attention
- reduce interference and distraction
 - choose an appropriate study area
 - write down what's on your mind
- use your best study times
- take breaks



Application of Knowledge

TAKING TESTS AND EXAMS



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Keep tests in perspective

- any given test or exam only identifies what you know and understand in that moment
- grades are a single measure meant for the purpose of feedback

**knowledge is
knowing
wisdom is
understanding**

Preparation

- **Review** daily and weekly throughout the term
- **Research** the exam
 - format, detail required, what's important
 - review previous tests, exams and quizzes
- **Create** review tools
 - checklists, summary sheets, flash cards, examples
 - consider the academic discipline
 - learn the major themes or issues
 - learn the details

Preparation

- **Predict** questions
 - ask yourself what questions you would ask
 - look for possible questions: in your notes and text
 - note when the instructor highlights something
 - and when they say “this will be on the exam”!
- **Form** a study group
 - make it small & functional
 - have a focus
 - test each other; teach each other
 - brainstorm questions and answers
 - compare notes

During the test/exam:

Preview the test/exam &
note the instructions

Arrange your time

Clue words (highlight key
words)

Easy questions first

Review test/exam



Type of exams/tests

Multiple choice:

- read all the choices before answering if possible
- try and figure out what the answer is NOT
- watch and slow down for tricky questions
- answer all the questions

Not sure?

- skip difficult questions, return later
- choose the longest or the middle answers
- look for clues in other questions

Type of exams/tests

Short answer questions:

- determine value and length of question
- write answers in sentence and paragraph form

Essay questions:

- pay attention to content and organization
- look for concept words
- Plan before you write
- read directions, plan your time, make notes, make an outline – then write your answer
- one main idea per paragraph; begin with the main idea

Look for cue words

Trace: describe the development of an event

eg. Trace the history of confederation in Canada.

Describe: tell how something happened (5w's)

eg. Describe the events that resulted in the building of the Bell MTS Centre on land previously occupied by the Eaton's Building

Compare: show similarities & differences

eg. Compare the purpose and function of analytical reports and research papers

Prove: give reasons or evidence that show that the concept is correct, logical, valid

Evaluate: discuss merits, strengths & weaknesses, limitations then explain your reasons

eg. Government intervention and regulations in the financial sector are required to prevent a repeat of the 2008 mortgage crisis.

Summary

Memory is a process

- note your attention, encoding and retrieval

Develop and use memory techniques:

- use a variety
- find what works best for you

Prepare for tests/exams on an ongoing basis

- review, research, use practice questions, relax

Services to Assist YOU

Academic and Career Services
advising@uwinnipeg.ca

Accessibility Services
accessibility@uwinnipeg.ca

Student Wellness Centre
studentwellness@uwinnipeg.ca