



Study Skills & Exam Preparation









This book belongs to:



Today's presentation and this book are the result of **twenty years' experience** and **tens of thousands of school visits**.

Our aims are simple:

-  To make learning easier
-  To make students, of all ages and abilities, enthusiastic about the learning process
-  To help students to realise their own ability and to reach their full potential
-  To give students the tools that they need to become effective independent learners.

This book (which is yours to keep and take away) has been carefully designed to fit alongside the seminar; there is space for you to practise, and write down, lots of the ideas we cover; and on some pages there is space for you to add in extra information we provide on the day.

Our presenters are study skills experts!



Follow their advice, learn from them and ask them questions. We want you to get as much benefit as possible out of today.

Good luck and enjoy the day!





Contents

Introduction	Pages 4 – 6
Module One – Understanding	Pages 7 – 12
Module Two – Condensing	Pages 13 – 36
Preferred Learning Styles	Pages 37 – 40
Module Three – Memorising	Pages 41 – 58
Module Four – Reviewing	Pages 59 – 72
Module Five – Exam Preparation	Pages 73 – 86
Module Six – Stress	Pages 87 – 94
Final Words	Page 95
The Puzzle Section	Pages 96 – 99



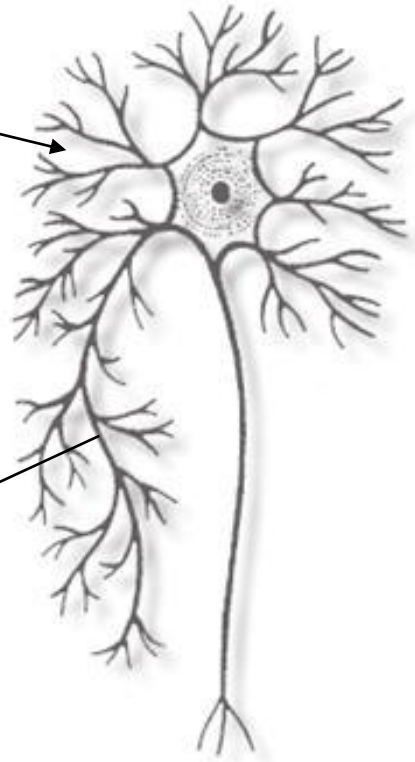
Introduction

This is a neuron

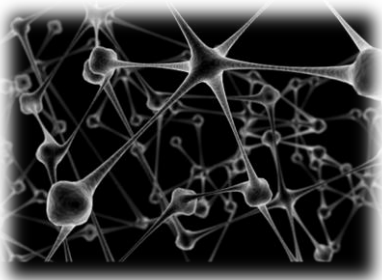
When we learn something new, different neurons connect to each other, forming linkages in the brain.

There are about 100 billion neurons in the brain and each one can connect to up to 10,000 other neurons.

This means that the brain is capable of making up to a quadrillion connections...



Linkages



...to give you an idea of how large that number actually is, consider this:

1 million seconds is about 12 days

1 quadrillion seconds is over 31 million years!

How does the brain match up to the world's top computers?



The Brain v Supercomputers

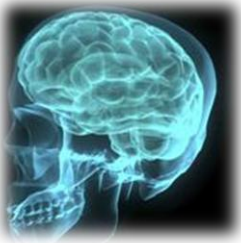
The world's most powerful supercomputers are capable of making over 500 trillion calculations per second. That's impressive, right?

Wrong! Not when compared to the brain.

In 2007, researchers at the University of Nevada found that the brain of a *mouse* was 10 times faster than their supercomputer.



The brain of a mouse has about 8 million neurons. A human brain has about 100 billion.



Not only is the brain immeasurably more powerful than any supercomputer (due to more efficient processing); it is also tiny in comparison, runs on less energy than a standard light bulb and does not cost you a penny!

What we are trying to say is, **“THE BRAIN IS AMAZING!”**

Therefore, you have your own personal supercomputer which you can take into every exam that you sit. This is great news for you, so we'd better show you how to use it.



The Four Steps to Success

Just like many things in life, learning is much step at a time.



easier when you take it one

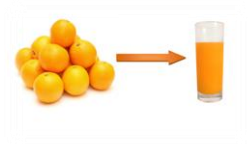
It is a simple process. In order to learn anything is:

efficiently, all you need to do

1. Understand it



2. Condense it



3. Memorise it



4. Review it



UNDERSTANDING, CONDENSING and MEMORISING are not separate activities.

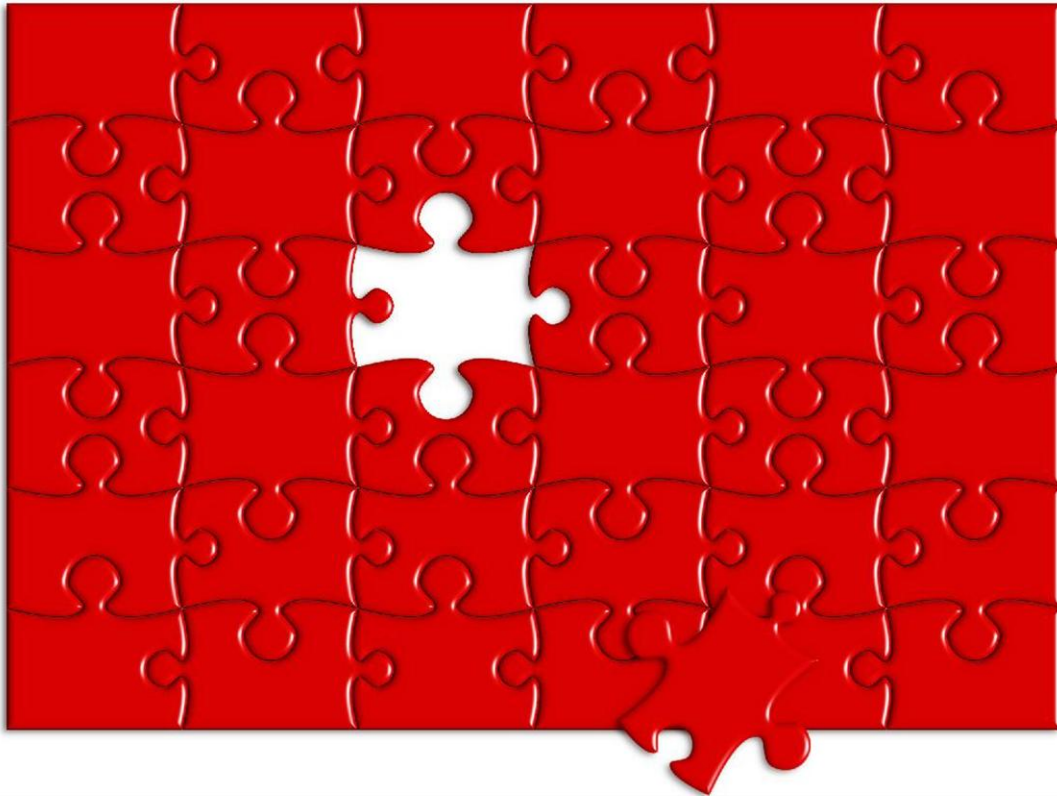
As soon as you start to use both sides of your brain to study, your memory will naturally improve.



Module One

Understanding

...Units of Work, Topics, etc.





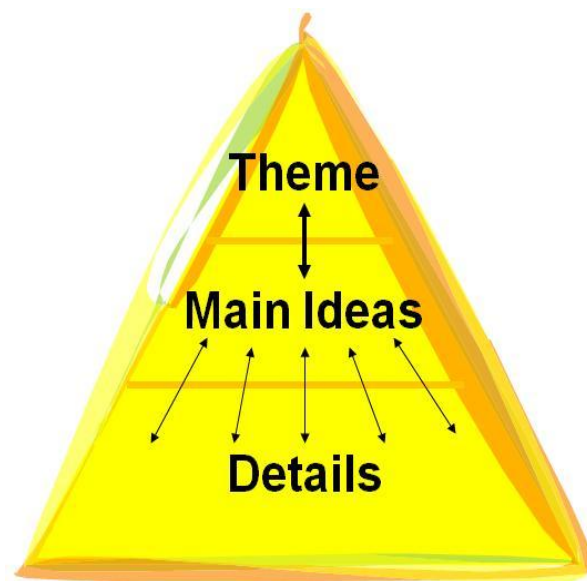
Understanding

In order to understand something, the first thing that you need to do is **break the information down into its individual parts**, whether it is a section of a text book, a report or just your lesson notes.

Doing this shows you how the information fits together, just like a jigsaw puzzle.



All information is organised into hierarchies. A simple way to break information down is to consider the overall **theme**, the **main ideas** and the **details**.



A Theme is the main point of the text, it can usually be found in the title



Main ideas are like mini-themes; they fit together to give an overview of the information



Details hold everything together like glue. Each one is specific and is related to its main idea.






Tips!

When trying to understand a topic, take note of the following advice:

Looking for Main Ideas


 A main idea is what the paragraph/section/chapter is all about.

Look for clues:

-  Look for words that are often repeated
-  Look for ideas that seem to connect to each other
-  Look for details that might give a clue to the main idea they describe.



Looking for Details

 A detail is information that supports, or is about, a main idea.

*"I keep six honest serving men, they taught me all I knew: Their names are **WHAT** and **WHY** and **WHEN** and **HOW** and **WHERE** and **WHO**."* - Rudyard Kipling



Exercise Space



Exercises: Understanding

Read one of the passages and answer the questions that your presenter gives you:

Greg's Day

Greg decided to go on a shopping trip in the morning. He chose to go to TK Maxx, where he bought some clothes. He bought a pair of trainers and a tracksuit for himself and he also bought a nice pink hat for his sister.

In the afternoon, Greg went to play a game of football with a group of friends at Claris Park.

After all the shopping and the football, he was too tired to spend any time on his homework. This did not bother him at all!



Henry VIII

Henry VIII was King of England from 1509 until his death in 1547.

Henry is said to have been an attractive, well-built and very athletic man, accomplished at many sports. Later on in life, he had a succession of health problems, partly due to becoming very obese.

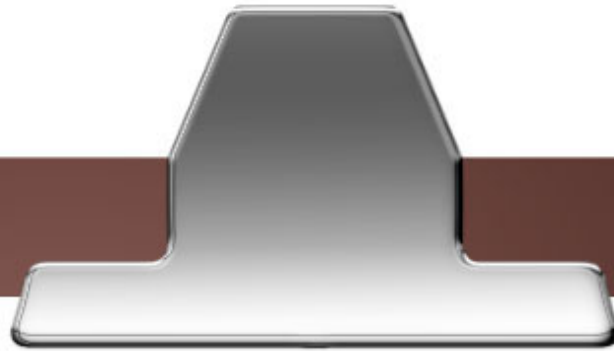
He is famed for having been married six times. He divorced two of his wives, another two of his wives were beheaded, one wife died and then Henry himself died whilst married to his sixth and final wife. As well as being married six times, Henry is known to have had many affairs.

Henry VIII is also famous for his part in the English Reformation - the creation of the Church of England by separation from the Roman Catholic Church. His squabbles with Rome, which were mainly due to the issues surrounding divorce, eventually led to the dissolution of the monasteries and the establishment of himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England.





Exercise Space



Module Summary

- 👉 Information is better understood if it is broken down into:
 - Theme
 - Main ideas
 - Details

- 👉 The **theme** is the main point of the text

- 👉 The **main ideas** give an overview of the information

- 👉 The **details** are specific and relate to the main ideas.



Module Two

Condensing

...Organising the best bits





Condensing

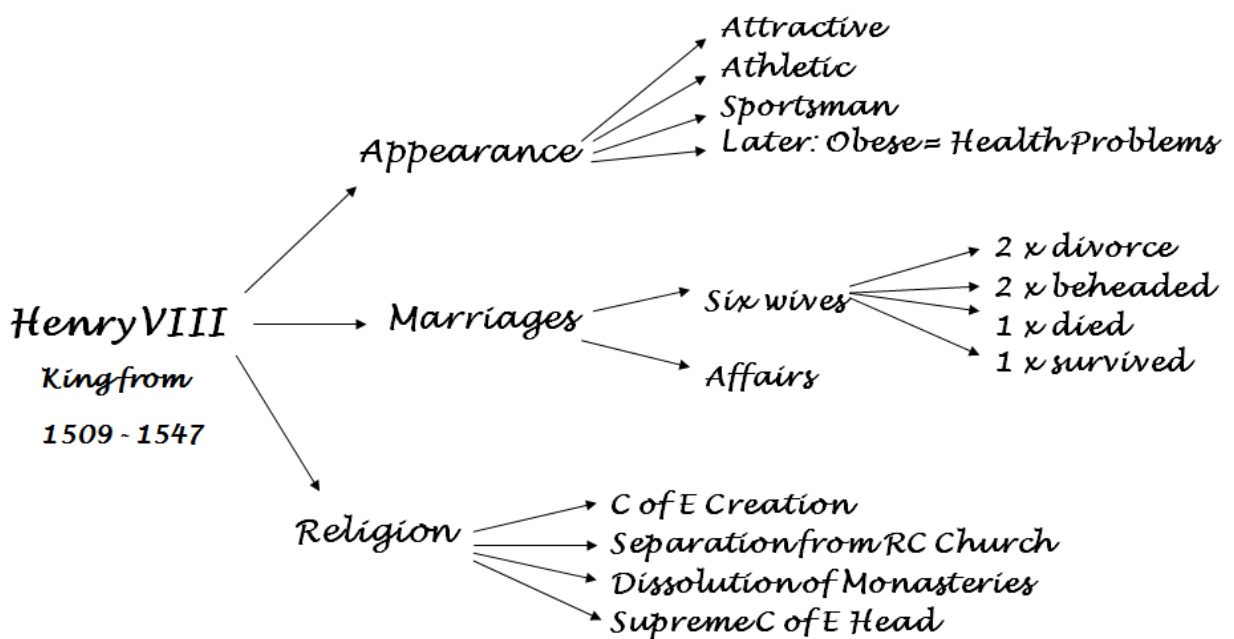
Many words, such as *the, and, it, is, whether, when, due, if, however* and many more, are only included in a piece of text to aid the reader's initial understanding of it.

It has been found that these sorts of words form approximately 80% of the total number of words; only about **20%** contain the actual meaning of the text.

This is great news for students who are taking notes because it means that, once you understand a piece of text, you only need about **20%** of the words to remember it all.

Remember the exercise from the previous section? You can condense them in many ways. Here are two examples:

1. Flow Diagrams





2. Bullet Points

Greg's Day

Shopping

- TK Maxx - Trainers
 - Tracksuit
 - Pink Hat - Sister
- Morning

Football

- Claris Park
- Afternoon
- Friends

Homework

- Not done
- Not bothered

Henry VIII (King from 1509 - 1547)

Appearance

- Attractive
- Athletic
- Sportsman
- Later: Obese = Health Problems

Marriages

- Six wives
- 2 x divorce
- 2 x beheaded
- 1 x died
- 1 x survived
- Affairs

Religion

- C of E Creation
- Separation from RC Church
- Dissolution of Monasteries
- Supreme C of E Head

It is up to you to decide whether to use flow diagrams or bullet points for condensing. Either method will work for any text.



Condensing Exercise

A Balanced Diet

In order to stay healthy we need to maintain a balanced diet. This means that we need to eat a certain amount of different food types.

Protein is essential for building muscle and it is found in meat, fish and beans. We need to make sure that about 15% of everything we eat is protein.

Carbohydrates provide 'ready energy' and should make up 55 – 65% of our diet. They are found in potatoes, rice and pasta.

We also need certain fats in our diet. There are two types of fat, saturated and unsaturated. Unsaturated fats are good for you and provide long term energy. They should comprise 20 – 25% of our diet and can be found in oily fish and some nuts. Saturated fats are unhealthy and should be minimised, they are found in junk food such as sweets, cakes and fast food.

Other essential elements to be included in a balanced diet include, vitamins and minerals, which can be found in a variety of fruit and vegetables; fibre, which is found in fruit, vegetables and cereals; and finally, lots of water!

On page 17, condense this text by using your preferred method. Including the title, there are 185 words. This means that you only need 35 – 40 words (about 20%). However, you do not need to be exact.



Exercise Space



Being Creative with Condensing

Memory thrives on a mixture of **logic** and **imagination**. This is because different things happen in different areas of the brain. Generally speaking, the left side of the brain is for logic and the right side is for creativity.

Left Side of the Brain

Language
Logic
Numbers
Sequence
Words
Order



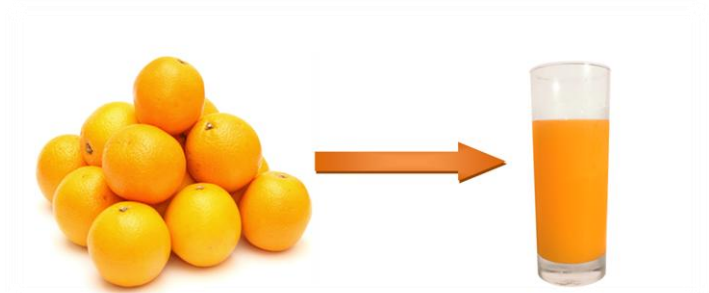
Right Side of the Brain

Rhyme
Rhythm and music
Pictures
Patterns
Creativity
Imagination

When the two halves work together, the whole brain is being used - which gives you access to even more neurons.

Flow diagrams and/or bullet points are very *logical* and very useful ways of taking notes. However, they only really tap into one side of the brain.

To get both sides of the brain involved, we suggest getting creative with your notes by using **Association Maps**.





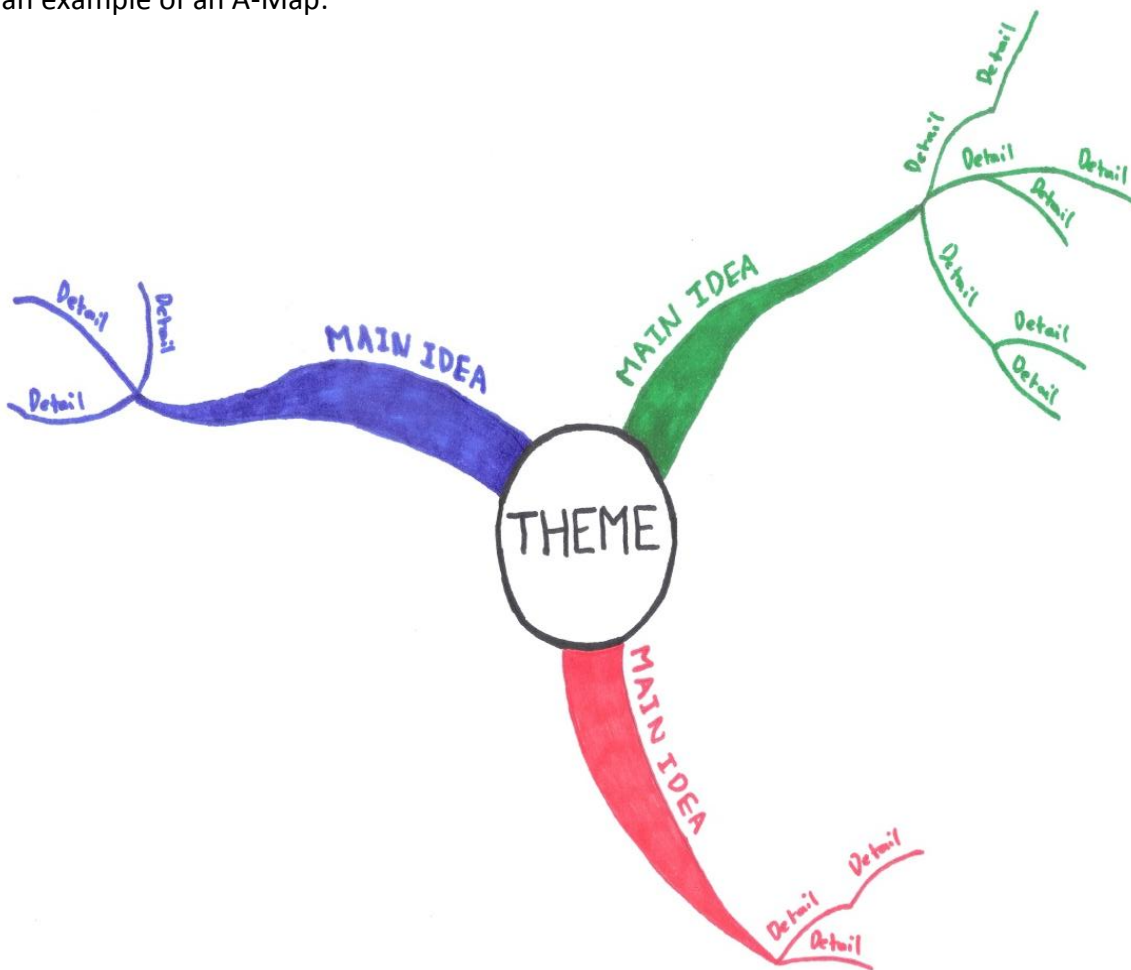
Association Maps (A-Maps)

A-Maps are excellent memory techniques because, by using a mixture of colour, pictures and imagination with logical and sequential information, they use both sides of your brain.

We recommend that you use A-Maps to organise your condensed notes (i.e. the approximately 20% of the original words).

Remember how all information is broken down? The **theme**, followed by the **main ideas** and then the individual **details**.

Here is an example of an A-Map:

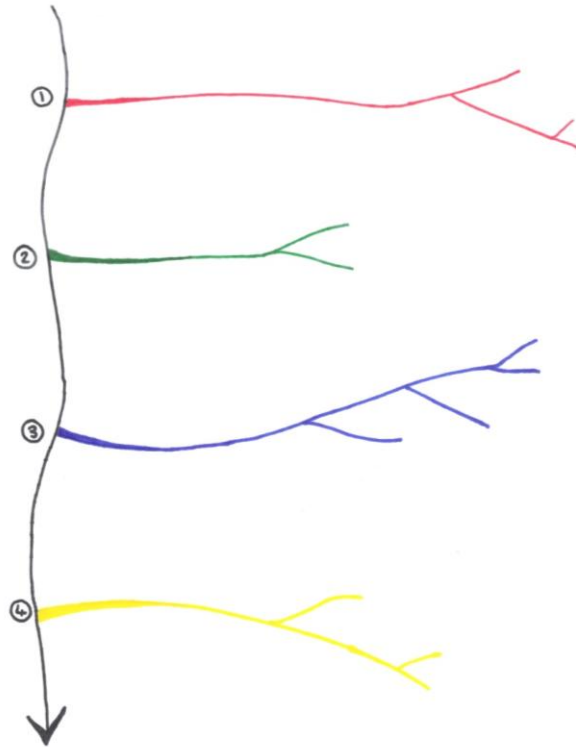




A-Maps are Flexible

Not all association maps need to look the same. In fact, it is likely that they will all be different. The whole point of using A-Maps is to use **both sides of the brain**, mixing logical thoughts with creative imagination.

The sketches below look different to the example used on the previous page but they are just as useful. When you create your own A-Maps, they will be different too.





A-Map Guidelines

1. Use **Colour** and imagination

2. Try using curved lines instead of straight lines



3. Use pictures to represent words and ideas



= Happiness

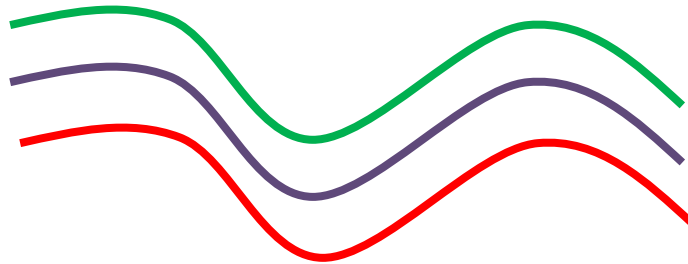


= Time

4. Always write or draw information on the lines



5. Make each main branch a different colour



6. ENJOY USING YOUR IMAGINATION!



The Human Heart

The following piece of text about the human heart contains 130 words. This means that when you have condensed it to approximately 20%, you should have used about 26 words (give or take a few).

The Human Heart

The human heart is roughly the size of a fist and it weighs approximately 300 grams. It is divided into two sides, the left-hand side and the right-hand side.

The purpose of the right-hand side of the heart is to pick up the de-oxygenated blood and pump it into the lungs so that gas exchange can take place (releasing of carbon dioxide and the collection of oxygen).

The purpose of the left-hand side of the heart is to collect the oxygenated blood and pump it out to the rest of the body.

Blood is prevented from flowing backwards by a series of valves.

In order to keep the heart healthy, regular exercise, a balanced diet and emotional well-being all are very important factors.



The next stage is to condense the text and then an A-Map can be created. Do this on the following page.



The Human Heart: Condensed






The Human Heart: A-Map

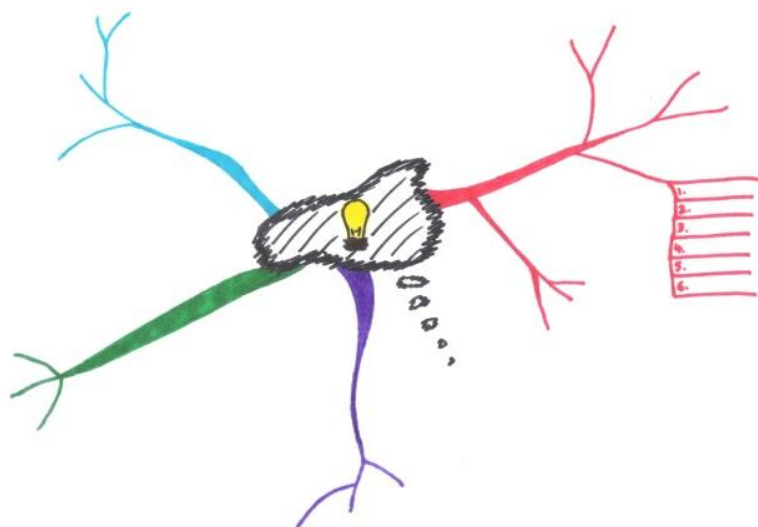


A-Maps - Further Reading





A-Maps are reasonably quick to create, which makes them great tools for revision. Re-draw your A-Maps from memory and compare them to the originals. Any main ideas or details that you miss out will highlight areas to work on.

A-Maps can also be used to:

-  Take notes during a lesson
-  Take notes from a speech
-  Plan projects
-  Plan presentations
-  Plan essays.

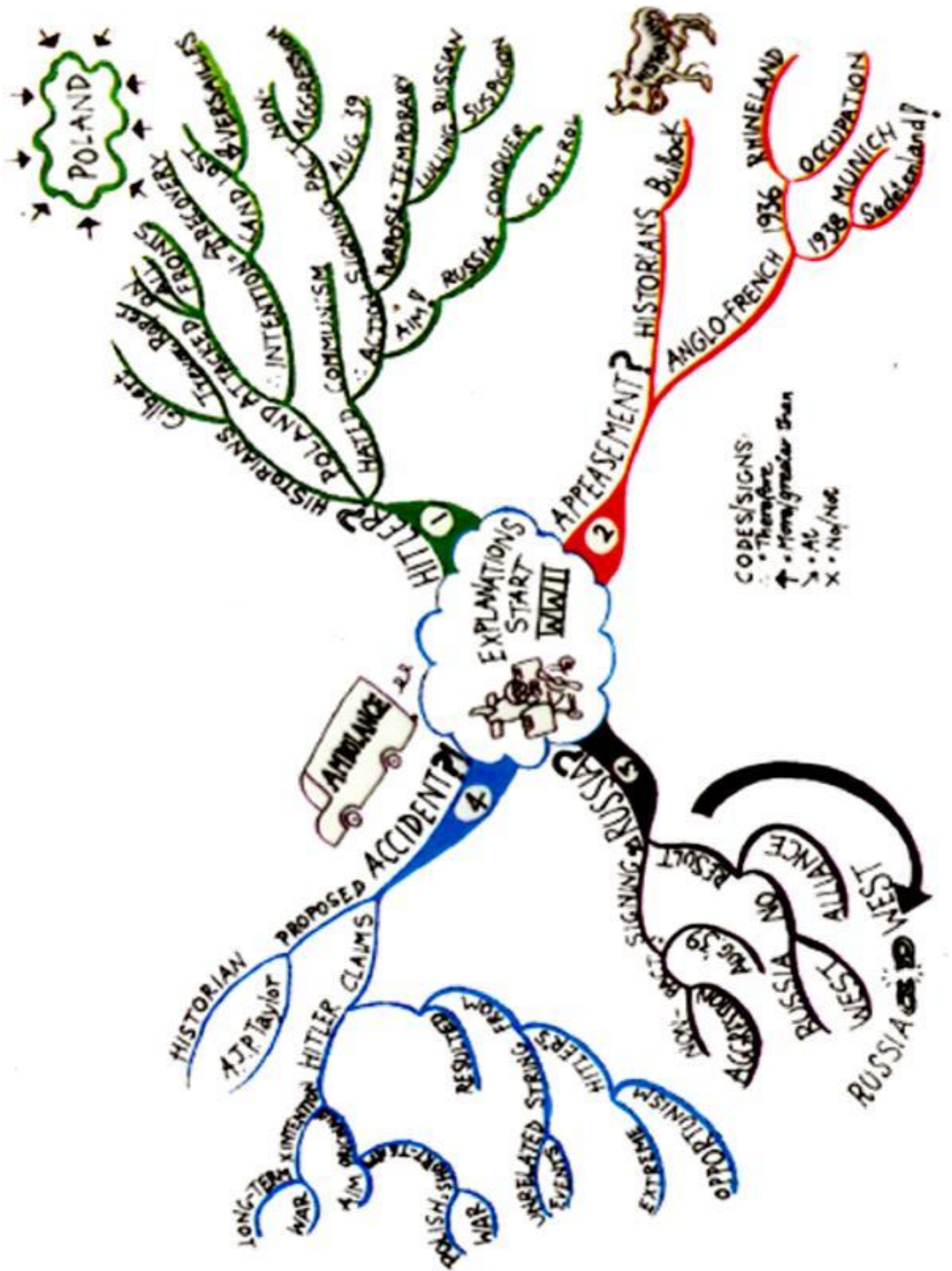


Whether it is in an exam or part of a homework assignment, using A-Maps to plan work has several benefits:

-  They use far fewer words (around 20%) than will actually be in the work, so they are quick to create
-  All of the required facts are written down in a logical order. This takes some of the pressure off when trying to recall facts later on
-  They allow you to see the big picture before writing a single word
-  They focus your thoughts, saving you lots of thinking time!

The A-Map on the following page was created in order to answer this essay question:

Discuss the various factors that were responsible for the outbreak of World War II.





Notes

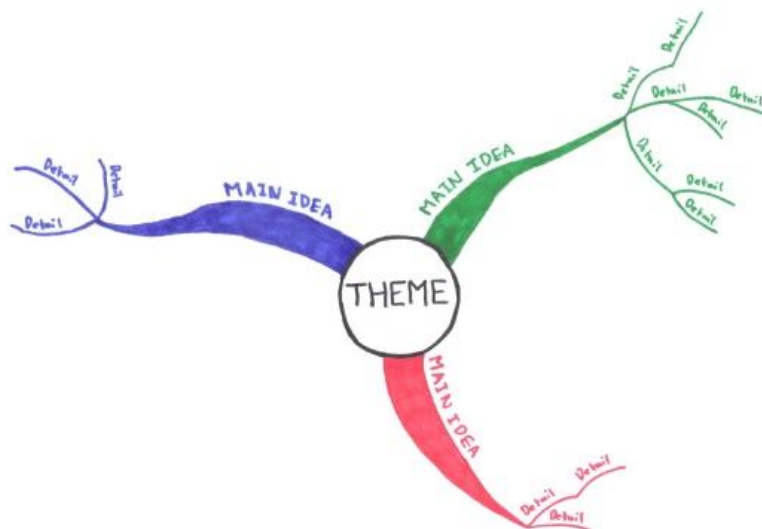
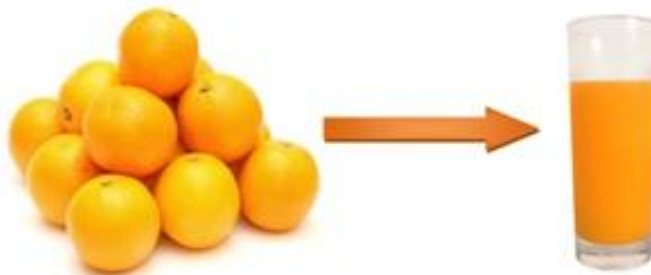
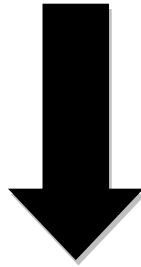


Condensing & A-Mapping Exercises

For this exercise, your presenter will ask you to read one of the following pieces of text: *Hurricanes* (210 words) or *Three major themes in the novel 'Of Mice and Men'* (340 words).

Read the chosen passage a few times, so that you understand it. Then, on the following pages, condense it and A-Map it. Keep the 20% figure in mind - but remember that you do not need to be exact.

Text





Hurricanes

Hurricanes are one of the most powerful forces on earth. They are the combination of powerful masses of swirling wind, clouds and rain. Rain pours down in a steady flow of solid sheets and winds can gust up to one hundred and seventy kilometres per hour.

The extraordinary power of these storms damages more property than all other kinds of storms. Trees are uprooted and roofs are ripped off the tops of buildings. Power poles crash to the ground causing power failure. Low-lying lands are saturated by floods.

In 1970, over 500,000 were killed during a hurricane in Bangladesh. The most deadly hurricane to hit the USA in recent times was in August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of the east coast especially New Orleans - where 80% of the city was flooded. Over 2000 people were killed and countless others became homeless. The total cost of the damage was in excess of \$100 billion.

Expert scientists use satellites and a series of radar stations to monitor the formation and movement of hurricanes. The storms no longer take people by surprise. Experts issue a "hurricane warning" if a storm is predicted to strike within twenty-four hours and this gives people in the storm's path time to move to safety.



Exercise Space



Three major themes in the novel 'Of Mice and Men'

The hopes and dreams of many characters are described regularly in the book. One of the main characters, George, dreams of the day when he can be independent. When he can "be somebody". George's companion, Lennie, shares this dream and longs for his own animals to "pet" whenever he wants. Following the death of his dog, Candy begins to think about the future and aspires to obtain some security for his old age, mainly by joining George and Lennie on their farm. Having been secluded from the rest of the workforce for many years and having been treated differently all of his life, Crooks dreams of being accepted and treated as an equal; he also feels that this would be realised by joining the others on the independent farm. Curley's wife dreams of being famous. She talks of a time when she was given an opportunity to become an actress and she is constantly saying how bored she is on the ranch.

Some of the characters suffer from loneliness, which manifests itself in different ways. Candy is lonely without his dog (which he agreed to have shot). Curley's wife deals with her loneliness by flirting with the men on the ranch, behaviour which will prove to have disastrous consequences. Crooks reflects on his own loneliness by stating the following: "A guy goes nuts if he ain't got nobody. Don't make no difference who the guy is, long's he's with you."

Some of the characters are shown to be powerless in the novel. Even though Lennie is the most powerful character in terms of physical strength, he is actually the most powerless of all, unable to look after himself due to his diminished intellectual capacity. Even though George, Crooks and Candy have the desire and intelligence to set up their own farm, they are unable to raise the funds to achieve this due to economic powerlessness. They, and the others who work on the ranch, are victims of the great depression.



Exercise Space



Notes



Sample Answers - Human Heart

There are many possible correct answers, these are just examples.

Human Heart Condensed Text

Size

- *Fist*
- *300g*

Right Side

- *Deoxygenated blood*
- *To Lungs*
- *Gas Exchange*

Left Side

- *Oxygenated blood*
- *To body*

Valves

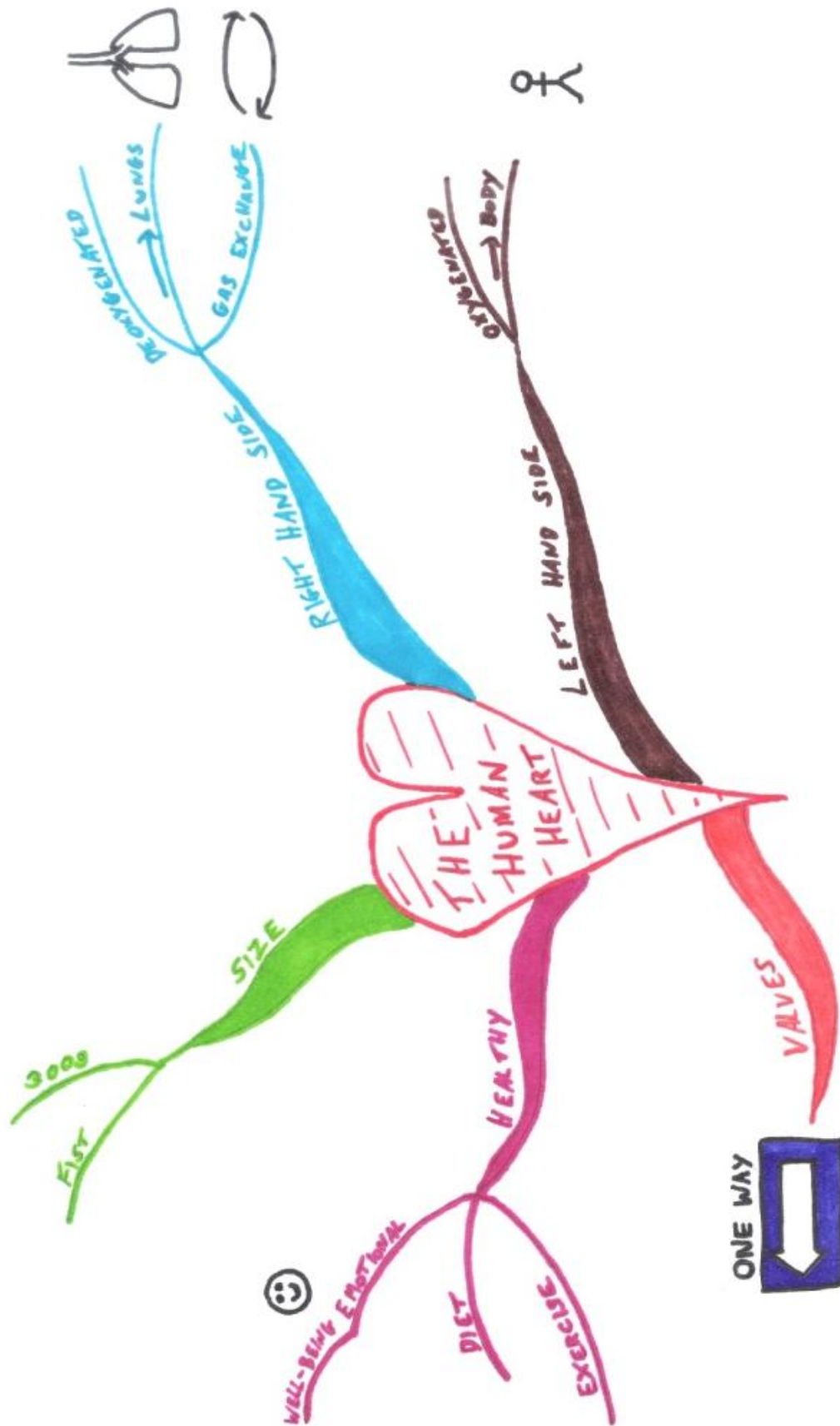
- *One Way*

Healthy

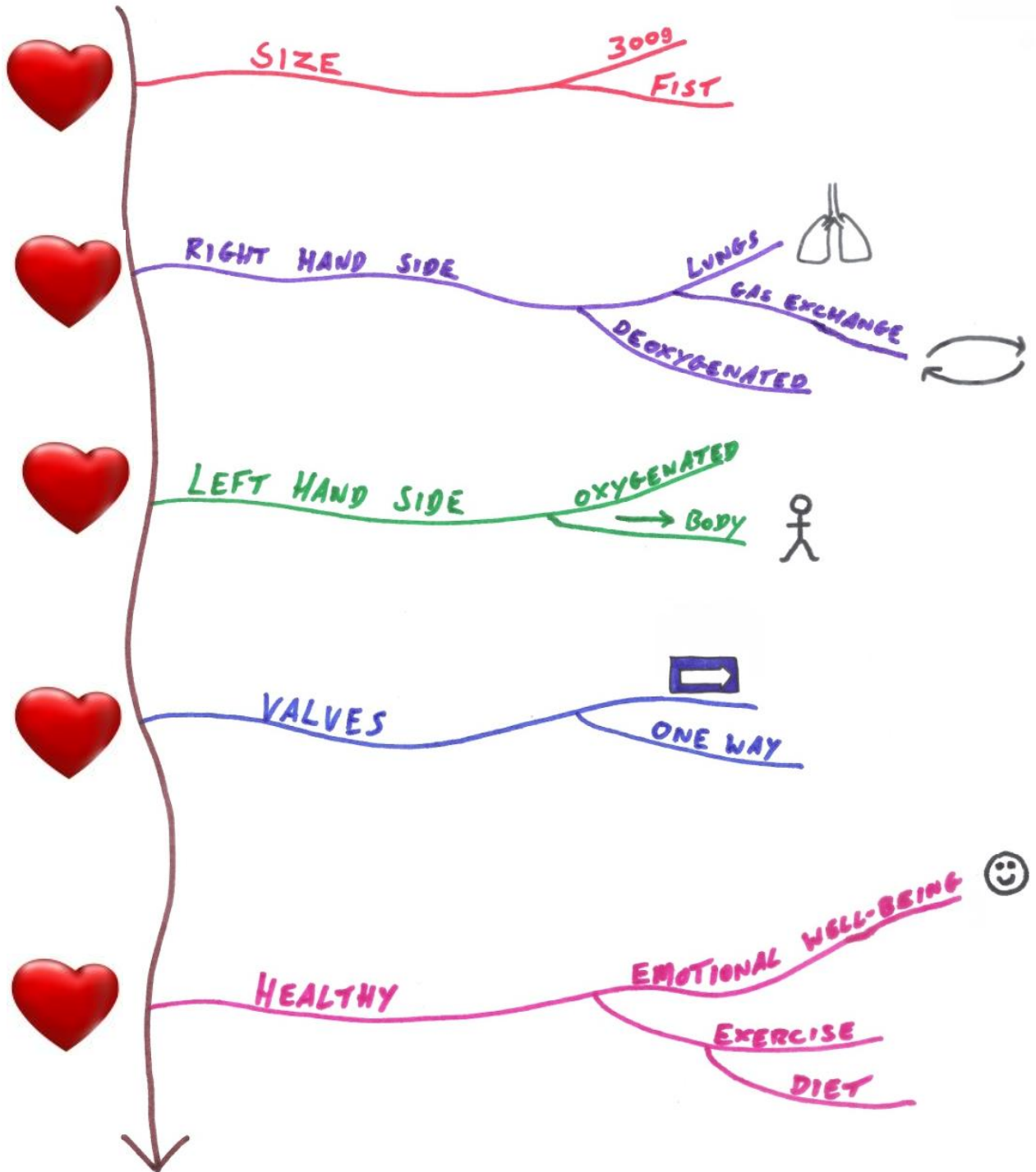
- *Exercise*
- *Diet*
- *Emotional Well-Being*

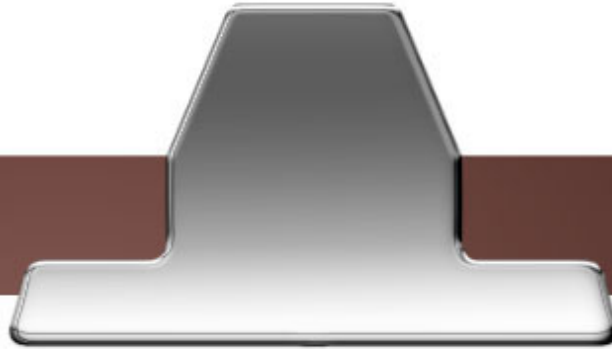


Human Heart A-Map: Example 1



Human Heart A-Map: Example 2





Module Summary

- 🍌 You only need about **20% of the words** to remember something that you already understand
- 🍌 There are many ways to condense text. **Flow diagrams** and **bullet points** are good examples
- 🍌 **Association Maps** use both sides of the brain as they are **logical** & **creative** at the same time
- 🍌 Association Maps are **flexible, versatile** and excellent tools for **planning**.



Learning Styles





Learning Styles Questionnaire

Tick or highlight your most likely response to each question below (but remember, this is just a bit of fun, not a psychological test!):

What do you notice most about people?

- V How they look or dress?
- A How they sound when they talk?
- K How they stand or move?

What kind of humour do you prefer?

- V Cartoons/comics?
- A Stand-up comedians?
- K Physical/Clown comedy?

What do you prefer?

- V Reading instructions?
- A Being told how to do something?
- K Getting stuck in and doing it for yourself?

When trying to find somewhere new, do you:

- V Follow a map?
- A Ask for directions?
- K Follow your gut feeling?

Do you find it easier to remember:

- V Faces?
- A Names?
- K Things that you have done?

When you are researching, do you prefer:

- V Work that is written and drawn in colour?
- A To listen to a talk or be told what to do?
- K To be active: making and doing?

Which of the following are you most likely to say?

- V "I see what you mean"
- A "I hear what you're saying"
- K "I know how you feel"

When solving problems, do you prefer:

- V Writing or drawing out possible solutions?
- A Talking through possible solutions?
- K Getting stuck in and working it out as you go?

What do you do when you are concentrating?

- V Focus on the words and pictures?
- A Discuss the problem in your head?
- K Move about or fiddle with your pen?

How do you choose food from a menu? Do you:

- V Imagine what it will look like?
- A Talk through the options in your head?
- K Imagine what it will taste like?

Now add up the total number of Vs, As and Ks you scored and note them down below.

Your Totals	V:	A:	K:
--------------------	-----------	-----------	-----------




You can use this additional box to see how you compare to friends and family:

	V:	A:	K:
	V:	A:	K:
	V:	A:	K:



The Three Learning Styles

Everyone learns by using all three learning styles (**Visual**, **Auditory** and **Kinaesthetic**). These are characterised as follows:

<p>Visual Learners</p> 	<p>Learn best by seeing pictures, diagrams, etc.</p>
<p>Auditory Learners</p> 	<p>Learn best by hearing and speaking</p>
<p>Kinaesthetic Learners</p> 	<p>Learn best by doing, moving, experiencing, etc</p>

Your “Learning Fingerprint”



There is no optimum combination of learning styles and everyone will be slightly different.

Everyone has their own unique mixture of learning styles and the questionnaire will have given you a good indication of yours.



Strategies for different learning styles

Successful students use a mixture of all three learning styles. The best thing to do is to try using **ALL** of the strategies below. This will help you to develop a broad range of skills which will help you succeed in any learning environment.

Strategies for improving your **Visual Learning**



Strategies for improving your **Auditory Learning**

Strategies for improving your **Kinaesthetic Learning**





Module Three

Memorising




...Facts, Details, Lists, etc.





Exercise: Natural Memory

There are several reasons why the brain naturally remembers information. Look at the following list for one minute, then cover it up and try to recall as many as you can in the exercise space on page 57.

Sea	1945	<i>Jumper</i>
Umbrella	a	Cake
Monster	Glass	
Einstein	<i>CHAIR</i>	
Cheese	Cheese	
Dog	BANG!	Alarm
If	Queen Elizabeth II	1666
Zip		Fork
Cheese		Pen
Flabbergasted		Cheese
Cracker	Sugar	Shark
	Hat	Shnoobles
	1	Butter
	2	Rabbit
So	3	Singer
and	Curark	1834
Plink	Drizzle	Tank



Before we forget...



If something is not very interesting, it is very likely that the brain will forget it.

In general, school textbooks are not quite as exciting or memorable as your favourite film or book. The trick is to make sure that the information that you need to remember is going into your brain in an interesting way.



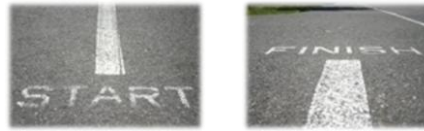
The techniques which we are about to show you will utilise the imagination to tap into your brain's natural way of thinking. This will make learning easier.

Make sure that you try all of the examples and tests - you may even enjoy it!



Which items did you remember, and why?

1. The Primacy and Recency Effect



The first few and the last few items on any list are more memorable, so you might have found it easy to remember items such as *rabbit, singer, 1834* and *tank*.

2. Sequence



If items have an obvious sequence they become easier to remember. Did you recall the sequence 1, 2 & 3?

3. Colour and

The use of colour and visual imagery are two of the best ways of making something memorable.

For example *Jump*, *Butter* & *Cracker*;  ,  &  might have been memorable.

4. Unusual or Funny Words



Things that stand out are more memorable. For example, *Flabbergasted, Schnoobles* and *Queen Elizabeth II* may have been easier for you to remember.

5. Repetition



Repetition is very important if you want to achieve excellent recall. *Cheese* appears four times on the list. Did you remember it?



Notes



Technique One: First Letter Triggers

First letter triggers (otherwise known as **mnemonics**) are a quick and easy way to remember short lists of words.

You take the first letter of each word in the list and use them as the first letters of words in an imaginative sentence. The first letter then 'triggers' (reminds you of) the original word when you need to remember it.

For example:

Richard

Of

York

Gave

Battle

In

Vain

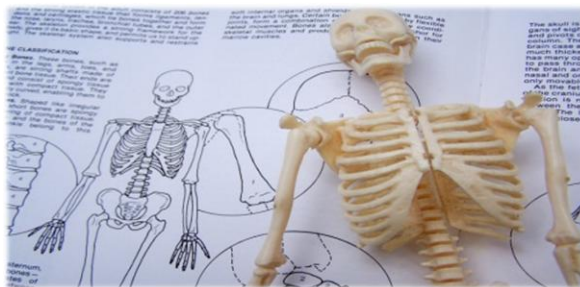


You may already be familiar with this sentence, which uses first letter triggers to help you remember the colours of the rainbow: they are:

Red, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **I**ndigo and **V**iolet



First Letter Triggers Exercise



The **BONES** of the human shoulder and arm are as follows:

Clavicle Scapula Humerus, Ulna, Radius, Carpals, Metacarpals and Phalanges.

Make up your own sentence using the first letter triggers; remember, there are no right or wrong answers! If it works for you, it does not matter how you do it.



















Technique Two: Image Chains

This is a simple, imaginative way to remember lists of words. You simply take each item on the list and link it to the next item by making a story in your head.



You must make sure that you are imaginative and creative with your story. Make it unusual & funny; the more you make it stand out, the more memorable it will be.

Look at the chain of images below. They form a story which has been designed to help you remember the following words: *Tree, House, Guitar, Pencil and Phone*.

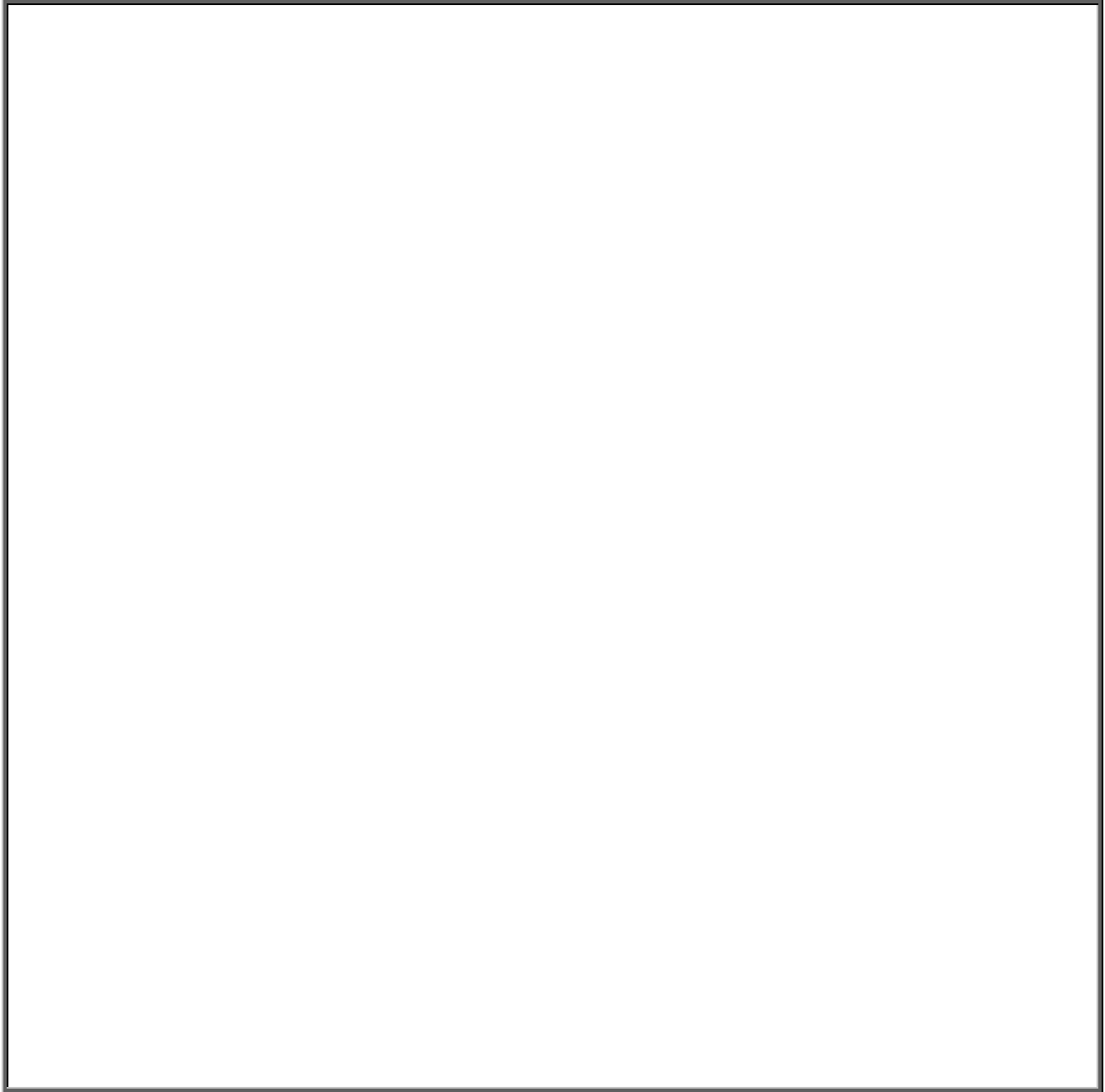


The great thing about image chains is that you do not need to spend time drawing the images, you can come up with them in your head!



Image Chain Exercise

Using the words your presenter gives you, create an image chain in the box below:





Technique Three: The Method of Loci

Based on the use of well-known places, the method of loci (meaning *locations*) is an ancient memory technique used by the Greeks and Romans. It is simple and effective.



You are already expertly familiar with many dozens of places, maybe even hundreds - whether they are part of familiar journeys or familiar rooms. For example, you would have no trouble remembering the route to school or to town from your own home.

Take rooms in your own house as another example:

Imagine that you are standing in the doorway of your kitchen at home, just about to walk in. What is the first thing that you see on the left? What is next to that? What are the next 8 things that you see as you continue to look around the room in a clockwise direction? Where is the fridge? Where is the sink?



Q: Why was it so easy to answer those questions?

A: Because you see your kitchen almost every day. Over time, you become so familiar with your kitchen that you do not really need to think when answering the questions posed above.

We have used your kitchen as an example, but is your kitchen the only place that you know this well? Certainly not!

This knowledge of familiar locations can help you to revise!



Your Memory Room/Journey

In the table below, create your own memory room or journey of 10 locations, then in the box next to it write down the 10 items that your presenter gives you:



Number	Item to Remember	Location
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Using the memory room or journey, try to remember the 10 items.

Try testing yourself on this information later on today. You may be surprised at how easy it is to recall all of the facts!



Advanced Method of Loci

To be able to master the method of loci and apply it to almost anything that you want to learn, there are two things that you need to do:

1. Create as many memory rooms/journeys as possible
2. Practice using associated imagery.



Associated Imagery

Sometimes the item or fact that you wish to remember already lends itself to a vivid image. If, for example, you wanted to remember a list that contained *rainbow* or *badger* then you could simply imagine these things as they are, and place them in your memory rooms accordingly.

If, however, you want to remember items or facts that do not have an obvious image, you need to create an associated image. For example, if you were using the method of loci to remember *Strong* or *Belgium*, you need to think of an image to represent these things before placing them in your memory rooms.



The image will be different for everyone. You might think of someone you know who happens to be very strong, perhaps you would think of a weightlifter, or even a strong animal.

Likewise, you may know someone from Belgium that you could use as your image. You could use something Belgian (such as a box of chocolates) or you could think of the sound of the word, which could lead you to using the image of a bell.



N.B. Using the *sound* of the word to create an image is also a good strategy to use when learning foreign language vocabulary.



Advanced Method of Loci Exercise

For this exercise, you will need to create a new memory room/journey of 10 locations. You will also need to create an image to represent each of the items.

Remember that there are no right or wrong answers, if a particular image works for you, for whatever reason, please use it!

Number	Item to Remember	Location
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



Technique Four: Peg Systems

Peg systems are lists of visual images in a known sequence. These images are then creatively linked (pegged) to items which you want to remember. This enables you to recall any list, forwards and backwards - and even in and out of order.



The most commonly used peg system is the number-rhyme system. Each number from 1 – 10 is converted into an image by using words which rhyme with each number. There are many words that could be used to represent each number.

The following table contains an example rhyming peg for each number.

<i>Number</i>	<i>Example Rhyming Pegs</i>
1	Sun
2	Shoe
3	Tree
4	Door
5	Hive
6	Sticks
7	Heaven
8	Gate
9	Wine
10	Hen



Once you have invested the little bit of time to learn the peg words If you prefer, you can create your own pegs.



Memorising 10 items (In and Out of Order)

This is actually easier than it sounds. You need to link each rhyming peg (from 1 – 10) with each of the items that your presenter gives you (from 1-10).

Use the table below to write both the peg (you may want to use your own examples) and the item to be memorised.

Creatively and imaginatively link each peg to each item, look over them again and then your presenter will test you!

<i>Number</i>	<i>Peg</i>	<i>Element</i>
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		



Other Peg Systems

Shape Pegs

A similar system to the rhyming pegs is the shape pegs. These images are created by considering the shape of each number between 1 and 10. For example, 7 could be a boomerang and 2 could be a swan.



Alphabet Pegs

You could also create a 26-item peg list by using an image to represent each letter of the alphabet. For example, an Apple for A, a Hotdog for H and a Pineapple for P, etc.

Number Systems

Using Pegs

To remember numbers, such as important dates, you could use the peg images which could be memorised by using an image chain or by using the method of loci.



Using Codes

You could alternatively use a code system, where every single digit translates to a letter. Words and phrases can then be created from the imagination!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	O

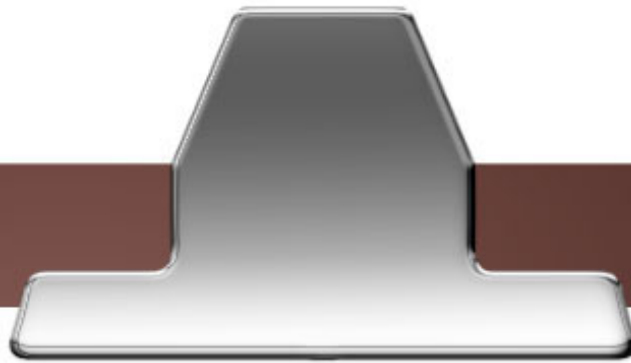
For example:

The great fire of London happened in 1666.

Using the code: 1666 translates to A F F F which could be - **A Flaming Ferocious Fire**



Exercise Space



Module Summary

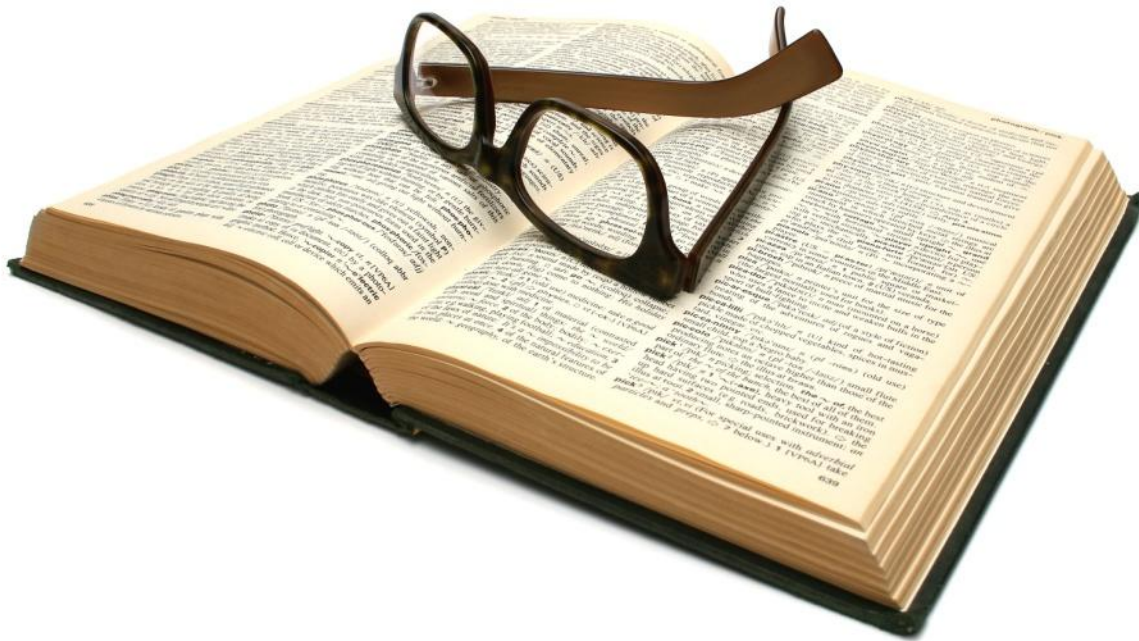
- 👉 We remember things better if they **stand out** in some way
- 👉 **First letter triggers** and **image chains** can be used to remember lists of information
- 👉 The **method of loci** is a very powerful technique to help you remember lots of information
- 👉 **Peg lists** help you to remember information in and out of order.



Module Four

Reviewing

...getting rid of revision





Reviewing

This is the most important stage of all.



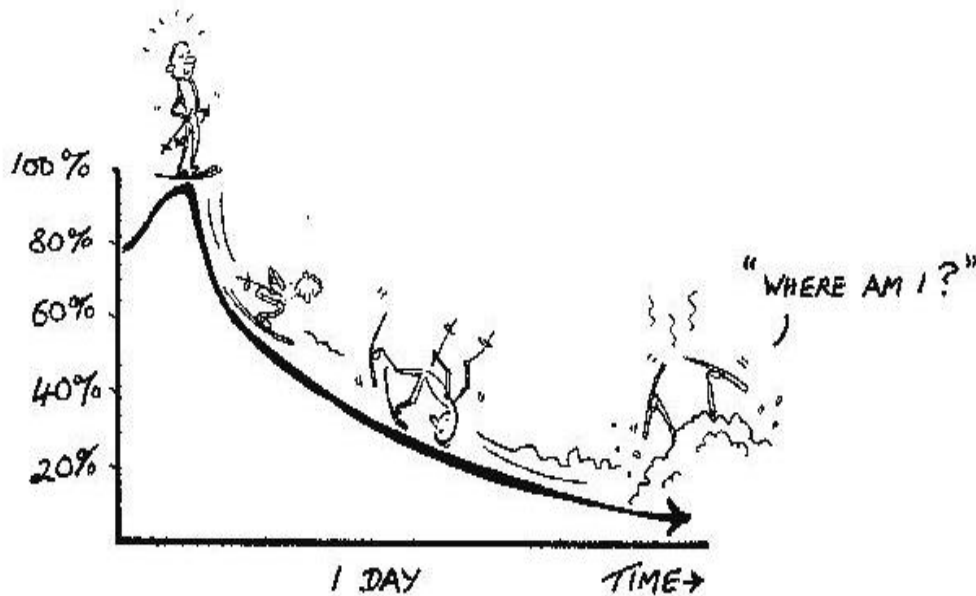
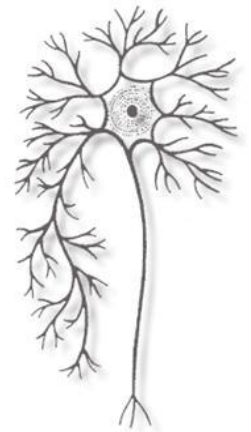
It involves testing and checking memorised work.

The whole point of the review stage is to stop you from forgetting any of it!

When we learn something, new linkages are formed between neurons in the brain. These connections are **strengthened** every time you think of what you have learned.

However, if you do not use the connections from time to time, they will begin to fade.

The graph below shows what happens to your levels of recall when you have learnt something but have not reviewed it.





Revision

Do you know how to revise?

For most people, 'revision' is a daunting word which conjures up many negative images and thoughts. As well as this, many people think that 'revision' is 'cramming'.

In short... Most people do not know how to revise.

Remember the 4 steps to success?

- 1. Understand it**
- 2. Condense it**
- 3. Memorise it**
- 4. Review it**

Separating your work into these manageable chunks makes revision so much easier.

Recap Exercise

What could you do to help:

Understand your work	
Condense your work	
Memorise your work	

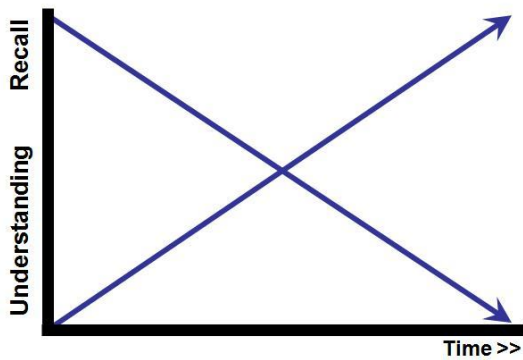


Study Breaks

To maintain a high level of **recall**, in addition to a high level of **understanding**, you need to use your time as effectively as possible.

We suggest taking a 3-5 minute break for every 30-45 minutes of concentrated work that you do. The graphs below show why:

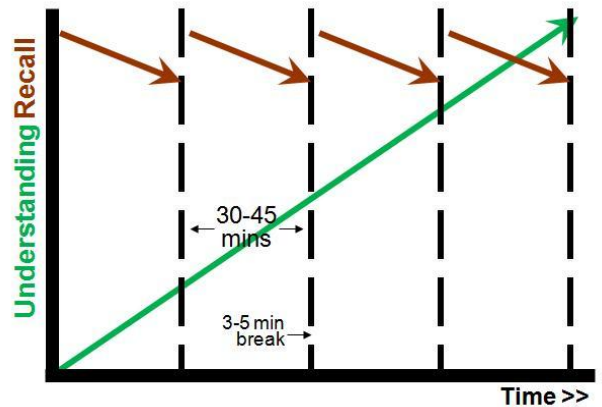
Graph 1



If you work continuously with no breaks at all, you may feel as though you are getting a lot covered - but you will find that the longer you go on without a break, the less you will be able to recall.

If you give yourself a short break after every 30 – 45 minutes, you will find that your understanding of the topic continues to increase - and that your high level of recall will be maintained.

Graph 2





How to Review

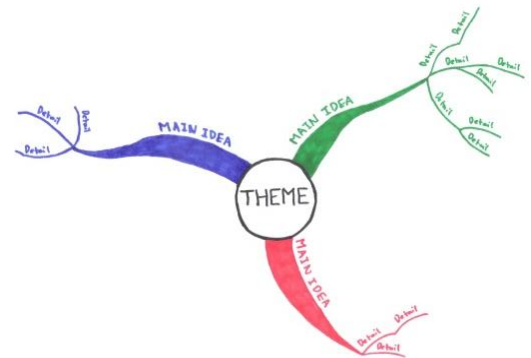
If you review your work at key times, then you will strengthen your neural connections and the information won't fade away.

It isn't a complicated process. In fact it's very simple! All you need to do is:



When you test yourself, we recommend the following.

Try to redraw your A-Map - or write out your condensed notes, or rewrite your image chain or mnemonic - from memory. With an A-Map, for example, simply look over your work, spot the connections and how they fit together. Turn it over and sketch a version from memory a couple of times. (You don't need all of the colours and pictures you may have had on the original – just the main ideas and details!)



If you are auditory, you might like to give a speech to an imaginary audience from your map/notes.

However you review, you will be surprised by how much you remember!

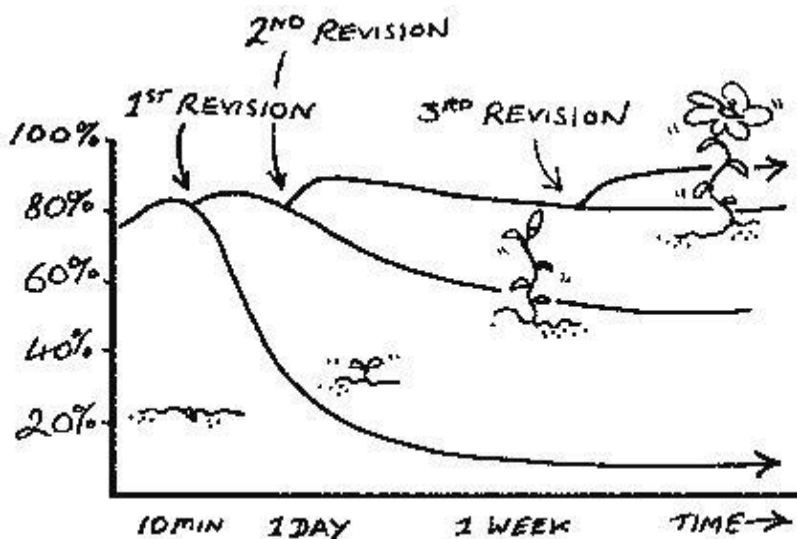


When to Review

After spending 30-45 minutes studying and creating A-Maps or other types of imaginative notes, you need to have a 10 minute break. Then you need to start the review process. The question is, **how often** should you review your work, and for **how long**?

Review	When	For how long?
First Review	<i>10 minutes later</i>	<i>About 10 minutes</i>
Second Review	<i>1 day later</i>	<i>About 5 minutes</i>
Third Review	<i>1 week later</i>	<i>Between 2 - 5 minutes</i>
Fourth Review	<i>1 month later</i>	<i>Between 2 - 5 minutes</i>

This is the result of 50 years of research into how your brain works.



This graph shows what happens to those neural connections with each review that you do.

Reviewing your work at key times strengthens neural connections - and the information won't fade away.



Managing Your Time



Two of the best ways of managing your time are prioritising your workload and creating a study timetable.

Prioritising

Make a list of the things that you need to do by creating a table like the one below.

Then rate them as to how urgent they are, by using these ratings:

- A:** Very urgent - deadline imminent
- B:** Quite urgent- deadline about a week away
- C:** Not so urgent – deadline longer than a week

Next, go through the As and decide which one is *most* important and allocate it as number 1 in the importance column. Then pick out the second most important and allocate it as number 2 and so on through the rest of the A items, B items and then C items.

Things to do	Urgency	Importance



Study Timetable - Practice

We recommend that you cross out any times that you cannot work, and then fill in the rest of the times with work that you can do (we suggest in 1-hour blocks).

Times/Day	Before School	The School Day							
Monday									
Tuesday									
Wednesday									
Thursday									
Friday									
Weekend Times									
Saturday									
Sunday									

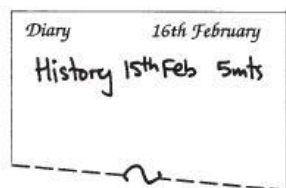


Study Timetable

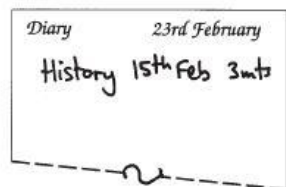
Times/Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend Times	Saturday	Sunday
	Before School	The School Day						
After School								



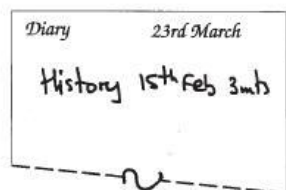
Review Diary



As well as creating a study timetable like the example on the previous page, we highly recommend that, in order to take full control of your time, you create a review diary like the one on the left.



It does not need to be precise. You could even programme the dates into your mobile phone's diary.

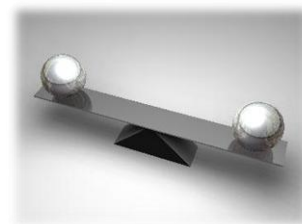


Start as you mean to go on



Filling your review diary and your study timetable to the brim with work may look impressive, but it is not very realistic! You **MUST** allow yourself time for leisure and you **MUST** allow yourself study breaks (just be careful not to allow yourself too much time!). This makes sure that the work you do is completed efficiently.

As you can see, you need to strike a balance. The earlier you can get into a rhythm the better. Just make sure that you can stick to your self-imposed schedule for the weeks and months ahead!





The Review Philosophy

Remember and understand things by finding the storyline and keywords first.

Enter the information into your brain using your imagination in a logical way

Visualise as much as possible.

Incorporate a continuous review of your notes into your schedule.

Easy does it – relaxed concentration is the key to excellence!

Work in short bursts: 30-45 minutes then 5 minutes stretch break for greater levels of understanding and memorising.



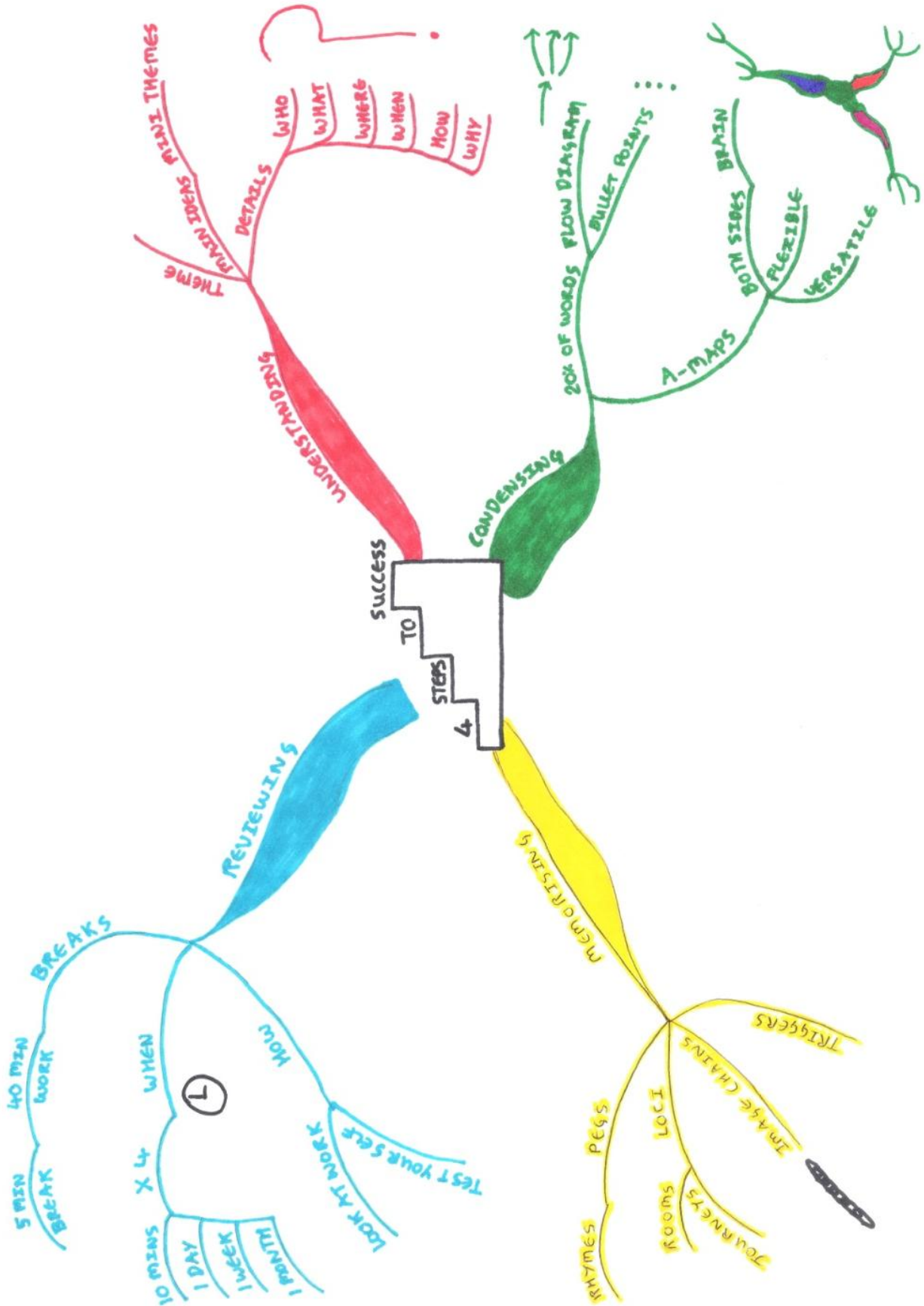
Final Recap

Understand your work	<i>Inspect your work to find the theme, main ideas and details. Use highlighters etc.</i>
Condense your work	<i>Turn your work into organised and creative notes. Works best when using the hierarchy.</i>
Memorise your work	<i>Put what you understand into your memory. Works best when done creatively.</i>
Review your work	

Module Summary

- 👉 **Reviewing** is simply **testing** and **checking** your memorised work
- 👉 Redraw your **Association Maps** and other notes to see how much you remember
- 👉 Review your work **four times** to get it into your long-term memory (after **10 minutes**, **1 day**, **1 week** & **1 month**)
- 👉 Remember to take a five-minute **study break** after every 30-45 minutes of work
- 👉 Create a realistic **study timetable**.

A Summary of the 4 Steps to Success





Module Five

Exam Preparation

...Simple tips to success





The Month Before Your Exams

Good Planning

With a month to go before your exams, there is plenty of time for you to create an overall summary on how you plan to tackle your revision.

This will consist of two plans:

Short-term Plan

This will be drawn up each week and will be detailed and specific. It will include all of the times that you are not available for study, time for your homework and time for study.

Such a plan can be simply created by making a grid with days along the top and times down the side (see examples on pages 66 & 67).



Long-term Plan

This will be a more general plan, accounting for topics and chapters revised between now and your final exams in each subject.

This type of plan can be created by making a grid with weeks across the top and subjects down the side.



Features of a Good Plan

No matter what the task, all good plans have the following 5 features:

1. Description of each task
2. Allocation of priorities
3. Estimation of time needed
4. Setting up a timetable
5. Monitoring of progress.



In the case of *exam preparation*, this would translate to the following plan:



1. List each topic in each subject
2. Decide upon the areas which require the most time
3. Work out how much time you have
4. Match the topics to the times
5. Tick off the work done.

Other Considerations

As well as creating a good solid plan for yourself, you also need to think about what else you might need and what might be useful.

This will be different for everybody - but common items might include revision guides, past papers, notes to borrow from a lesson you may have missed, etc.



The Study Environment

The following is a list of simple tips which might seem like common sense - but it is all too easy to neglect them when settling down to a study session. Don't make this mistake!



Work at a desk. Preferably large enough to spread out all of the required study materials for the topics at hand. Even a small desk is better than the floor or your lap!



Sit in a comfortable chair. Studying requires concentration and discipline. Do not make it harder by making yourself uncomfortable



Ensure that you have **good lighting and ventilation** and, if needs be, a fan or a heater. These all add to your general level of comfort



Have some water available. Keeping your brain hydrated will ensure that your work is completed efficiently








No Distractions! When you study, make sure that the time spent is being spent wisely. Keep video games, TV and social networking for *after* your study sessions (or, if you must, during your breaks).





Just Before Your Exams

The Night Before the Exam






-  No cramming or trying to tackle any new material
-  Stop doing any work at least one hour before bed (to let your mind relax)
-  Do something to relax, such as having a nice bath or read a book
-  Pack your equipment - and spares
-  Have a good night's sleep.



It is also important not only to make travel arrangements to get yourself to the exam, but also to make *contingency plans*.

The Morning of the Exam



-  Have a good healthy breakfast
-  Stick to your normal routine
-  Use positive self-talk
-  Imagine positive situations
-  Leave with plenty of time to spare.



Immediately Before the Exam

- 🍂 Arrive at a comfortable time – not too early, not too late
- 🍂 Avoid or ignore ‘doom and gloom’ merchants!
- 🍂 Control your breathing
- 🍂 Use positive self talk.



The First Few Minutes of the Exam



- 🍂 Synchronise your watch with the official clock
- 🍂 Check the essentials
- 🍂 Check the format
- 🍂 Get a quick overview
- 🍂 Decide which questions you will answer (if there are options)
- 🍂 Start with the easiest questions first
- 🍂 Plan your answers by scribbling notes and sketching out your A-Maps.



Specific Question Types

What are you being asked?

Although reading the question might seem like the easy bit, you have to make sure that you *fully understand* what the question is actually asking you to do.

Below is a table which explains the meaning behind the key terms that you may see in an exam question.




Key Term	Meaning
Account for	Give the reasons
Analyse	Find the main points, discuss them and consider their relative importance
Comment on	Discuss, criticise and explain in detail
Compare	What are the similarities and differences
Contrast	Emphasise the differences
Criticise	Give your opinion, good points and bad, and support your view with evidence
Define	Give a precise, accurate definition. Identify what is essential from what is not
Describe	Give a detailed account
Discuss	Argue for - and against - the proposition and come to a conclusion
Evaluate	Express various opinions
Explain	Interpret, clarify and give reasons
Illustrate	Give examples
Interpret	Use your own ideas and give examples
Justify	Give convincing reasons to support the proposition
List	Write a numbered outline of the points
Outline	Summarise the main points in order
Review	Survey, summarise and comment on
State	Clearly set out the information that is asked for
Summarise	Give the main points in order
Trace	Describe the history, progress or development of...







Essay Style Questions

You need to plan all exam questions, but for *essay* questions you also need to make sure that you stick to a good format, such as the one that follows:




Write an **introduction**:

-  One paragraph
-  Tell the reader what to expect (content and treatment)
-  Refer to the question.

Then the **body**:

-  A number of paragraphs
-  Logical progression
-  Tie ideas together
-  Refer to the question repeatedly, especially the key words.

And, finally, the **conclusion**:

-  One paragraph
-  Statement of what has been discussed
-  Refer to the question.





Mathematics and Formula Questions

Questions that involve formulas and calculations are unique because you can get the final answer completely wrong - but still pick up most of the available marks.

Top Ten Tips

1. Read the question carefully
2. Underline key bits of information
3. Write the formulas down
4. Don't miss any steps
5. Show ALL working out
6. Use the correct units
7. Draw diagrams where appropriate
8. If you lose the flow, leave it and come back to it later
9. Do not cross out any workings unless you are replacing them
10. Do not leave any questions unanswered!





Short Answer and Multiple-Choice Questions

Top Ten Tips

1. Read directions carefully
2. Note layout of answer sheet
3. Give yourself time checkpoints
4. Underline key words in questions
5. Answer those you can
6. Leave those you can't
7. Mark your choice very clearly as directed
8. Don't spend too much time on any one question
9. Go back over your answers to double-check them
10. Make your best guess at questions not answered.










Getting Stuck

If you don't know the answer at all, don't panic! Just follow these simple tips:





Multiple Choice:

-  Make sure that you answer every question, even with a best guess (but no silly answers)
-  Mark those that you are not sure of. Review these on a second pass
-  If you don't know the answer, try not to make a random guess. Look at it logically...
-  What keywords stand out?
-  Does the theme of the question give any clues?






Essay Style Exams



-  Say as much as you can
-  Use short paragraphs
-  Write legibly
-  Volume, quality, clarity and neatness payoff.

General Tips

-  NEVER leave a question blank
-  Answers often pop up in other questions; keep that thought in mind
-  Don't panic! Be aware of your breathing: take control of it and attempt to become calm again.



Exercise: Aptitude Test

This three-minute test has been designed to see how good you are at exams.

1. Read everything before doing anything.
2. Put your name in the upper left-hand corner of the page.
3. Circle the word "name" in the second question.
4. Draw five small squares in the upper right-hand corner of this page.
5. Put an X in each square mentioned in number 4.
6. Put a circle around each square.
7. Sign your name at the bottom of this page.
8. After your signature write YES YES YES.
9. Put a circle around number 1.
10. Put an X in the lower left-hand corner of the page.
11. Draw a triangle around the circle you just drew.
12. On the side of this page multiply 70×30 .
13. Draw a circle around the word "page" in sentence number 4.
14. Loudly call out your first name when you come to this point in the test.
15. If you think you have carefully followed directions, call out "I HAVE".
16. On the side of this page add 107 and 278.
17. Put a circle around your answer to the last problem.
18. Count in your normal speaking voice from 1 to 10 - backwards.
19. If you are the first person to get this far call out loudly, "I am the leader in following directions".
20. Underline all even numbers on the left hand side of this page.
21. Now that you have finished reading carefully, do only question two.



Notes

Module Summary

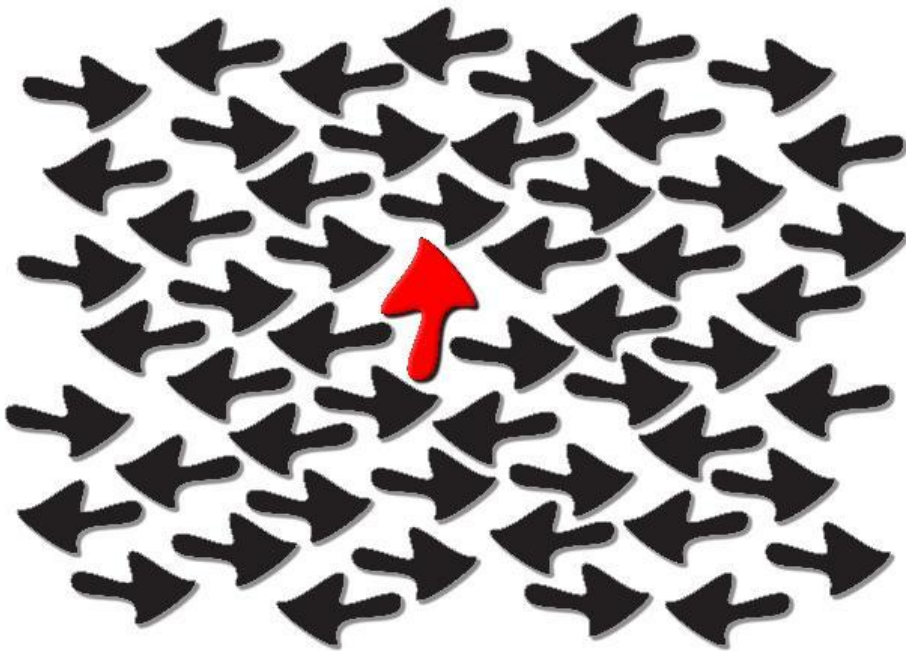
- 👉 You will need good **short-term plans** and a **long-term plan**
- 👉 Make sure you have the best possible **study environment**
- 👉 Stay **relaxed** and **positive** in the build-up to an exam
- 👉 **Never** leave a question unanswered. If in doubt, take the best guess you can
- 👉 **Always** read the questions in full.



Module Six

Stress

...and how to beat it!





Stress

It may not seem like it, but stress is actually designed to help us. It can be traced back to our ‘caveman’ days.

Stress comes in two forms, *physical* and *mental*.

Physical Stress

Your body needs certain things in order to survive. These include air, food, water and sleep. The body also needs to be protected from physical damage and from the effects of the extreme heat or extreme cold.



Being deprived of any of these physical needs will cause physical stress, signalling that something is wrong. This will prompt you to take the necessary action, such as eating or drinking.

Mental Stress



Mental stress is quite different. It is caused by what you *think*. On the one hand, you have certain thoughts (a picture) of how your life is at the moment. On the other hand, you have thoughts (a picture) of how you would like your life to be. The *difference* between how it is and how you would like it to be creates mental stress.

Once again, this stress is designed as a “signal” that something is wrong. It will prompt you to do whatever is required to reduce the difference between the two mental pictures.








Physiological Changes

If you are confronted with a physically dangerous situation, the muscles of your body instantly become highly sprung, ready to fight or run away (the so-called 'fight or flight' response).



For example, let's imagine you're standing in the middle of a large empty space and you see a car heading straight for you. Your body becomes tense and highly sprung in preparation for some kind of action. You might not know at this stage what the appropriate action is, but your body is ready.

Certain other physiological changes occur to give your body the power and energy to act in a quick and decisive manner:

-  Adrenalin is released into your bloodstream, to give you energy and quick reaction speed
-  Your blood pressure rises, to force blood into your arms and legs
-  Your heart rate speeds up
-  Circulation to the brain and muscles increases - at the expense of the digestive system
-  The lungs are stimulated for more oxygen.



When the appropriate response to a situation is immediate or dramatic physical action (as would be the case in any survival situation) then help from the stress response can mean the difference between life and death. This must surely mean that the stress response is always good?

... Not necessarily.



Problems

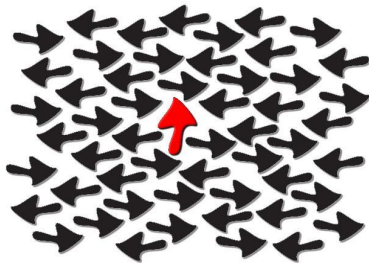
DANGER

When you think 'danger', your body responds with stress. Instead of thinking about running away from a wild animal, or jumping out of the way of a fast-moving car, you might be thinking about failing an exam or struggling to meet a deadline.

All stressful situations call for a fight or flight response. However, immediate or dramatic physical action is not going to help much when the stress is mental. The trouble is, your body does not distinguish between physical stress and mental stress. It responds much the same way for both.

This can cause a variety of problems.

Tension in the muscles of your body is probably the most obvious response to everyday mental stress. Tension within you (such as a tight jaw, clenched fists, headaches, backache and a sore neck) affects your capacity to learn.



The adrenalin produced in response to the stress hangs in the system, puts you on edge and makes the mind become foggy and confused.



Threat or Challenge

Stress can either help you *avoid* something you don't want, or it can help you *achieve* something that you do want.

You know that mental stress is caused by what you think. How you think about a situation will determine whether it represents a challenge or a threat to you.



Stress can be quite productive (provided it's kept at a manageable level), because it propels you to do whatever you need to do to close the gap between what you want and where you are now. Examples of this might be the challenge of completing an assignment on time, or achieving a certain mark in an exam.

Bio-chemicals are mobilised in response to the sense of challenge. They can assist you by keeping you awake, providing energy, giving you a feeling of motivation and blocking out pain.



However, if you think of something that you really don't want, a different kind of stress is setup. This is a confused stress because the mind is not focusing on a particular direction (the want). Examples of this might be thinking about how you don't want to fail the exam or don't want to miss the deadline.

Again, the body produces chemicals designed to help you avoid the threat. Since threats are usually more long-term than challenges - and because there is no inherent direction to the action for which these chemicals were designed - the long-term effects are usually debilitating and unproductive.



The Five Part Stress Busting Plan

1. Give yourself permission to relax

The best way to give yourself “permission” to relax is with self-talk. If it doesn’t work immediately, then repeat it a few times (believing it) until you feel some effect.



What could *you* say to yourself to help you relax?

2. Control your breathing

When you become aware that you are feeling tense, become aware of your breathing. You will probably find that it is quite shallow. The best thing to do at this point is to take over: deliberately control your breathing—long, slow and easy. We suggest that you:



- Breathe in**, to the count of three
- Hold your breath**, to the count of three
- Slowly release it**, to the count of five.



You’ll be surprised how much difference this can make. **Try it now!**

3. Do regular relaxation exercises



Keeping your eyes closed, try to imagine yourself somewhere that you find relaxing. This may be the beach on a warm sunny day, a mountain top, a forest - or it might just be your bedroom!

Whenever you find yourself getting a little stressed, picture yourself in the place that relaxes you, until you are calm and ready to continue with your work.

Where would this place be for you?



4. Do regular physical exercises

If you have stress chemicals hanging around in your body, the best approach is to burn them up. After all, they were put there in the first place to be burned up - by meeting the challenge or threat with *activity*. Any activity will do - it doesn't have to relate directly to the stress.



Long walks, swimming or cycling are excellent. So (especially in the lead-up to exams, when the pressure is really on) take time out once a day for something like a fast walk or a cycle ride.

Get your pulse rate up and keep it up for about fifteen minutes. You may or may not feel the effects immediately, but over a few days the results will be quite noticeable.

What exercise could *you* do regularly?

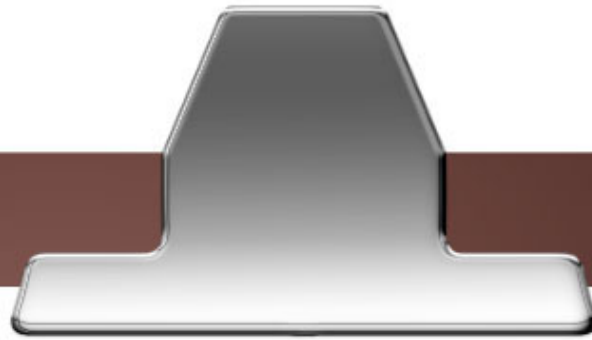
5. See the process

You may think that exams, teachers, deadlines etc. cause you mental stress, but they don't. It's what you *think* about these things that causes you stress. A common evaluation is to see consequences as "horrible". For example, you have an exam coming up and your feeling is "I might not do all that well, and wouldn't that be horrible!"

"Horrible-ising" or "awful-ising" the consequences of your behaviour is what causes most mental stress. The less stressful alternative is to think of the possibilities and opportunities that exams and assignments offer you.

HELP

The bottom line is that if you do put whatever dedication and work is required into achieving what you want, then you'll probably get it. If you don't, then there's not a lot of sense worrying about the predictable outcome.



Module Summary

- ☞ *Stress* can be *physical* or *mental*
- ☞ *Stress* is designed to help you but sometimes this can cause problems
- ☞ Beat stress by *self talk*, *breathing & relaxation exercises* and *physical activities*
- ☞ Remember to *see the process*. If you put the work in, it will pay off.



Final Words

We have shown you how you can make learning easier.

We suggest that when you have finished a unit of work, you should get all of your notes together and then do the following:

1. **Understand** them
2. **Condense** them
3. **Memorise** them by using a combination of A-Maps and the other memory techniques that we have shown you
4. Start the **review** process.



It is all down to you.

You can make the most of school, get the best possible grades and get to grips with effective, lifelong study techniques; or not. It is up to you.

Give the ideas in this book a go. Alter them to suit your own way of learning and, most of all, try to have fun whilst doing it.


GOOD LUCK!

The Learning Performance Team







Ten Quick Brain Teasers

 A man buys bread at 50p per loaf from British bakers and sells them at 2p per loaf in Africa. He continues doing this for many years. As a result, he becomes a millionaire. How?




 An ordinary British citizen, with no passport, visits over thirty foreign countries in one day. He is welcomed in each country and leaves each one of his own accord.




 If today is Sunday, what is the day that follows the day that comes after the day that precedes the day before yesterday?




 What orchestral device is not blown, bowed, plucked, or struck?



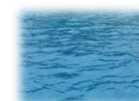
 What mathematical symbol can you put between 1 and 2 to make a number greater than 1 but less than 2?




 Mr and Mrs Green have four daughters, and each daughter has one brother. How many people are in the family?




 What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?




 A man falls out of a fifty storey building with no parachute, ropes or support of any kind. He hits the ground at full speed and is perfectly fine. He does not have any injuries. How could this be?



 A policeman saw a truck driver clearly going the wrong way down a one-way street, but he did not need to stop him. Why not?



 A deaf man, wanting to cut some wood, went to a hardware store to purchase a saw. How did he indicate to the shopkeeper that he wished to buy a saw?





Four Tricky Puzzles

1. The Castle Lights

A property developer purchased an old Scottish castle that was in desperate need of repair. One of his first priorities was to rewire the tunnel leading to the antiques storage room in the cellar. The electrician finished the basement wiring, but had failed to label which of the three switches belonged to the storage room.



The developer had a small flashlight that would enable him to find the storage room; however, he didn't like the thought of returning carrying a small item, armed with only a small light. He wanted to be certain he could correctly label which switch belonged to the storage room, with only one trip. How did he do it?

2. The Race for Riches

A wealthy business man tells his two sons to race their horses to a distant city to see who will inherit his fortune. The one whose horse arrives LAST will win.

The brothers, after wandering aimlessly for days, ask a wise man for advice. After hearing the advice they jump on the horses and race as fast as they can to their destination. What did the wise man suggest?





3. A Wartime Standoff

During the Second World War on a foggy day, the Americans and the British had the following conversation out at sea:

Americans: "Please divert your course 15 degrees to the north to avoid a collision."

British: "We recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees to the south to avoid collision."

Americans: "This is the Aircraft Carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, the second largest ship in the United States' Atlantic fleet. I demand that you change your course 15 degrees north or counter-measures will be taken."



Although they were unarmed, the British remained completely calm and did not move. What did they say that made the Americans change their minds?

4. The Quick Arrest

Acting on an anonymous phone call, the police raid a house to arrest a suspected murderer. They don't know what he looks like but they know his name is John and that he is inside the house.



The police burst in to find a carpenter, a lorry driver, a mechanic and a fireman all playing poker. Without hesitation or communication of any kind, they immediately arrest the fireman. How do they know they've got their man?



Notes












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