

# The Secret of Remembering: How to Trick Your Brain Into Memorizing Things

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM



We've all heard that understanding concepts is better than memorizing them. But for certain tests, you have to know how to memorize. Here are seven strategies to help you memorize *without* sacrificing your sleep and your neurons the night before the midterm!

## 1. Acronyms

Technically, acronyms connect a list or a concept with a certain word. But what actually is an acronym? You already know a bunch of them – LOL, SOS, ASAP, GTG, and BRB are a few of the most popular. There are plenty of the websites out there that will **generate the acronym for you** (like this one <http://www.jschramm.com/acreator/> ), and once you have it, it will be with you for a long time.

## 2. Sing it

Have you ever watched a commercial with a cheesy, catchy melody that stayed in your head for days? This is what you want to do with your definitions, concepts, formulas, and dates. Give your inner Beyoncé some freedom and you will be singing through your tests.

## 3. Practice, Practice, Practice

You cannot ignore good old repetition when it comes to memorizing. Read the items over and say them out loud, rewrite them, quiz yourself - whatever works best for you! (Find out what kind of practice works for you by discovering your Learning Style! (check out Learning Styles page here [http://hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/advice/asp/asp\\_learningstyles.html](http://hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/advice/asp/asp_learningstyles.html) ).

## 4. Flash Cards

This is one of the most popular and effective ways to memorize a lot of material in a short period of time. Flashcards are helpful for a lot of us because it's an *active* way to use repetition, and because you can quiz yourself with them, it's an easy way to find out what you know or don't know.

5. Chunking

This method is used to memorize long lists of items, like numbers. An example of chunking that we ALL use how we memorize our phone numbers! Your goal is to divide your information into smaller chunks and memorize them separately, so when it comes to the exam you can put the whole thing back together. Sound confusing? See this video for an easy explanation of chunking – you can strategize using the abilities you already possess! (Link to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y08t7lctfoI>)

6. Association

Remember how to play associations? Why not try to do it with your schoolwork? Associate a group of concepts around one word using a pattern that is memorable to you and all you will have left to do is just remember that one word during your test.

7. Retype your notes

This may seem boring, but it works because it's repetition combined with physical action. If you're into visuals, drawing, or color-coding; you can make it more interesting using concept maps. (You can read more about concept maps on our Critical Thinking page, [http://hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/advise/asp/asp\\_critical\\_thinking.html](http://hofstra.edu/StudentAffairs/advise/asp/asp_critical_thinking.html))