

SMART STUDY

- a guide to skill yourself to be a better student

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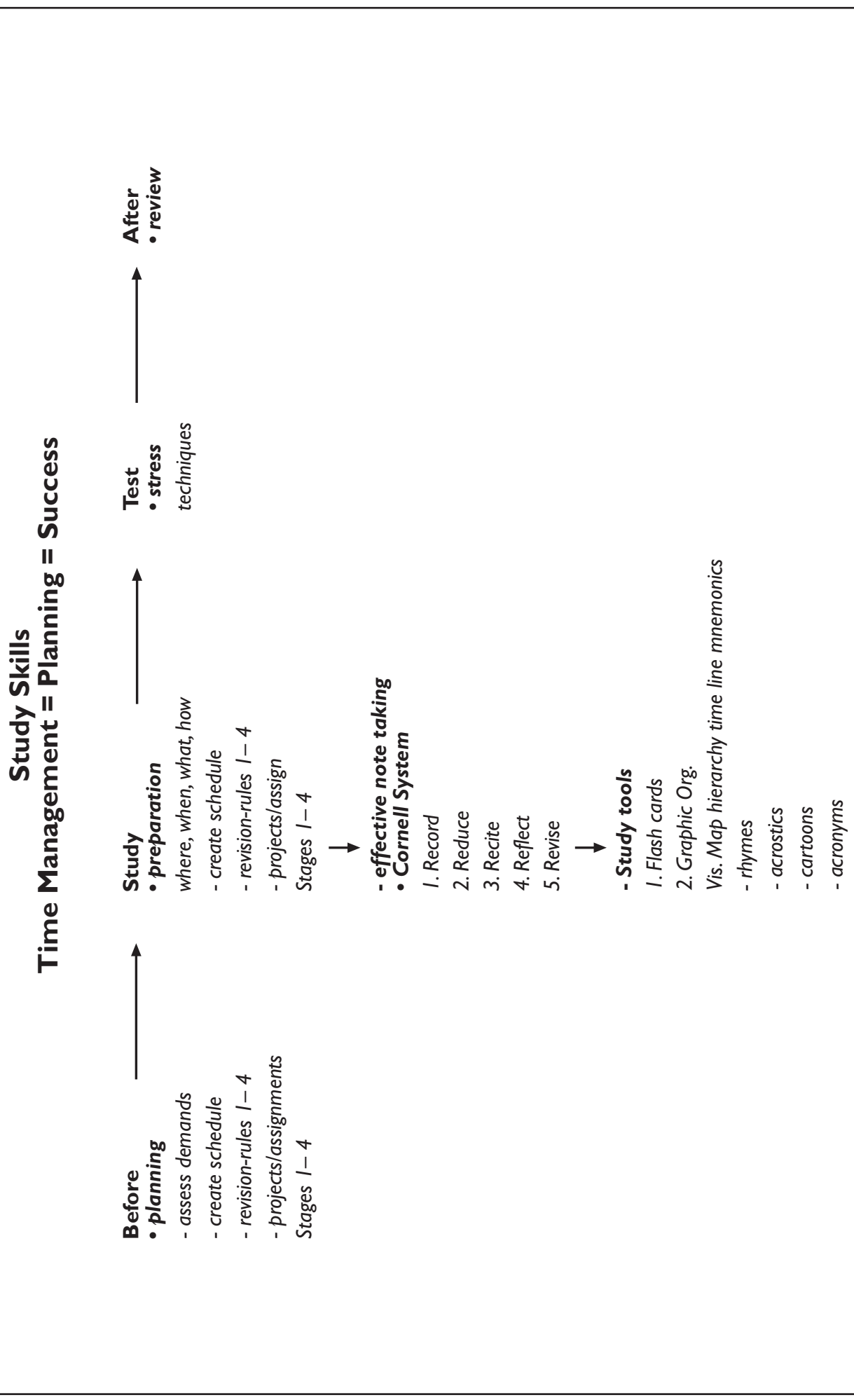
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THIS SCHEMATIL DIAGRAM SHOWS WHAT IS COVERED IN THIS GUIDE:



INTRODUCTION

This guide aims to assist you with:

- information on how to plan,
- how to study,
- remembering what you have studied, and
- retrieving this knowledge when you need it during tests and exams.

There is no recipe for instant success, but you don't have to be a genius to score in tests or exams. You do, however, need to be committed and sincere about acquiring study skills that have to be practised **regularly**.

If you are a typical learner, you have other interests besides schoolwork – such as sport, hobbies, family and maybe even a part-time job. The one thing you won't have is much spare time. Therefore, however much of a bother it seems to be initially, you need to sit down and consider how you are going to manage your time. This is your first step to success, **TIME MANAGEMENT** through proper planning. Scheduling your activities to include time for study blocks, revision, assignments and so on will give you a clear picture of how you need to organise your life to achieve your goals.

When you look at your time management schedule, you will realise that time set aside for study periods must reap the maximum benefits. In your second step to success, you will have to consider **HOW TO STUDY**. In the guide there are hints on how you prepare to study, then how to study by selecting and processing information for memory, how to take notes effectively and how to create study tools such as flash cards, graphic organisers and mnemonics. Read through the guide for an overview of the content, then go back and read more closely the sections that you feel will help you the most.

Your third step on the road to success is to **PREPARE** yourself for tests and exams. In the guide there are suggestions on how to cope with stress as well as effective test / exam-taking techniques.

Start your journey to success today, write your goals in colour on a large piece of paper, then with the aid of this guide, begin planning how you intend to achieve them!



TIME MANAGEMENT begins with drafting a **PLAN** that will reflect a **BALANCE** between the time needed to cope with the demands of school, including **REGULAR** study periods, time for revision and for the other activities in your life.

TIME MANAGEMENT = PLANNING = SUCCESS

STEP 1: HOW TO PLAN...

1. SCHEDULE:

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE, START PLANNING!



At the start of each school term you will need to draw up a **Time Management Schedule**. This will be the plan of how you intend to spend your time during the term. There are obviously times that are fixed and non-negotiable, for example, the hours you spend doing lessons at school. What you do have under your control is the amount of time you could spend doing homework, studying, revising; the number of hours you need for other school related activities such as sports, and also very importantly, the time you need for leisure and social activities. Your Time Management Schedule has to reflect a **BALANCE** between all these daily commitments.

1.1 HOW TO BEGIN YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

You will require a blank calendar for the term, large enough to write in each day's activities. If such a calendar is not readily available, you could easily draw one on an A1 size sheet of paper or cardboard. Once you have filled it in, fix it to a wall in the room where you study for easy reference. Use a pencil at first until you are satisfied with your time allocations, then you can use different colours to indicate the various activities so you can tell at a glance how many times a term you practice swimming, for example.

Begin by **assessing the demands of each subject/learning area**. You need to make brief notes wherein you:

1. Identify the learning outcomes and assessment standards of each subject/learning area – what you're expected to learn.



EXAMPLE:

In Grade 12 Life Sciences, you have to investigate, understand and apply the prescribed concepts included in the topics below. You also have to evaluate the application of scientific and indigenous knowledge in South Africa and elsewhere with regard to these topics:

Topics

1. Reproduction and related diseases,
2. Environmental studies,
3. Genetics, and
4. Evolution.

2. Anticipate how you will be assessed – how your learning will be measured, e.g. tests (how often?), (when?), projects and/or assignments (how many?) and so on.



EXAMPLE:

Grade 12 Life Sciences assessment could be as follows:

1. Two external examinations at the end of the year;
2. Mock examination: two examination papers
3. Mid-year examination in June (One paper)
4. Summary of the year's formal assessment:
 - Term 1: Controlled test and practical task
 - Term 2: Research project and Mid-year examination
 - Term 3: Controlled test, practical task and mock examination
 - Term 4: Two external question papers
5. Daily assessment: Tests and/or tasks every two weeks

This should help you decide how much study time to devote to a subject/learning area. In the given example, a test every two weeks will require regular study and revision time that will ease the burden of studying for the three exams. If you prepare yourself well for the tests, exam studying should require only intense revision.

You will need to find out as soon as possible what is expected in the assignments so you can work this into your Time Management Schedule.

1.2 STUDY SCHEDULE GUIDELINES

1. Estimate study time needed per subject/learning area
2. Study during your alert times during the day (morning? evening?)
3. Use 50 minute study blocks with 10 minute breaks when you intend studying more than one subject on any given day
4. Have at least one study block every day of the week
5. Do not study for more than 3 hours in a row. You will have to develop study methods that suit you, your constraints (time, family and other commitments) and your natural inclinations (when you work best, what type of learner you are); you need to try out different patterns and plan to get the most out of yourself in a way that suits you best. Therefore,
6. Work out the best conditions that suit you
7. Plan to work regularly using this pattern, remembering the point that study skills and strategies only become study habits if they are practised regularly.



EXAMPLE:

For Life Sciences, estimate study time needed per subject/learning area

At least 1 hour per week, revise 10 minutes the next day, with 20 minutes revision time the day before the test

1.3 HOW TO FILL IN YOUR TIME MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

1. Write in all fixed activities for the term e.g. lesson times;
2. Write fixed study times for subject/learning areas per day (including a time slot over weekends!);
3. Add shorter daily periods for revision, (the difference between studying and revision is explained under the heading 'Regular Revision');
4. Add times for other responsibilities such as sports and homework; and
5. Schedule time for leisure, social engagements, etc.

EXAMPLE OF TIME MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 school opens UGGGGH!!	24 School: 8 - 2.30 Swimming: 3 - 4 homework: 5 - 7 study science: 8 - 9	25 School: 8 - 2.30 Drama: 2.45 - 4.30 Homework: 5 - 7 study bio: 8 - 9	26 work in gift shop: 9 - 1 movies: 3 - 5 revise science & bio: 7 - 8	27 Study history: 6.30 - 7.30 Bath dog Family picnic Church
28 School: 8 - 2.30 Swimming: 3 - 4 homework: 5 - 7 study geo: 8 - 9 revise history	29 School: 8 - 2.30 Dentist: 3.30 - 4 homework: 4.30 - 5.30 Gran's birthday: 7	30 School: 8 - 2.30 Swim gala: 3 - 5 homework: 6 - 7.30 Revise geo: 20 min study Eng. Lit. Test	31 School: 8 - 2.30 Swimming: 3 - 4 homework: 5 - 7 begin bio project: 8.30 - 9.30			

2. REGULAR REVISION:

Revision means **re-studying** material that has already been studied. Revision is: regular, continuous; the cornerstone of learning; and an ongoing process – before-exam revision is the end of the process.

Rule 1:

Revision is done daily. Revise today what you studied yesterday.

Example: Study History for 1 hour on Monday, revise this section for 10 minutes on Tuesday.

Rule 2:

At the end of the week revise the whole week's work. This need not be labourious if you have done 10 minutes revision every day. This weekly revision need take no more than 15 – 20 minutes.

Rule 3:

At the end of the month when you are looking back at your Time Management Schedule and your planning, spend at least an hour revising everything you have done to date.

3. DEALING WITH PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS:

You will find that in many, if not in all your subjects/learning areas, you are required to do assignments and/or projects during the term. These will be referred to here simply as 'assignments'. Here are a few guidelines to assist you with planning and scheduling of assignments:

Create a Master Assignment Sheet, even if you have only one assignment for the term. More than likely there will be several assignments you have to work on throughout the term.

3.1 PLANNING SEVERAL ASSIGNMENTS

1. Identify assignments that have to be carried out in parallel.
2. Schedule tasks you need to carry out to complete these assignments by the due dates.

THE FOUR STAGES OF PLANNING:

1. Write down assignments and time period you have to complete them.
2. For each assignment, list main tasks you have to complete. Put these into the right order.
3. Draw up a timetable. Insert end dates. Add tasks listed in 2 with dates.
4. Note these dates on your Time Management Schedule. Make adjustments to avoid a bottleneck.

SET GOALS AND MANAGE TIME

3.2 DEFINING THE TASK

Deal with each assignment separately:

What should it look like and what criteria will be used to assess it?

Establish, by asking questions if necessary.



EXAMPLE:

Life Sciences Assignment for First Term:

Identify a child, a teenager and an adult whose diets you can track over a two week period. Draw up a chart wherein you analyse the food values of each one's diet. State whether each one is getting adequate nutrition, keeping in mind his or her age, gender and activities. Should the nutrition be less than ideal, suggest possible changes to the diet to deal with the deficiency.

Due date: 16 March

3.3 PLANNING YOUR USE OF TIME:

1. Break up assignment into individual steps / manageable tasks
2. Identify an outcome for each task
3. Estimate time needed for each task
4. Double the amount of estimated time
5. Use a calendar to map out due dates
6. Begin NOW!

EXAMPLE:

	Hours x2	Date
1. Read assignment instructions etc., list needs Read instructions, identify participants, what information on food values, etc.	1 = 2	30/01
2. Find out what's available in library, etc. Also consult text book	3 = 6	2/02
3. Read chosen references, take notes Notes on participants' diets for 2 weeks: 4 - 18 February, also continue reading	15 = 30	4 - 24/02
4. Organise notes into outline Draw up chart, analyse, calculate, etc.	5 = 10	26/02 -3/03
5. Write first draft	6 = 12	3 - 9/03
6. Proofread and revise	3 = 6	11 - 14/03
7. Add bibliography and cover	1 = 2	15/03

Insert these dates in your Time Management Plan. Try, as far as possible to follow your plan. Apart from assignments, remember there will be work which you are required to study thoroughly for tests and exams.

STEP 2: HOW TO STUDY...

1. PREPARATION FOR STUDY:

1.1 PLANNING TIME

- When do you work best – early morning, night?
- Where do you like to work? Library, home?
- When can you work undisturbed?
- Will you work with other people? If so, who?

1.2 IDENTIFY YOUR LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES:

How do you best remember information?

- **Visual** – pictures, colours, graphs, visual mappings, etc. help you learn better; or
- **Auditory** – you need to hear the information to remember it; or
- **Kinesthetic** – you are an active learner, you need to move around while you are learning, it helps you retain what you have learnt.

There are notes further on in the text describing various study techniques which you can adapt to best suit your learning style preferences, whether you are a visual, auditory or kinesthetic type of learner. However, whichever type of learner you are, spend a little time preparing for your study session, as follows:

TO IMPROVE CONCENTRATION

Develop concentrated listening skills, essential for understanding lectures, taking accurate notes, following discussions and communicating with others.

Set physical environment: music level, table, chair, uncluttered work surface, good lighting, have resources at hand.

1.3 MENTALLY PREPARE TO STUDY (RAVES)

- Use relaxation techniques to calm your mind
- **A**rrange goals and priorities for study block
- **V**isualise yourself capable of full concentration
- **E**motional words for success: effort, enthusiasm, energy, eagerness
- Use positive self-talk to set a positive attitude

A FEW RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- Soothing mask** – use your fingertips to gently smooth across your face a few times, from the forehead to chin and back again;
- Relaxation blanket** - close your eyes and imagine you are slowly pulling a warm blanket over your body, from your feet up to your chest, then
- Breathe in 3's** – breathe in slowly and gently to the count of 3, then exhale again slowly and gently to the count of 3, do this several times, or
- Deep breathing** – breathe in deeply, hold for a couple of seconds, then exhale slowly, emptying your lungs.



With a clear, calm mind, you are now prepared to begin your study session.

2 HOW TO STUDY:

TWELVE MEMORY PRINCIPLES

1. Learn to **be selective** when you study, pick out significant information. You cannot learn every detail, every example, every word.
2. **Associate** new information with what you know. This way, you learn more quickly and completely. Ask yourself: What do I already know about the subject? Have I seen something similar to this? How does it fit in with what I have previously learned?
3. **Visualise** what you are learning. This takes practice, but it is well worthwhile as the result is better memory skills. Using visualisation to aid in processing information activates your entire brain: words are stored in the left hemisphere of the brain while pictures are stored in the right hemisphere. You can also try to create 'stories' or 'movies' in your mind; begin by reading a sentence then close your eyes and 'watch' the information you've just read move across the screen as if it were a movie. After you can visualise sentences, apply the same method by creating 'movies' of concepts, paragraphs, sections of the textbook.
4. Learning requires effort; it takes motivation and determination to take information in, rehearse it, and retrieve it. Create your own **study tools** for yourself, apply effort and you will be rewarded with more thorough learning, greater sense of satisfaction and better marks.
5. **Concentrate** when you study. You have to set aside valuable time to study, don't waste it by allowing your mind to wander or by being easily distracted from your task. Your mind has to be alert and focussed.
6. **Recite** information as you study; use your own words in complete sentences, pretending you are explaining the information to a friend. Go back and check for accuracy and additional details. Reciting keeps you focussed on understanding rather than rote memory as you are personalising the material. You are also activating your auditory sense perception which strengthens your path to long term memory.

7. Create an interest in what you need to study, even if the **interest** isn't there. You can create an interest by looking for a value or purpose in knowing the information, by using new study techniques to learn the information. Identify what you do like about the subject, emphasise and strengthen the positive aspects rather than focussing on the negatives. Look at your attitude towards the subject and see if your lack of interest is related to a previous experience or past incident in class.
8. See the 'big' as well as the 'little' pictures. Learning based on **understanding** requires you to use at least two levels of information. One level is the 'big' picture which is the general concept or category of information, the other level is the specific details, or 'little' pictures that together create this concept. Here you can use visual mapping: place the 'big' picture i.e. the category or concept in a circle in the middle of the page then surround it with details that are related to the topic in the centre circle.
9. Provide yourself with **feedback** to check your progress by self-checking or self-quizzing. Reciting, writing summaries (without looking at your notes) as well as drawing visual maps and pictures can also help. Check back with the original for accuracy.
10. **Organise** information into meaningful clusters. Arrange your information as it is listed in the proper time sequence that shows order of occurrence. Use a time line. Group information into meaningful categories: identify those that 'belong together' because of common characteristics. Use visual mapping.
11. Use time to your advantage. **Plan** your study time effectively, aim for 50 minute blocks of concentrated effort. Studying a subject for an hour or so each day is more effective than trying to study all on one day for several hours.
12. Use ongoing **revision** to practice retrieval. Avoid last minute cramming by regularly revising what you have already learned so the information remains.

3 RETRIEVING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED:

TO ENSURE THAT YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU HAVE STUDIED,

- You must revise regularly and frequently.
- When you search your memory for information, think in categories.
- Practice retrieving information by several methods. This can include reciting it, summarising it, drawing or reproducing it, or seeing the relationship it has with other information.

The following are a couple of methods you might try for retrieving information. The SQ4R method outlines a way of selecting and processing information for memory, while the Cornell System details a very useful and effective manner of note taking.

Do remember, however, that you may need to adapt these methods to suit your own needs. As given below, they each offer a sound basis on which to build good study practices.

3.1 SQ4R – A METHOD FOR SELECTING AND PROCESSING INFORMATION FOR MEMORY

Systematically read textbooks or other study material by applying the **SQ4R** method:

1. **S**urvey the chapter
2. Write **Q**uestions for each heading and subheading
3. **R**ead the information one paragraph at a time
4. Select a form of note taking to **R**ecord information (see Cornell System below)
5. **R**ecite the important information from the paragraph
6. **R**eview the information learned in the chapter

1. **Surveying:**

Carefully read..... the title of the chapter

the introduction

chapter objectives

headings and subheadings

Look: at visual aids (maps, charts etc.)

Read: marginal notes

Glance: at terms in bold or in italics

Read: chapter study questions and the summary carefully

Surveying is a warm-up activity that gets your mind focussed and prepared for work.

2. **Questions:**

Who, what, why, which, when, where, how give a purpose for reading, helps you to concentrate and increased concentration means increased comprehension which helps you prepare for future tests.

3. **Read carefully:**

One paragraph at a time. Keeps you focussed, concentrating. Read paragraphs out loud; find definitions for unfamiliar words; find the topic sentence with the main idea; look for supporting details for the topic sentence and review notes for preceding paragraph.

4. **Record information:**

Condensed form of information, writing means you are actively involved in the learning process.

5. **Reciting:**

Recite notes out loud, in full sentences. This reinforces understanding when you use your own words. Check back for accuracy; this is active learning. Reading a chapter this thoroughly means you do not have to re-read.

6. **Final step: revising:**

Answer questions

Write summary

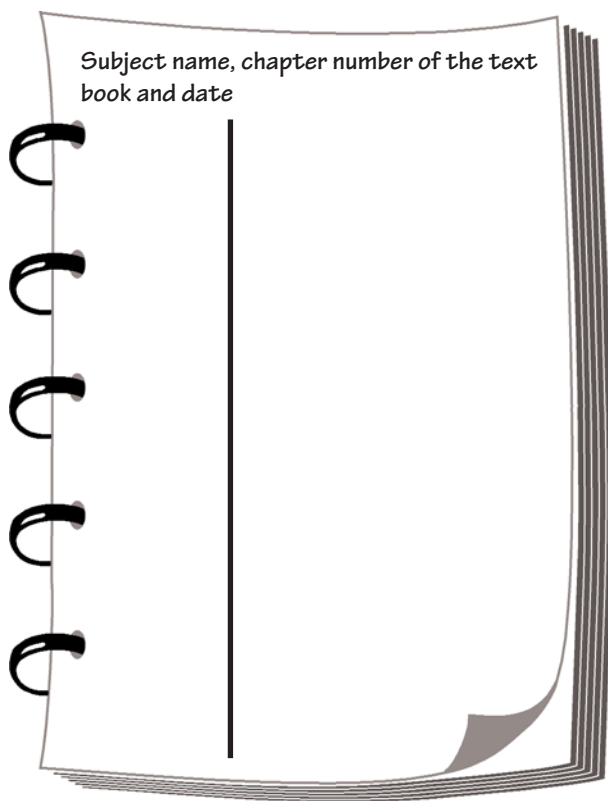
Study and recite from your notes.

3.2 EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING: THE CORNELL SYSTEM

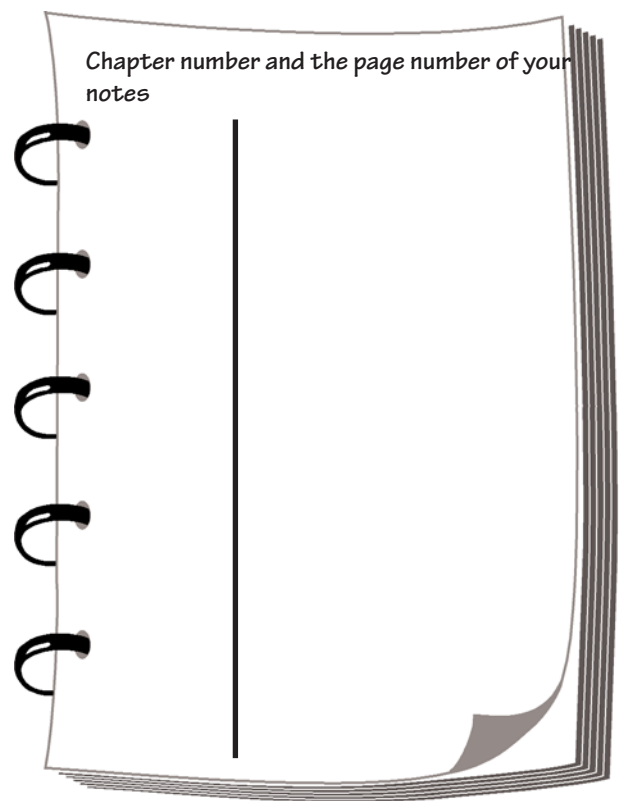
The goal of note taking is to take notes that are so accurate and detailed that you do not need to go back to the book to study. Note taking is important for several reasons; you

- become an **active** learner when you seek out important information and write it down.
- **focus** on organising the information logically.
- **select** important information and reduce it to a form that is easy to study and revise.
- have **reduced** notes to use for continual revision throughout the term.

For the Cornell system of note taking, draw a wide margin on the left side of your note paper. All your note taking is done on the front side only, the back of the paper is for other purposes. At the top of the first page, write the subject name, chapter number of the text book and date. For all the following pages, just write the chapter number and page number of your notes.



PAGE ONE OF NOTES



PAGE TWO OF NOTES



THE CORNELL 5R SYSTEM

1. **Record** your notes in the right hand column
2. **Reduce** your notes into the recall column on the left
3. **Recite** out loud from the recall column
4. **Reflect** on the information you're studying
5. **Revise** your notes immediately and regularly

1. **Record: In the right hand column:**

Read paragraph carefully, decide what's important then record the information on your paper. Your notes must be a reduced version of your textbook, otherwise you're wasting time. Copy first heading from the book into notes. Underline. Read the first paragraph. Identify important points, number these and write down.

Continue through the book, paragraph by paragraph. Leave double spaces between sections before writing a new heading, in case you want to add to that section. Record page number in your notes if there are important graphs and charts you need to refer back to when studying, or draw a copy.

2. **Reduce:**

After you have finished taking notes for the chapter, close your book and begin reducing. Now you will be writing in the recall column on the left. In Step 1 you reduced the textbook information to the most important points and details. In Step 2, you reduce one step further. Copy the heading from your notes into the recall column. Re-read your notes under that heading. Directly across from each important detail, write yourself a reminder of that detail. Write it as a brief study question such as Why? How many kinds of ...? Name ... Or you can simply write keywords. These may be words you need to define or relate to others. Be brief!

3. **Recite:**

Cover up the notes on the right. Start at the top of the recall column. Read the heading and the first keyword question. Talk out loud in complete sentences. Explain the information. If you don't remember, uncover the right hand column. Reread the information. Cover it up and try reciting again. Move through your notes in this manner. Adjust the recall column as needed.

4. **Reflect:**

Take time to think about the information in your notes. Line up all your recall columns to see the overall structure of the chapter. Relate the information to previous information and to your personal background. Write your own summary. Use the back side of the notepaper to make lists of information or questions; use visual mapping or other study aids e.g. flash cards. Spend time thinking – what were the main ideas in this chapter? What did I find the most interesting?

5. **Revise:**

Information is kept active in your memory when you revise. Before you close your book and quit studying, do an immediate revision of your recall columns. Thereafter, ongoing revision is necessary as you will be storing more and more information in your long term memory as the year progresses. You must make sure that the 'old' information is practised. By including ongoing revision in your weekly schedule you will save time in the long run. When the time comes, you won't need to cram for tests or exams as you would have kept the information active.

The Cornell system of note taking is summarised as follows:

1. Select important information and record it in the right hand column of your note paper.
2. Reduce the information to key terms or study questions, write this reduced information in the left hand column.
3. Cover up the right hand side of your notes while you recite information in complete sentences; use the left hand column as a guide for reciting.
4. Reflect on the material, finding relationships and creating study tools.
5. Use immediate and ongoing revision to rehearse information.

EXAMPLE:

Consequences of the French Revolution	Consequences of the French Revolution
<p>The consequences were 4) What was replaced? Freedom of ... (3) Changes in public administration: (2) Vote ...</p>	<p>1. Politics: Republican government replaced monarchy; democracy replaced divine right; right to vote; freedom of speech, press and religion; single judiciary; public administration free of corruption, uniformity</p>
<p>2. Equality ...</p>	<p>2. Social: all people equal, equal opportunities</p>
<p>3. What was abolished? (3) What about tax?</p>	<p>3. Economic / Financial: everyone paid tax; tolls abolished; guilds abolished; feudalism abolished</p>
<p>4. What happened to the nation? (3)</p>	<p>4. Nationalism: patriotism; compulsory military service, national symbols</p>

You will have noticed by now the emphasis that is placed on 'continual revision'. To make this ongoing task much easier, quickly created, simple study tools are extremely helpful. The study tools described below focus specifically on flash cards, graphic organisers and mnemonics.

4 CREATING STUDY TOOLS:

4.1 FLASH CARDS: FOR BUILDING YOUR VOCABULARY:

Since vocabulary or terminology is the foundation of understanding any subject, you should learn key terms thoroughly. Flash cards are effective because they provide you with immediate feedback when you are studying; they are compact and easy to use when you study or have a few extra minutes to review.

To make flash cards:

1. Use an A4 piece of cardboard cut into four equal pieces to make your cards. You could make use of different colours for each subject.
2. On the front of each card write the vocabulary word or concept you need to learn, with the definition or explanation on the back.
3. When using these cards to study, begin by stacking the cards with the vocabulary word facing you. Say the word out loud.
4. Recite what you know about the word or concept. Do not look at the back of the card.
5. After you have finished reciting, turn the card over for feedback. If you get it right, place the card in a 'Yes, I know it' pile.
6. If your feedback indicated you still don't know the information, read out the back aloud and slowly. Think about the information. Try to visualise it. Put this card into the 'I need to study these more' pile.
7. Revise the 'I need to study these more' cards again.
8. Use ongoing review for the complete set of flash cards.

Study from the back:

1. Read the definition or list of information on the back of the card.
2. Say the vocabulary term you think is written on the front of the card.
3. On a piece of paper, write the word or concept.
4. Check the front of the card to see if you are right and have spelt it correctly.
5. Again, make two piles – one for those you know and one for those of which you are unsure.
6. Revise the cards that need more work.
7. Use ongoing revision for the complete set of cards.

4.2 GRAPHIC ORGANISERS: VALUABLE TOOLS FOR PLANNING, UNDERSTANDING, REMEMBERING AND ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE:

There are four basic patterns of knowledge organisation:

- conceptual,
- hierarchical,
- sequential and
- cyclical.

Graphic organisers can be constructed for each of these four organisational patterns.

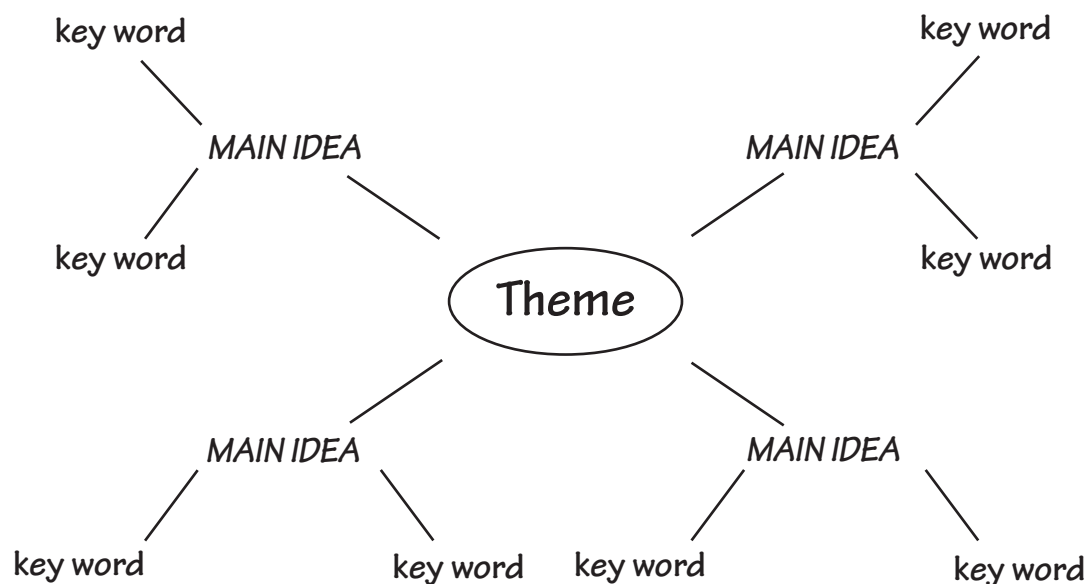
BENEFITS OF GRAPHIC ORGANISERS

- Focus attention on key elements, you must be able to distinguish among 'big ideas', 'little ideas' and supporting details.
- Helps integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge. Provides a framework for the addition of new knowledge. You can 'hook' new information to what is already known, learning new information is easier and makes sense.
- Enhances concept development; representing key ideas with appropriate vocabulary helps you see the attributes of a concept. Aids comprehension and learning because you use vocabulary that explains, clarifies and illustrates the information structure of the concept.
- Aids writing by supporting, planning and revising. Graphic organisers are effective ways to brainstorm, plan and organise writing.

4.2.1 CONCEPTUAL:

This pattern includes a central idea, category or class with supporting facts such as characteristics or examples, description (see visual mappings details below); problem/solution and comparison/contrast also are examples as are Venn diagrams.

BASIC STRUCTURE



BENEFITS OF VISUAL MAPPING

- Uses both sides of the brain (whole brain)
- Works in a series of links, connections and associations
- Makes remembering easier
- Allows ideas to flow
- Can be read over and reviewed quickly and easily
- Makes it easier to see how ideas are related
- Uses only key and important words, which strengthen memory and save time
- Keeps you focussed on the main idea
- Makes it simple to connect ideas
- Allows for easy additions
- Captures all the information on one page, like a map
- Optimises the brain's potential

You can make visual mappings of:

1. A paragraph or group of paragraphs under one heading
2. A topic or a subject presented in several chapters
3. Your lecture notes
4. Information to review for a test
5. Each chapter you have covered
6. Ideas brainstormed for an assignment or speech

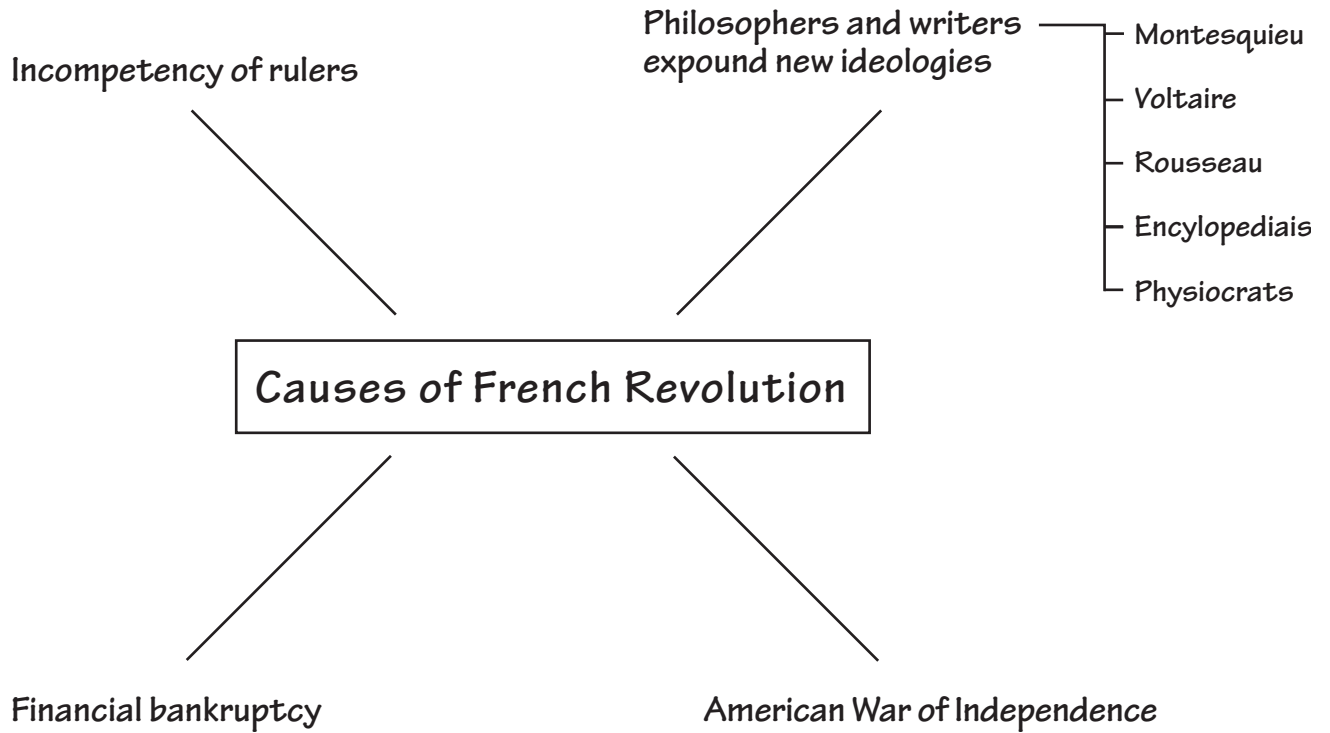
How to Create Visual Mappings:

1. Write the topic in the centre of your paper
2. Write the main ideas or main headings, use lines to connect them to the topic
3. Add major details to support the main ideas
4. Add any necessary minor details

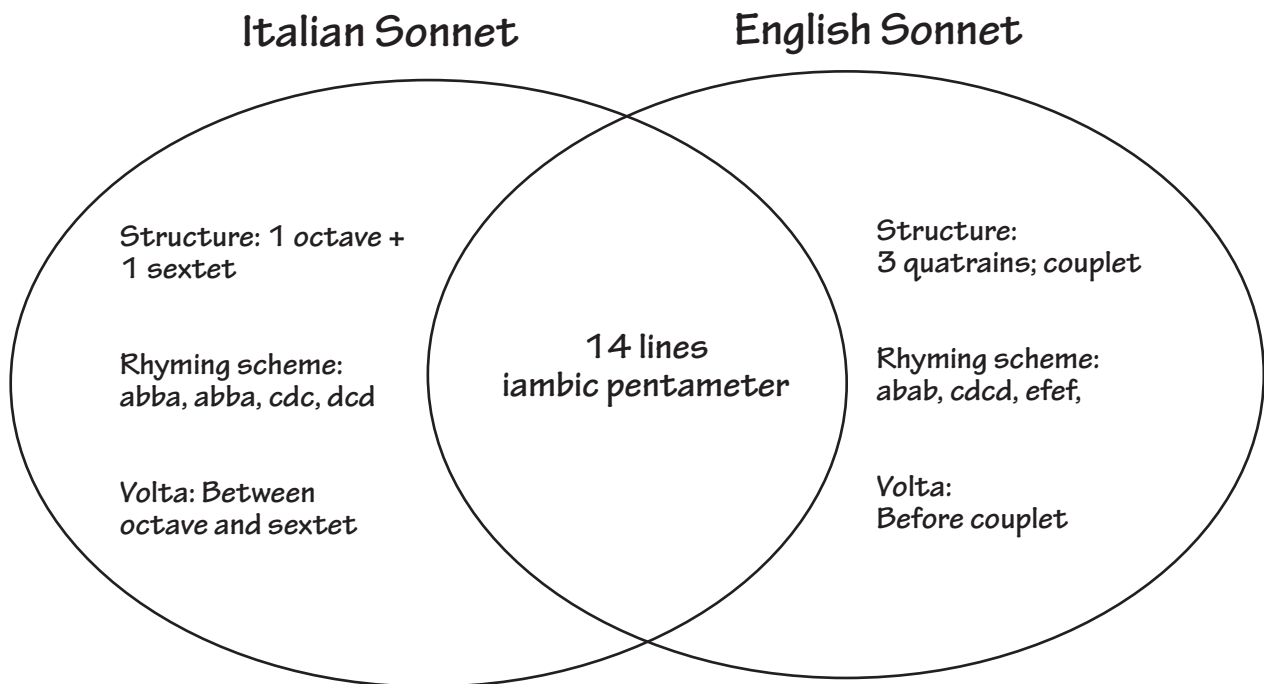
Write or draw a picture representing the topic in the centre of the page, with a coloured border or shape around it. Add the main ideas around the topic. To make these stand out, place a border or shape around each item, different to that of the topic and use another colour to differentiate these from the central topic. The main ideas are usually written clockwise around the central topic, keep enough space between them so your 'map' is not too cluttered. Connect the main ideas to the central topic with lines. Now add the major supporting details under each main idea, again using another colour. Write only key words that will serve as 'triggers' for you to recite in full sentences. The key word to use is usually a noun, people, places things as well as verbs, action words. Ninety percent of words written in a sentence are not important. Key words save time, but visual mapping clearly links all key information together. Your brain makes connections between key words, not sentences, therefore recall and understanding is increased. Be selective, include only as much detail necessary to help you remember important information. If you need to, add minor details using the same guidelines as for major details.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF CONCEPTUAL ORGANISERS:

1. MIND MAP



2. VENN DIAGRAMME: COMPARE SONNETS



How to study from visual mappings:

Visual mappings are powerful and work effectively as they are based on memory principles that help you to learn new information. The information in mappings is organised logically, shows relationships and helps you associate one idea with another. Concentration and interest increase as you work to present information creatively; as you recite, revise, receive feedback and visualise, the process of learning is enhanced.

1. Visualise and recite the topic in the centre of your paper
2. Visualise and recite the main ideas
3. Check your accuracy by looking at your mapping
4. Return to the first main idea. Without looking at your paper, recite the major and minor details associated with that main idea
5. Check your accuracy by looking at your mapping
6. Continue until you have recited all the main ideas, major details and minor details
7. Use reflect activities, such as, draw the skeleton of your mapping, then without referring to the mapping, fill in the words for the topic and main ideas. Or, try to redraw the mapping with as many major and minor details as possible without looking and without first giving yourself a skeleton. Repeat the process of visualising and reciting the entire mapping
8. Use ongoing revision



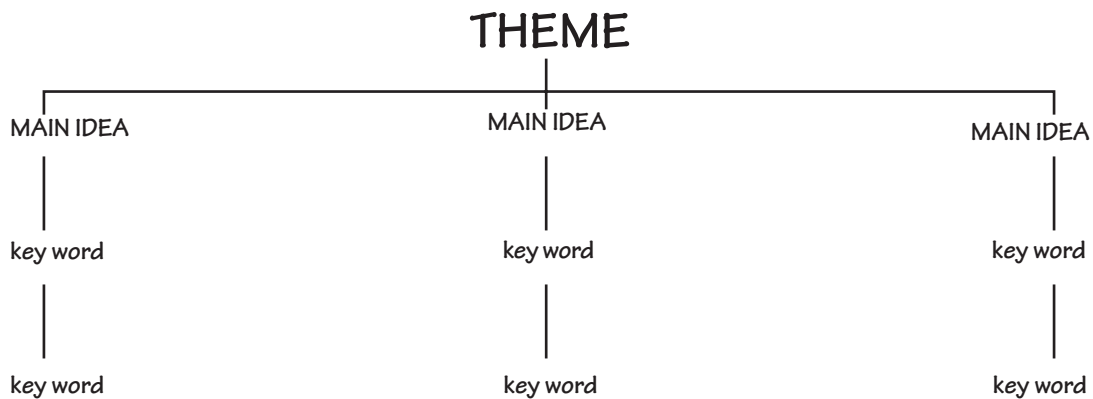
REMEMBER - WHEN VISUAL MAPPING

- Use only key words so that the map is not cluttered
- Write horizontally
- Use borders and shapes to help each level of information to stand out clearly
- Use colour coding if you so wish.

4.2.2 HIERARCHICAL:

This pattern includes a main concept and the ranks, or levels of sub-concepts under it.

BASIC STRUCTURE



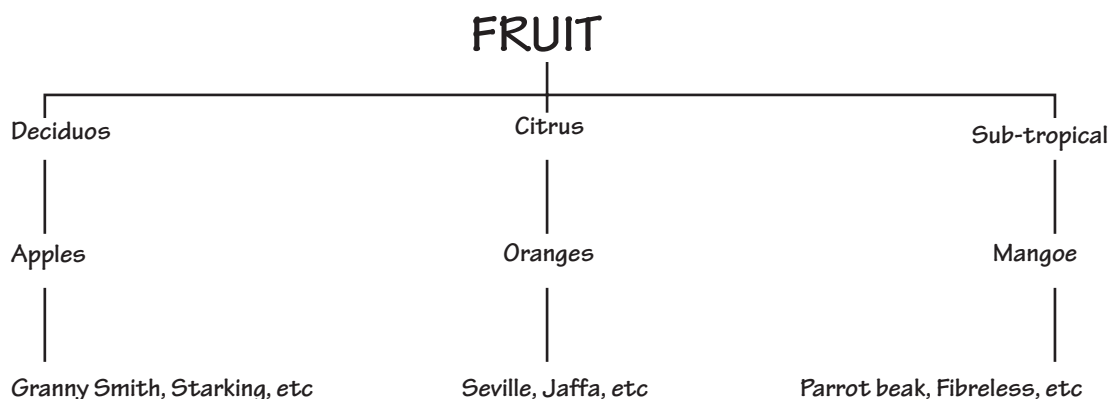
Hierarchies and how to create them

Hierarchies are a form of visual mapping in which information is arranged in levels of importance from top down. If visual mappings with lines extending in all directions is difficult for you, you may prefer the organised structure of hierarchies. The steps for creating hierarchies are similar to those of mappings, the same levels of information are used: main idea, major details, minor details.

1. Write level one information (the topic) on the top line of the hierarchy
2. Draw lines downwards from the topic to show level two information (the main ideas)
3. Under each main idea, branch downward again for level three information (major details)
4. Add level four information (minor details) under major details if needed

As with mappings, hierarchies need to be visualised, recited and revised to work effectively as study tools.

EXAMPLE OF HIERARCHICAL ORGANISER



4.2.3 SEQUENTIAL:

This pattern arranges events in a chronological order, e.g. time line. They are useful in organising events that have a specific beginning and end, cause/effect, chronology, process/product or problem/solution.

BASIC STRUCTURE



Drawing Time Lines:

A time line is a visual representation of a series of events in chronological order (time sequence), frequently used in history courses.

How to create time lines:

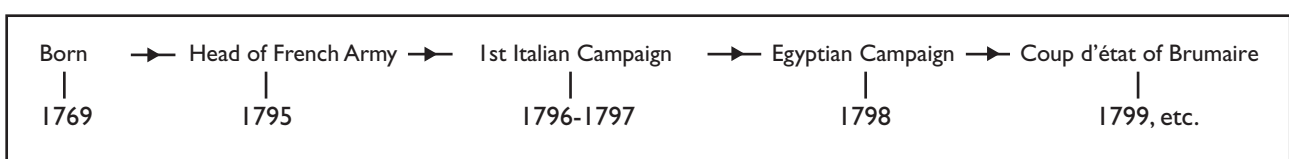
1. Time lines vary in length, so select appropriately sized paper
2. Draw a horizontal line and label it with dates
3. Write events above the dates
4. You can further emphasise the visual nature of the time line by drawing or pasting on pictures that represent these events

How to study from a time line:

1. Time lines give you constant visual input if they are taped or tacked to the wall where you study. The more you look at them and think about the different events, the stronger the image will be in your memory
2. Try covering the bottom half of the time line, recite dates. Cover up the top half of the time line, recite events
3. Make written or verbal summaries
4. Use ongoing review

EXAMPLE OF A TIMELINE

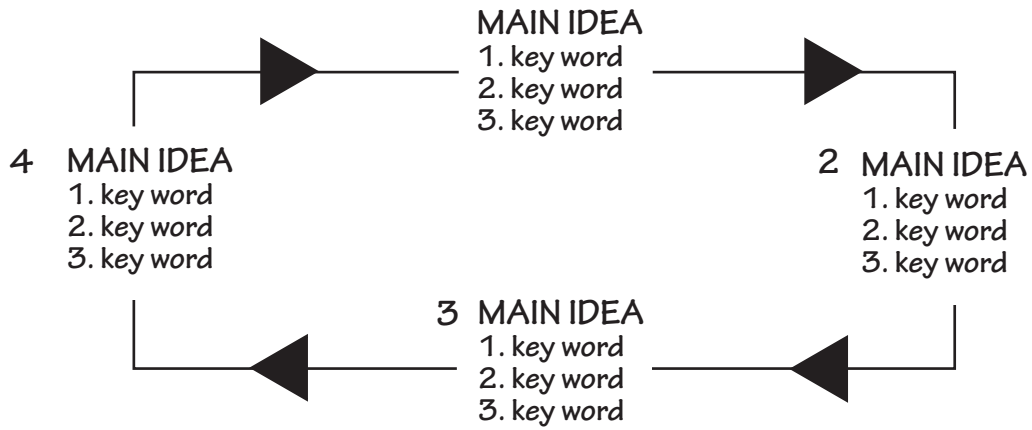
Napoleon Bonaparte



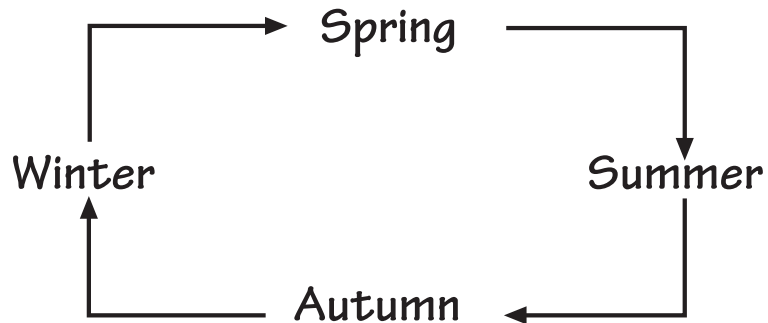
4.2.4 CYCLICAL:

This pattern includes a series of events within a process in a circular formation. In a cyclical pattern there is no beginning and no end, just a continuous sequence of events. This type of organiser depicts information in a series, succession or cycle.

BASIC STRUCTURE



EXAMPLE OF CYCLICAL ORGANISER



4.3 CREATING MNEMONICS:

Mnemonics are tricks that help trigger associations in your mind.

LEARNING TO USE MNEMONICS CAN:

- help you remember information that is otherwise difficult to remember
- provide you with extra clues to help trigger your memory to recall information
- add an element of interest to studying

Of the many types of mnemonics available, five are listed here that can be used effectively with academic material:

Acronyms - words made from the initial letters of key words

Acrostics - sentences made from the initial letters of key words

Rhythm, rhymes and jingles, sayings for auditory learners

Association - two ideas linked together

Cartoons/pictures - pictures for visual learners

• **ACRONYMS:**

An Acronym is a word or a group of words made by taking the first letter of a key word in a list of items you wish to remember. The following are steps used to make an acronym:

- Make a list of all the items you wish to remember, e.g. a shopping list:

Bananas

Grapefruit

Sugar

Eggs

- Write the first letter of each key word, for your shopping list it would be **B, G, S, E**
- Re-arrange the letters until you can form a word or a group of words, in this case, **BEGS**
- Practice memorising the mnemonic, then practice translating it accurately by reciting what each letter represents

The following are examples of how letters of key words were re-arranged to form an acronym:

- a child with gastric flu should be given: **b**ananas, **r**ice, **a**pplesauce and **t**oast. The acronym is **BRAT**
- Sudden muscle injuries treatment should be: to **c**ompress, use **i**ce, **e**levate and **r**est. The acronym is **RICE**
- A quartet consists of four voices: **a**lto, **s**oprano, **t**enor and **b**ass. The acronym is **STAB**

Remember to select only one key word for each item, otherwise you may be confused into thinking each letter represents a different item e.g. ice, NOT use ice.

- **ACROSTICS:**

Acrostics are sentences made from the initial letters of key words.

- Make a list of items you need to remember e.g. you need to remember the order of operations in a maths problem:
parentheses
exponents
multiplication
division
addition
subtraction
- If there is more than one word per item, underline only one key word that will help you remember the item
- Write the first letter of each key word, leaving a space after each letter:
P ... E... M... D... A... S

Make a sentence using the letters in order. It is easier to remember if it is silly or significant to you. An acrostic for the order of mathematical operations could be:

Please **e**xcuse **m**y **d**ear **A**unt **S**ally

- Memorise the sentence, then practice translating the mnemonic by reciting what each word represents.

- **RHYTHMS, RHYMES AND JINGLES:**

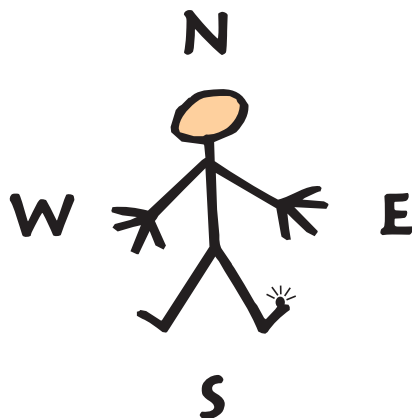
These are created by listening for words that rhyme, such as the spelling rule 'i before e except after c' and 'Who invented dynamite?' *Alfred Nobel had quite a fright when he discovered dynamite*, or 'Which way should you open a jar or tighten a bolt?' *Righty tighty ... lefty loosy*.

- **ASSOCIATION:**

An item can often be remembered when it is associated to something that is familiar or has a similar characteristic.

- **CARTOONS AND PICTURES:**

These can add visual clues to help you remember. Key words and details can be written next to or within the picture. e.g. Is the Tropic of Capricorn north or south of the equator? When you have **corns** on your feet, are they on the northern or southern half of your body?



5. REVISION: THE SQ3R FORMULA:

The essence of revision is re-looking at something regularly to fix it on pegs in your mind. If you use skills such as visual mapping, grouping, categorising and labelling, key wording or any other techniques, revision becomes quick and easy.

When you come to studying in depth, e.g. just before an exam, use the **SQ3R** formula = study the text, query it, read it again, recite the main points and review it to check yourself.

For regular daily, weekly or monthly revision, use the **5S** formula =
scan the whole text (chapter, notes) briefly, try to map or diagram an overview
skim read it, highlighting important parts as you go, or noting page numbers on your map
select by using these prompts what you really need to study
slurp these bits e.g. study, recite aloud, review for accuracy
summarise, using your map and making notes from your notes

STEP 3: TAKING TESTS/EXAMS WITH LESS STRESS

Test anxiety can be reduced and your performance increased by preparing yourself for the exam or test emotionally, physically and mentally.

To assist with your **emotional** preparation, request support from your family and friends.

Use affirmations, self-talk and visualisations: picture yourself being successful and showing what you have learned. Tell yourself 'I have studied, I am ready, I have revised, I have used enough time and effort to review well'.

Use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing to calm yourself before the test.

Be **physically** ready for the demands of a test by getting a good night's sleep, allowing enough time for a healthy breakfast, check that you have the necessary supplies such as pencils, pens, rulers, calculator and get to school well ahead of time to avoid last minute panic.

Your **mental** preparation is of the utmost importance. In addition to your basic study skills, here are a few other suggestions for preparing for a test or exam:

- Organise your materials for studying, gather important handouts, homework assignments, notes, old tests, flash cards or other study tools you have created.
- Make a special study schedule for test/exam preparation, to reflect the demands for study time.
- Make a special set of notes that contain summaries or information that you need to know better: focus most of your study time on these special notes.
- Use study methods that give ample feedback; ask someone to quiz you so you can identify areas that need more review.
- Anticipate test/exam questions, practice answering these questions. Find out as much as you can about the test/exam e.g. what kinds of questions are these (essays, multiple choice, etc.)?

Effective Test/exam-taking techniques

- Get a good start:
- Arrive early and ready to begin
- Jot down any important information you need to remember
- Listen carefully to all the instructions
- Survey the test before you begin
- Budget your time

Now go back and **read** directions and each question carefully. **Underline** key words/terms in directions and questions. **Mouth** the questions or whisper them quietly to yourself. **Focus** on one question at a time. Ignore the other students. Do not rush out of the room as soon as you have finished. Read through your answers carefully, you may find you have information to add; don't change answers in a panic but only if you can justify the change. If you run out of time, rather jot down a few points which are worth a few marks than leave a blank space that can only score zero.

Most important!! Analysing your test when it is returned to you to adjust your study techniques and **learn** from your tests.

NB:

1. Test/exam anxiety, a state of excessive stress, results from being under-prepared.
2. Anxiety reduces your ability to concentrate, retrieve information and perform well.
3. There are strategies, (see above) you can use to prepare emotionally, physically and mentally for exams/tests.
4. Get a good start, which includes listening to directions and surveying the exam/ test.
5. As you work through the exam/test, follow the four steps for answering questions:
 - Answer immediately the questions you definitely know, then
 - Answer those you did not know right away,
 - For the questions you're not sure of, use other parts of the exam/test to help locate the correct answers, and
 - Use educated guessing as your last resort for questions you really are not sure of.

CONCLUSION

You will need to reflect on what you have read in this guide and read through it a few times. Begin with your Time Management Plan for the term, organise the space in which you intend to study. You may need to experiment with several of the suggested study methods until you find one or combinations of more than one that suits you and the subjects you are learning.

Try to stay with your plan, fine tuning where necessary. When you are organised and focussed on your goals, you will be more in control; your confidence in your abilities and your improved results will be rewards well worth the effort.

Good luck!

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