

Mnemonics: Chunking Techniques

Mnemonics – a single word that means any type of structured memory strategy

Chunking is the process of grouping or reorganizing ideas into clusters or categories so that many items can be remembered through fewer group labels.

- based on STM limits: groups of 7 or fewer items
- find similarities of these items; group them and label each group
- limit number of groups to 7 or fewer, or begin to group the groups

What to chunk:

- ✓ Items given to you in series (numbers, groceries, labels)
- ✓ Steps of a procedure that are reduced to single words or short phrases →
- ✓ Series of topics or activities you want to remember
 - Introduction, overview, concept, examples, conclusion
- ✓ Key Concept 1 items – identified from your class notes (or a mind map)
 - Key words of an outline
 - Labels of a diagram →

Ways to chunk:

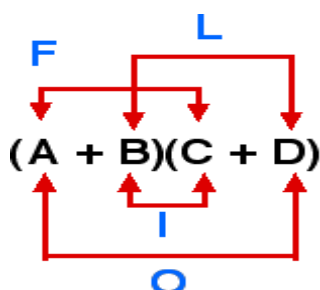
1. Don't use items you already know
2. Sometimes, simply having fewer items to remember works by itself
3. Watch for whether the **order of the items** is important
4. Notice items or groups that may have personal relevance to you
5. Begin to look for patterns: top to bottom, alphabetical, time sequence, etc
6. **Consolidate** – use #3 and #4 to get fewer items to remember

First Letter Mnemonics:

Acronyms: Use the first letter of each word to make a single word

→ More common when the order of the items is not important:

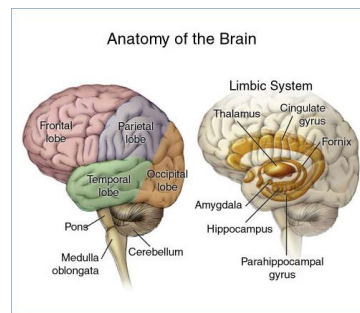
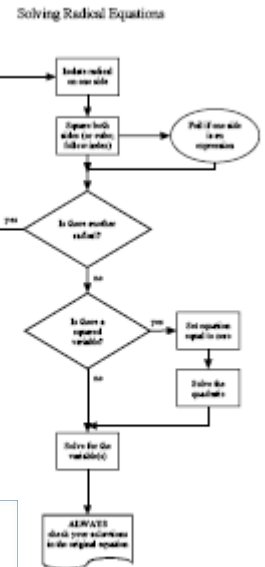
- ✓ FANBOYS – Coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
- ✓ HOMES – The Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior



- ✓ ROY G. BIV – The color spectrum (in order): red, orange, yellow, green, blue indigo, violet

- ✓ FOIL – Order of operations when multiplying expressions in math

Try: The four directions: *North, South, East, West*



Acrostics: Use the first letter of each item to make a word of a phrase or sentence

→ *More common when the order is important, but also useful when order is not important:*

- ✓ Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally - Order of operations in math (in order) parentheses, exponents, multiply/divide, add/subtract
- ✓ Sam's Horse Must Eat Oats – The Great Lakes in order of size: Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie, Ontario

→ for spelling: (or even for just the part of the word that is troublesome)

- ✓ A Rat In The House Might Eat The Ice Cream – spells *arithmetic*
- ✓ Boys Eat Apples Under Trees In Fall Until Late – spells *beautiful*

*** These are most effective when your sentence relates to what you are trying to remember!

Idea to get started: Make 3rd word an action, then the 2nd a thing doing the action, then the 1st a word that describes the thing. Then finish the sentence with the others.

Try: The composition of crystal rocks (decreasing order)
Oxygen, silicon, aluminum, sodium, and calcium



Rhymes/Songs/Rhythm/Drama:

Alphabet song, words done to a rap or in rhythm, poems like “30 days hath...”

Medical: If the face is red, raise the head; if the face is pale, raise the tail.

King Henry VIII’s 6 wives’ endings:

Divorced, beheaded, died,
Divorced, beheaded, survived



→ Use kids song melodies and insert your material as the lyrics

→ Pretend you’re giving a presentation, teaching the class, explaining to a friend.

→ Add sound, movement, visuals, color, nonsense!