

The Learning Code



**Memory Improvement
for
Exams**

RICHARD H. BOWDLER

The Learning Code
Published in 2012

ISBN 978-1-4716-6725-1
Copyright © 2012 Richard Bowdler. All rights reserved
Graphics: Daniel James

The right of Richard Bowdler to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright holder except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Applications for the copyright holder's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the author.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book. It is not intended to provide personalised psychological, therapeutic, legal, financial, or investment advice. The author and the publisher specifically disclaim any liability, loss or risk which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any contents of this work.

To my parents

THE LEARNING CODE

Study Less, Remember More

Memory Improvement for Exams

STREAMLINED EDITION

Contents

Introduction	6
1. Pay Attention.....	14
2. Association.....	19
3. Imagination.....	25
4. Method of Loci Part I	29
5. Method of Loci Part II	38
6. Method of Loci Part III	46
7. Review	51
8. Organise Yourself.....	60
Acknowledgments	67

<http://www.citymemory.co.uk/>

www.citymemory.co.uk

Introduction

The introduction will:

- Tell you how my learning system developed
- Give you an overview of the 6 simple steps involved
- Show that this system works for you

You are about to learn **how to learn** as efficiently and successfully as possible. I will show you how to implement the most effective learning techniques on the planet. Quite simply, study less, remember more and have fun. This book is your guide. It gives you what you need to produce your best results.

How I developed my system

My experience of developing the memory techniques in this book goes back to my final two years at school. I came across a technique known as 'Method of Loci', (that is, mentally storing knowledge in locations), but did not have all of the principles in place, so although it was effective, my application of the technique was lacking clarity. I persevered with the technique throughout university and used it to good effect for my Chemistry Finals, this time incorporating the well-known system of Mind-maps. I further refined the techniques of learning in my early adult life, teaching myself the syllabus of an MBA. Later I trained to be a stockbroker, registered by the FSA, again using the learning techniques which I was fine-tuning all the time.

I'd like to confess something to you here:

The world of finance was completely unknown to me when I started my stockbroker training and I found the contents of the textbooks rather alien at first. However, as I had refined and refined my Learning Code and knew that it worked, I was able to take on board all the information that I needed, not only to pass the

exams but to retain and summon up all that information in my working life.

The skills you will learn in this book will improve both the speed and quantity of your learning beyond recognition. Please don't think that you can slide passively through this book and come out with tools that will do the work for you. For the system to work, you must engage with the text and "do" the book, rather than simply read it.

There is a learning curve, as with any new skill. Initially your learning process may be slower, but with diligent application, even for as little 20 minutes a day, your learning process will be far faster within the space of a few weeks without any further guidance from this book or from me.

For these techniques to take effect, give them a fair shot:

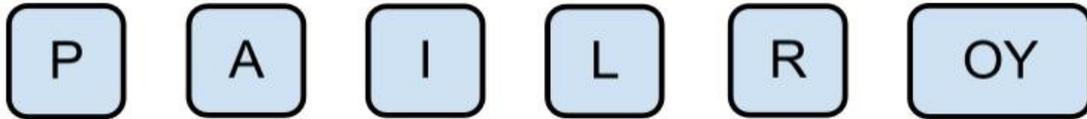
Resolve to apply this system for 30 days.

After that period of time you will see a marked improvement in the rate at which you can absorb new information and the ease with which you can do so. It is merely a question of learning a new system and then developing the habit of applying it to all you attempt to learn.

My system is called

THE PAILROY SYSTEM™

THE PAILROY SYSTEM™



Pay attention

Association

Imagination

Loci (Location)

Review

Organise Yourself

The essence of this system is to harness our innate creativity as well as our incredible capacity for spatial recall. Thus you will use familiar locations, built into a route, as a mental filing cabinet for storing all the information which you have to learn. The information is much easier to recall if we have transformed it in our minds and woven it into a fantastical story with the help of vivid imagery. The result is that, on summoning up a particular location the imagery is simple to bring to mind. This then triggers the information that you wish to recall.

All of this starts with our ability to pay attention properly, thus taking on board the information in the first place.

In order to fix the information in our locations, we must review it methodically, and in order to achieve all of the above we must get ourselves organised. Once organised, it is easy to stay organised.

The acronym, PAILROY, provides you with the template that you can apply to any course of learning in order to improve your speed and quantity of retention and recall. My system can be applied to any subject, by anyone because the techniques are simple to pick up and they work. Over a period of seven years I have successfully taught groups as diverse as members of the British military, private investigators, hedge fund advisors, lawyers, psychologists, doctors, medical students, fund managers, actors, commercial pilots, executive MBA students and A-level students. My students' ages have ranged from as young as 5 to as old as 95 years old!

So whatever your particular course of study may be, this system will work for you. If you are ready, I will take you step-by-step through the PAILROY system.

Welcome to a new way of learning.

First of all, let's try a little warm-up exercise. While it is perhaps rather crude in places, the point is that it is memorable:

When you see this picture, set a timer and take the recommended amount of time on the exercise.

(Available at <http://www.online-stopwatch.com>)



So set yourself 1 minute. I want you to take that time to imagine the following things. Start the timer now:

1. You have Mark Zuckerberg's head.
2. You have E.T.'s neck
3. You have a calculator on the palm of your left hand
4. Your organs have been replaced by a beehive

5. This is causing a large quantity of anal honey to leak out on your seat.
6. Flying ants are flying out of the zip on your trousers
7. Your right thigh has been cut open for an operation
8. Your knees have the red 'The Economist' logo tattooed onto them
9. One of your lower legs is made of a chess piece and the other is made of a Strat (the famous fender guitar).

Stop the clock here!

Now see if you can remember them.

Perhaps you remembered where the images were, but you forgot a couple of the images in the middle. If so, it could be that you're not used to using your imagination like this. Imagination is like a muscle, it gets stronger with practice.

Now I want you to try that again, but this time I'm going to ask you a question about each image so that you see the difference between merely thinking about something and *really* imagining it. Imagining something is like rendering it in 3D in your mind, so you can pick it up and play with it.



Start the clock.

1. How do you feel about seeing Mark's face when you look in the mirror? Are you uglier or better looking for the change?
2. What does E.T.'s neck feel like? Feel your neck and imagine the strange alien texture. Let your hands respond to what your brain is imagining your neck feels like.
3. Tap $1+2+3=$ into your calculator on your left hand and see what it says.

4. Be silent and hear the noise coming from the beehive. Can you be sure the vibration is coming from inside you and not from anything else?
5. Try to quantify the amount of anal honey: is it a tiny quantity or quite a lot?
6. Swish some of the flying ants away. Do your zip up.
7. Operate on your right thigh then sew it up. What colour is the thread?
8. Put each of the 'The Economist' logos a different way up. Read each of them letter by letter.
9. Strum the strings of the Strat. What chess piece is the other leg?

Stop the clock here!

Now try again to recall those nine things and it should be much easier. That is because the second time you were really 'living' your imagination.

Children do it all the time. They can't help but do it. As adults however, we tend to have had our creativity educated out of us.

This book gives you back the power of your imagination. You're here to learn what you need to pass your professional exams and your imagination is what's going to get you there.

Look at the following table and you'll see what I mean.

Association (Hard to remember)	Imagination (Easy to remember)	Location
Marketing	Mark Zuckerberg	Head
EThics	E.T.	Neck
Accounting	Calculator	Hands
Organisational Behavior	Organs-beehive	Stomach
Quantitative Analysis	Anal-quantity	Bottom
Finance	Flying Ants	Privates
Operations	Operations	Thighs
Economics	Economist	Knees
Strategy	Chess & Strat	Lower legs

The table shows you how to use easy-to-remember images to remember words, or concepts (in this case, the 9 chapter headings of a generic MBA course).

Revisit the parts of your body once more, translating the images into the chapter that they are associated with as you go - (Mark = marketing, ET = ethics etc.). Stop reading and do that now.



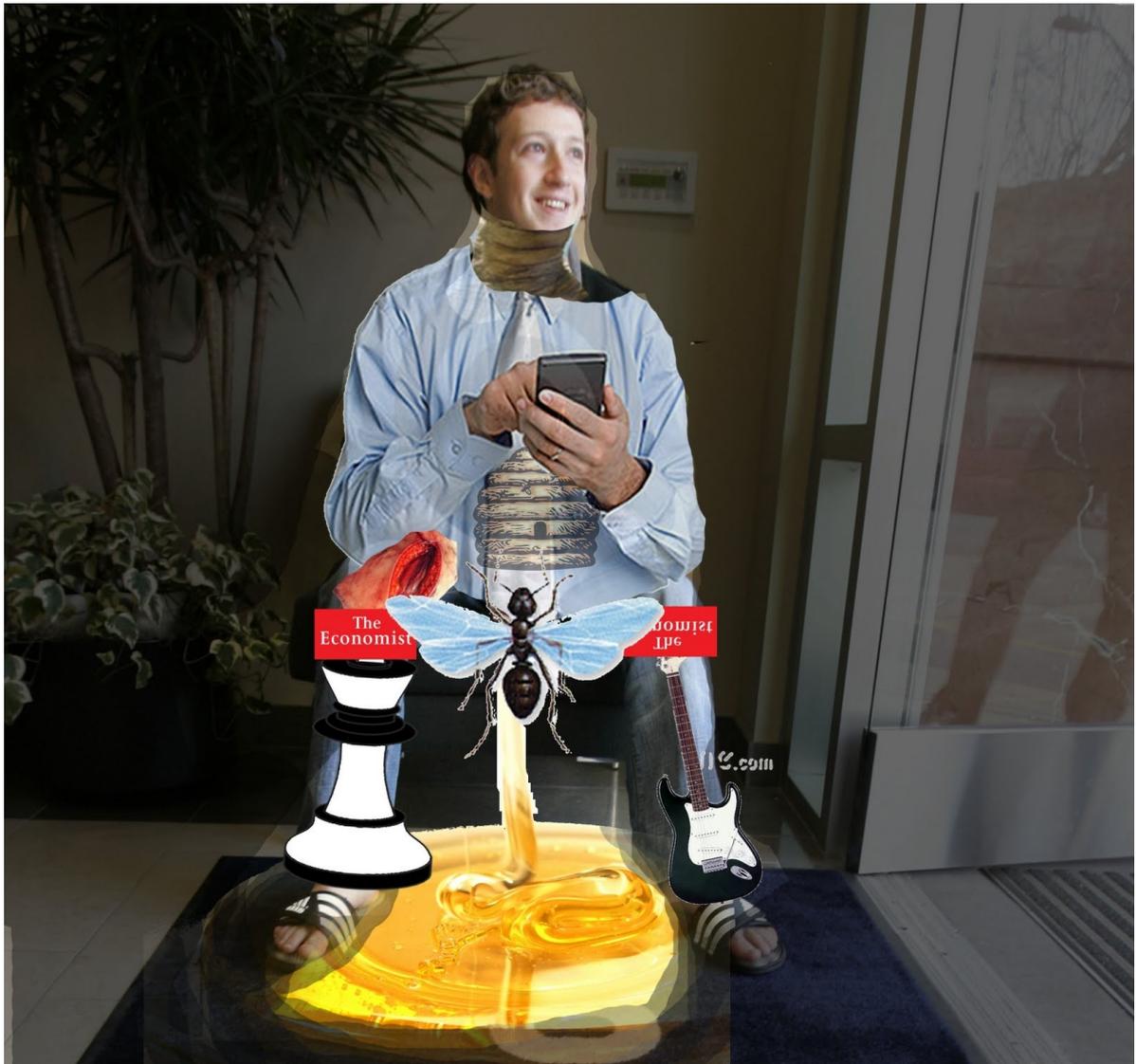
You should find that they will come back to you with ease.

Why does this work?

The **Locations** are easy to remember because they are 3-dimensional and exist in the real world. They also follow a coherent order and each has its own number.

The **Images** “stick” in your mind because they are unusual, funny, disturbing, disgusting, colourful, dynamic and most importantly, personal. i.e. They evoke a heightened emotional sensation when you imagine them.

Finally, the **Associations** are easy to remember because you already have 50% of the actual information that you’re looking for. You just have to fill in the final bit. It’s easy to get from ‘Mark’ to ‘Marketing’ or ‘Strat’ to ‘Strategy’. Even ‘Quantity of Anal honey’ to ‘Quantitative Analysis’ is easy because it is so distinct.

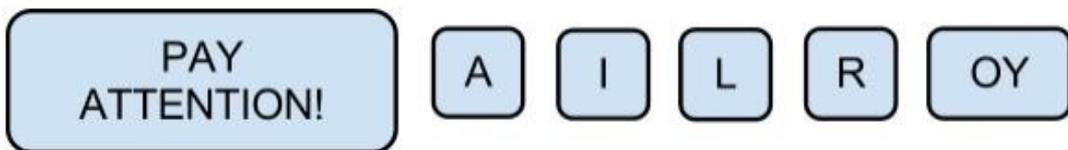


Hopefully you found that exercise easy. Imagine going into an exam with all your notes easily accessible in vivid picture form. Recalling any information you need really is as simple as doing that exercise.

The rest of this book is going to show you how to apply that to your whole syllabus and more.

Now let's go deeper into the PAILROY system...

Pay Attention



In this chapter you will:

- Practise paying attention!
- Learn tips for improving concentration.

How can you learn to pay attention?

There are two clear distinctions here and I will define them as:

1. Attention - Paying attention to your immediate environment, (important for things such as remembering people's names).
2. Concentration - Concentrating on a specific body of knowledge, so that you can retain information you are learning and stay focused on it for periods of time.

Attention

Many of my students say that they have a bad memory, especially for remembering people's names. This is almost never the case. It is very often that they are not paying attention in the first place. If this applies to you then from now on, forbid yourself to think this way. Allowing yourself to have a poor memory is tantamount to excusing yourself, giving yourself permission never to change. Instead, develop a positive attitude. You see, it all comes down to what you believe about yourself. Thankfully you can choose your beliefs and influence them through what you say

to yourself. Improving both attention and memory is a matter of habit and because you are reading this book you are well on the way to acquiring that habit. Tell yourself that you are going to improve, starting right now. Whenever you are about to meet someone, tell yourself that you are going to pay attention to their name, then go ahead and pay attention! Repeat their name back to them to confirm that you have the correct pronunciation and even spelling. Then repeat their name to yourself a couple of times within the first minute of being introduced.

To recap: tell yourself that you are improving your ability to remember people's names and that you are actively going to practise the new habits daily.

Exercise:

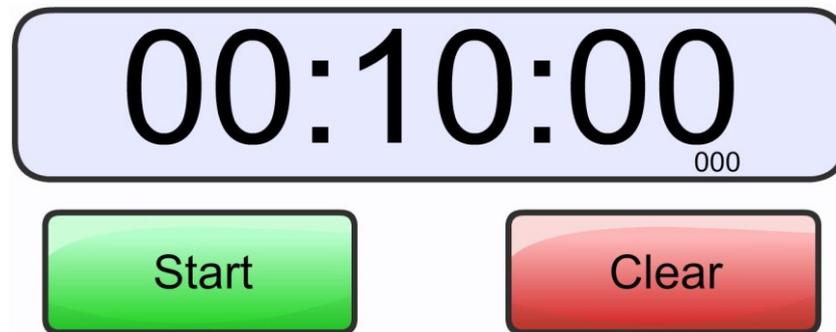
The next time you leave your office, house or area of study, make of point of meeting 5 new people and asking them their name. Pay attention to their name and then make an effort to recall their names when you resume reading this book.

Concentration

Here are a couple of useful practices to get you to focus on your learning material. Concentration happens through the creation of clear, distinct goals. Decide exactly what you want to achieve from your learning. It could be simply to pass your exams, or it could be to achieve a specific grade or percentage. Whatever it is, decide exactly what you want and then write down that outcome. Next set a deadline. You may have exam dates already booked, or it may be up to you to decide when to book them. Either way, take note of when you are going to have achieved your desired learning outcome.



Next, write a list of the actions that you need to take in order to achieve that. This will most likely be a list of your chapters/topics, and your actions will be learning and testing.



Organise the list according to priority. Then before you sit down to study, know in your mind what you want to achieve over the next 30 minutes. This single point will dramatically improve your effectiveness. (There is more about how to structure your revision in chapter 8).

Here are a couple of additional exercises you can try to improve concentration.

Exercise:

When it comes to listening in class, or studying for exams, if your attention is *particularly* bad, then try to pay attention for a short period of time initially. Set yourself a target of 5 minutes to focus on one particular task of learning or paying attention. Do this by setting a timer. When you are on task, do one thing and one thing only. No checking email, Facebook, mobile phone etc...

00:05:00
000

Start

Clear

Once you have managed to make it through half an hour in successful chunks of 5 minutes, increase the time period for concentration to 10 minutes and so on.

Continue this until you are able to reach 30 minutes at a time. Much longer than this and it is easy for your concentration to wane, after which your efforts are distinctly less fruitful.

Exercise:

Another intriguing way of increasing concentration is through meditation. This is a very simple exercise and takes only 5 minutes. Have a go now before reading any further.

00:05:00
000

Start

Clear

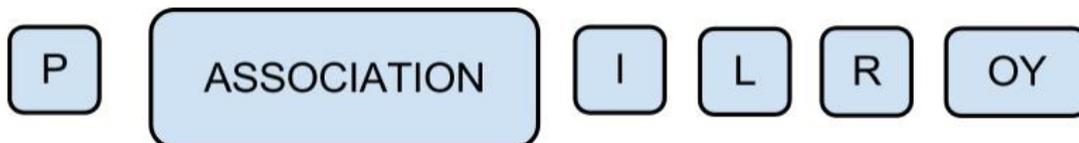
Pick an object in your environment to concentrate on. It could be a chair, a pen, a glass or you could use a candle. Take a good look at that object. Next set a timer for 5 minutes and then close your eyes, holding an image of that object firmly in your mind. Notice how your mind wanders. Keep bringing it back to the image. As you start to create stories and go off into daydreams, just bring your attention back to the image. Keep this up for 5 whole minutes.

Checklist 1. Pay attention

Clear your mind, set targets, get rid of distractions and engage with your material.

- I am able to concentrate for (5, 10, 20, 30) minutes.
- I am going to clear my mind of my background distractions each day before I work
- I am going to work on one clearly defined thing at a time
- I am going to set specific time periods for my work
- I am going to recognise when something is distracting me from the work I want to do
- I am going to turn my phone off when I work
- I am going to leave my phone outside the room while I work
- I am going to work without the Television or radio on
- I am going to close my internet browser while I am doing work that doesn't require browsing

Association



In this chapter you will:

- Use association to your advantage to learn anything you want.
- Form vivid associations to trigger information you have learnt.

To continue, using a Facebook example:

To prevent you from incorrectly recalling Mark Zuckerberg's surname as Zuckerman, you could simply repeat the surname several times. However, to really flavour your association, you could imagine the Facebook founder eating a burger, with his head made out of iceberg lettuce, all while sitting atop an iceberg with a huge Facebook logo on it.

Our minds make sense of the world by categorising everything we experience by comparing and contrasting, raking through our memory banks to see if there is a close match. As we go about our daily life, it is as though our unconscious mind is playing a continuous game of snap with the world around us, seeing if it can neatly categorise everything in our conscious

awareness. The basis of our knowledge banks for playing this game of snap is our memory of experiences and the world at large.

When you see a car and the word car springs to your mind, the reason is that you have created this association a number of times before. But as well as just thinking of the word car, your brain will also make several other natural associations at the same time. This is how our brains work, as there is a network of neurons that link to one another. By taking advantage of these natural associations you can apply images to information that you are trying to remember.

For example, when I see the sentence from a finance textbook,

“The Labour Party gained power in 1997 and the late 90’s saw a radical reform of the financial services system with the creation of the Financial Services Authority”

I automatically recall a couple of images: One of Tony Blair coming to power and another image of my FSA textbooks.

This same process of recall is happening right inside your mind even as you read these very words. Making associations is the way we learn and retain information. It is crucial to the success of memory techniques. Ultimately you are going to be devising your own associations to apply to the information which you have to learn. In effect, you are going to create your own visual shorthand.

Try the following exercise.

Carry out the exercise as quickly as possible so that you get into the habit of working quickly and effectively. If you take a long time, then you will be giving your conscious brain too much control of the reins. With increased speed, to the point where you can no longer think about your associations, you free up your mind to be open to its unlimited creative potential.

Allow yourself 2 minutes to complete this exercise.

Set a timer.

Take a piece of A4 paper and write the word **bat** in the middle of it.

The point of this exercise is to think of as many associations as you can in the time allowed.

There will be primary associations as well as secondary associations. For example, you may think of the word **batman** – which would be a primary association. This may then make you think of **The Joker**, which is a secondary association, as you would not have thought of it automatically from seeing the word **bat**.

You should also set yourself a target of, say, 20 different associations, with the idea being that you work as quickly as possible and do not spend any time wondering what to write. Simply put pen to paper and keep writing until the 2 minutes are up.

Initially, I appreciate that you may find this difficult, but with a little practice, you will become far better and more confident at this process.

Do not fear this exercise. It is an exercise in letting go and using your imagination. There are many ways that you could think, so just have a go.

Stop reading and do the exercise now.

Start the clock.



Count how many you got. Quantity really is the key here.

When you have finished (**do** have a go first otherwise the book won't work) you can try another word if you want. Choose something simple and give yourself only 1 minute this time, yet still try to come up with as many associations as before.

Other words you could try using are:
mouse, speaker, moon, carrot, precision.

What are false associations? – Translation of symbols back into information to give you to the wrong information!

Symbols are used as a central tool for remembering information – that is, turning words into images that are incredibly bold and vivid. These symbols form the language of your own visual shorthand.

A problem that people sometimes face is creating a symbol that only translates in one direction. Let me give you an example:

Trying to remember the name of a legal case “Donoughue and Stevenson”, you may associate *Donoughue* with Hugh Laurie and *Stevenson* with Stephen Fry (both very memorable people). However, when you come to translating those characters back into the information that you want, it could be easy to get stuck with those images and not remember where they came from. In other words, you remember Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry and you know that they refer to the names involved in a legal case, but can't make that extra leap to remember Hugh came from Donoughue.

Instead, imagine Hugh Laurie, eating a doughnut, (he's “doughnut-Hugh”) and he's exclaiming “I dunno who you think you are!” to Stephen Fry's son who is now hiding in a Stephenson screen (those white boxes used to measure various climactic features). This scene is now far more memorable and quite ridiculous. It is also more effective at getting you back to the original information.

It will become quite clear to you whether or not your imagery is easy to decode when you come to the review stage. A useful question to ask yourself if you are creating a lot of images that leave you rather stuck is:

“When I think of (my image), do I naturally think of (the information I want to remember)?”

Checklist 2. Association

- I am going to use the power of association to memorise information
- I recognise when something has few associations for me
- When I think of my images, they easily translate back into the information that I wish to recall

3

Imagination



In this chapter you will:

- See why imagination is so important to the process of memory.
- Bring your imagination to life.

“Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.”

Albert Einstein

Using your imagination to the full to create vivid images and scenes is vital to the process of memorising information. The things which stick in our minds are, typically, extreme in some way, whether in a positive or a negative sense: very amusing, very startling, very unusual, scary, happy, loud, colourful, big, small. By using extremes you can turn dry information into something that is attention-grabbing, fun and vivid. Colourful images are more memorable than black and white, so add vivid colours to the scenes that you create in your mind. In addition, colour coding is a very useful way of categorising information. You must remember that your imagination is infinite – absolutely anything can be

imagined, so let your mind wander freely. The more striking your imagination, the more intriguing the scenes you create and the richer their emotional content, the more likely it is that you are going to remember what you have created.

Let's take an example, say a lemon, and apply a checklist to it

MENS CHOPS

Movement
Exaggeration
Number
Symbolism

Colour
Humour
Order
Positive/negative imagery
'Sexiness'

With the image of a lemon in your mind, imagine what it tastes like as you bite into it. And think of that distinctive smell as well as the feeling as your teeth pierce the skin. Think of the lemon coming alive and wriggling around in your hand, and now it becomes a ridiculous cartoon lemon, if there is such a thing. Think of it as the number 1 lemon in your life. But there may be 5 others sitting on your desk in front of you all waiting to be bitten. Really brighten the colour of the lemon, or change the colour so that it is bright blue instead. Imagine now that the lemon grows in size to fill the entire room, squashing you up against the wall.

All I have done here is take a simple example of a lemon and run through the checklist, playing around with that single image.

Obviously, you do not have to run through the entire checklist for every image that you create, but if you are struggling to make something memorable then it is useful. In effect, all you are doing is training your mind to use a creativity tool.

The process is similar to training a muscle - so treat your imagination as a muscle and with time, you will no longer need

consciously to refer to the list, but will automatically call upon it when required.

A note about learning styles

Styles of learning vary from person to person. Around 80% of the population are visual learners, 15% auditory and the remaining 5% kinaesthetic learners (i.e. using emotion, touch and spatial awareness). We all think and learn using a combination of all three styles, however; it's just that most of us have a marked preference for one style.

The techniques outlined in this book accommodate all types of learning styles and, in fact, fuse different learning modes by using all of the senses to store information, rather than just the one.

I highly recommend that you add sound and sensation to the images you create. Use rhymes, rhythms, mnemonics and songs to add richness and texture and bring your learning alive for you. Involve several of your senses when creating any "image". This really brings things to life and you are more likely to remember them.

Checklist 3. Imagination

- I am in awe of my own imagination
- I am going to enjoy using my imagination
- I recognise that using my imagination is actually quite simple
- I have confidence in my imagination
- I can use my imagination to make boring things more interesting
- I recognise the difference between reading words and actually visualising what the words are saying

Method of Loci Part I



In this chapter you will:

- Create your first memory route
- Complete your first guided memory storing exercise
- Make a written list of your locations and the information which is stored there

Your real-world 3D environment is very easy to remember. Here is a thought exercise. In a minute I want you to close your eyes and picture your bedroom.

When you enter through the door, can you see where the bed is? And the windows? Where is the wardrobe? And the chest of drawers? Mirror? Desk? Bookshelf? Bed-side table?

In your mind, move around your room in a specific direction. (It does not matter if it is clockwise or anticlockwise, pick one direction and stick to it. This is so that it becomes habitual and you will always know where you are heading!)

Look at 10 different and distinct locations.

Each location must be different and distinct, otherwise, when you come to storing information there, it will be harder to remember what items are where. Stop reading here and do the exercise.



You should have found it simple to picture your room and many of the items in it.

The following is a list of locations within a room that are going to be used as “hooks” to store images on. This is for my bedroom, but obviously you must use your own. e.g.

1. door
2. wardrobe
3. window
4. bed
5. bed-side table
6. desk
7. lamp
8. mirror
9. wall-hanging
10. rug

This is the foundation of your first memory route - your first template for storing knowledge. Make a note of it for future reference.

Test yourself to see that you know the route.

Self-testing is essential. So test yourself immediately. First, work through it in your mind in a forwards direction. Then try and work through in reverse.

When you are confident that you know the order by heart, test yourself randomly. Ask yourself "what is the 3rd location?" and "what is the 9th location?" and so on, again and again, until you are sure that you are sure.

The process of route creation and testing should take no more than 5 minutes. Stop reading here and test yourself thoroughly.



It is useful to anchor every 5th location.

As you are creating your route, make every fifth point stand out in your mind, so make it slightly larger and brighter - even imagine going round it with a bold pen to really bring it to your attention. In doing this, you are creating an anchor point that will serve as a landmark for when you are trying to access your route at random. The purpose of this is to give you speed of access to any information anywhere along the route, analogous to random access memory (RAM), as in a computer.

This is particularly useful when you come to create **longer routes**. Rather than having always to work from the start, you can jump in at any point.

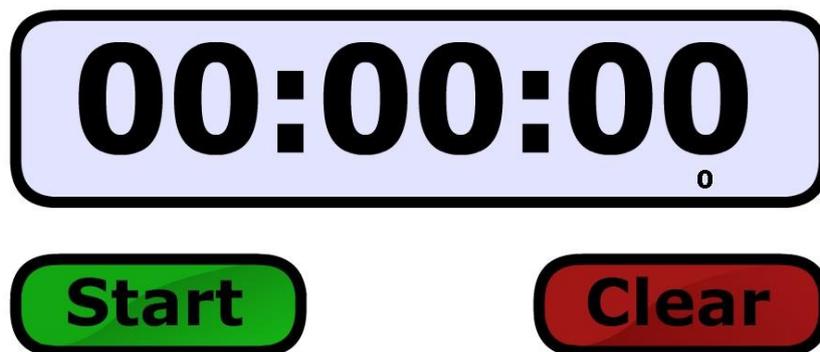
You have just planned, and memorised your first route!

Now let's use your first route for a memory storing exercise. Using the memory tools that you have learned so far - PAIL - have a go at remembering this list of 20 items. It is easier to pair them up. Use the route that you have just created with 10 locations and place one pair of items at each location. Make sure that you get the order correct!

For the first item in each pairing, you can manipulate the image so that when you recall the pairing you remember which one is first. You can do this in a number of ways, but whatever system you follow, make sure that you stick to the same method, keeping it systematic and consistent.

In each pairing you can make the first image much larger than the second. Or you could always work by putting the first image on top of the second image. Or you could always place the first image on the left hand side of the second image. But remember! Make sure that you keep to your arrangement - don't change from making your first image larger, to then making your second image larger as this will confuse you.

This time, rather than use a countdown timer, use a stopwatch. Time yourself and see how quickly you can do the following exercise. Then when you have finished, leave it for a minute then test yourself by rewriting the list on a blank piece of paper. Remember, first turn the words into images. Then store a pair of images in each of your 10 locations. Get your stopwatch ready! Go!



Here is the list

1. Bomb
2. Balloon
3. Light
4. Beryl
5. Borehole
6. Coal
7. Knight
8. Oxygen
9. Floor
10. Neon
11. Salt
12. Magnet
13. Alan
14. Chips
15. Fossil
16. Sulphur
17. Pool
18. Aga
19. Pot
20. Teeth

...and when you are done memorising, no peeking while you test yourself!

How did you do? You just practised using your imagination to create images out of information and then storing those images in locations.

The Method of Loci enables you to store your knowledge more effectively than ever before. Of course lots of exams require more than just memory. These techniques will not help understanding. However you can use the techniques to aid your recall of concepts as well as simply aiding recall of information. A significant number of exams do require high levels of information recall.

So while you are sitting in your exam, whether it is a law, an equation or a concept that you have encoded as startling imagery, all that you need ask yourself is:

“Where did I store this information?”
 and
 “What was the image that I used to remember it?”

Once you have the location, it is very simple to retrieve the knowledge just by remembering the image that you placed there. It is quick and easy. There is no other technique like it.

Back to our list of 20 items. I expect you spotted that the 20 items were actually symbols, representing something else.

Symbolism is an incredibly useful tool. Rather than necessarily trying to remember everything for what it really is, the purpose is to use an association that is relevant to you, drawing from your existing knowledge base. The reason for this is that you are far more likely to remember something that is personal to you with which you have an emotional connection. So, however you managed to remember that list of 20 items, do you know what it has to do with this?

The periodic table is color-coded by groups. A legend box contains the following categories:

- alkali metals (orange)
- alkaline earth metals (light orange)
- transition metals (purple)
- other metals (light purple)
- other nonmetals (red)
- halogens (green)
- noble gases (light blue)
- lanthanides (yellow)
- actinides (light blue)

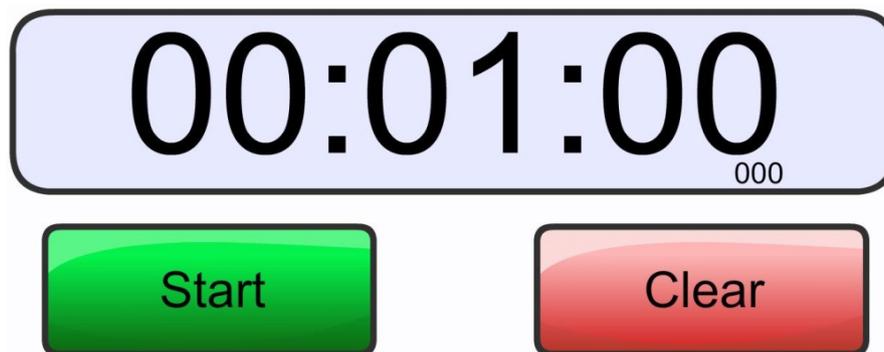
The periodic table shows elements from Hydrogen (H) to Oganesson (Og). Groups are labeled 1* through 18, and periods are labeled 1 through 7. The lanthanide and actinide series are shown separately at the bottom.

The first 20 elements of the periodic table:

1. Bomb	Hydrogen	11. Salt	Sodium
2. Balloon	Helium	12. Magnet	Magnesium
3. Light	Lithium	13. Alan	Aluminium
4. Beryl	Beryllium	14. Chips	Silicon
5. Borehole	Boron	15. Fossil	Phosphorous
6. Coal	Carbon	16. Sulphur	Sulphur
7. Knight	Nitrogen	17. Pool	Chlorine
8. Oxygen	Oxygen	18. Aga	Argon
9. Floor	Fluorine	19. Pot	Potassium
10. Neon	Neon	20. Teeth	Calcium

Now that you know the first 20 elements, you should also try the following self-test exercise:

When you built your route, you remembered to highlight every fifth location, so this exercise should be easy. Working as quickly as you can try to recall the following, without having to work through from the beginning each time.



The 5th element (hint - go to the start of the third location)
The 8th element (hint - go to the end of the fourth location)
The 14th element
The 17th element

How did you find that? If you built your route with the anchor points in place, then it should have been fairly simple to do.

When you have finished, get your written list of the locations of your first route and add a reminder of what you have stored there.

Checklist 4. Method of Loci Part I

- I recognise the power of spatial memory
- I have built my first route
- I used my route to store 20 items
- I have made a written list of the locations and what is stored there
- I am going to create a route for everything I want to learn
- I am going to enjoy walking through my route in my imagination
- I feel confident that I can recall information I store around my route

5

Method of Loci Part II Creating Longer Routes



In this chapter you will:

- Expand your “loci” to be able to store more information

Rather than limiting yourself to a room in which you can store images, you can take the technique outside and operate on any scale. As you walk around any area, you can create a route as you go, noting down the sequence of locations for later use.

Examples

You could take in the journey from your home to school or work. Or you could walk around a major city and map out hundreds of distinct separate locations onto which you can later hang images in sequence for subsequent recall.

This gives you far more space for storing information. Obviously there is initial ground work to be done to create a route, but the effort is worth it.

The length of your route will determine how long it takes to impress it into your memory. For example, a route of 10 locations around a familiar area such as your home town would only take a couple of minutes at most.

It might take 20 minutes to build a new route with 50 locations and you could use them to remember the main points of a chapter in a text book.

This process also has the advantage of improving your observation of the world around you. So, by virtue of creating a memory route/journey, you are forcing yourself to take in landmarks that might otherwise go un-noticed, and so you learn about your local area - the nearest post-box, cash point, post office, street names, police stations, hospitals and so on.

Virtual Routes

Of course, you don't even need to actually visit somewhere to build your locations, as you could just use Google Street View.

I myself am not a "gamer", but if you wish, you can use maps and locations from computer games. Many people who play first-person shooters, such as Call of Duty, find that they have an exceptionally good working knowledge of the layout of every level. This can be used to your advantage by putting images in sequence around these virtual locations.

The purpose of giving structure to your knowledge

Giving a structure to your knowledge means that it is easily and quickly accessible. The method of loci achieves exactly that. Imagine going into a library only to find all of the books in a pile in the middle of the room. You may well be able to find the book you are looking for, but it will take some time. This is how most people currently store information in their heads. Instead, with the method of loci, your mental filing cabinet becomes more like a playful library with your knowledge arranged in a clear order.

“Playful” and “Library” don’t usually go together, but the name of the game is to combine the useful precision of library storage with the infinite possibilities of your imagination.

Rules for using routes

Each route can only be used for **one** body of knowledge. Otherwise, for example, if you use your house to learn your A-level/High school biology, and then soon after try and use the same location for studying Law, you will end up with lots of layers of images that are unrelated, all in the same. This will confuse you.

So - one route/journey, one body of knowledge.

It is important to note that unless you systematically review the images (covered in more detail in chapter 7), then they will fade and you will be left with empty routes.

When I am teaching my course, I do use a couple of routes over and over again, but these are for demonstration purposes only. I do not need to commit this demonstration information to long-term memory. For any knowledge that I do wish to retain for the long-term, the rule applies - **one route/journey for one body of knowledge.**

Common mistakes when creating routes

Similarities in locations will cause confusion. For example, if you have used a row of more than 3 or 4 cubicles that are all identical, or if you have used 2 different floors of an office block that look similar, then it can be very easy to confuse which items go in which places. The sequence of learning becomes hard to remember and the purpose of using method of loci is lost.

The same holds true for multi-storey car parks.

Sometimes people experience fading of locations or slight haziness of specific hooks. This is why it is useful to keep a written note of your locations, just in case.

Initially, a common problem is uncertainty as to whether a location is suitable and so deciding on a route becomes a drawn-out process. My advice is this: when you are first starting out, make decisions quickly, produce results, make mistakes and learn what works best for you. Just go ahead and start building a route that you are going to use. It is fun!

You can operate on different scales, by zooming in or out of each location – perhaps using each corner of a desk as hooks on which to stash an image. The benefit of this is that you need fewer locations for more information. The disadvantage is that it can be confusing and overwhelming if you are not experienced.

When first starting out, I recommend using an entire object for each hook and on each hook, hang no more than 2 or 3 images (at most).

In the following example you can see how to fuse 7 images together to hang more information on one hook. Build up to this! The example is from the MBA syllabus and the 7-step marketing strategy development process. I have amalgamated several images into 1 item and hooked that outside my front door. Let me show you how I have done this:

The 7 steps are

1. Consumer analysis
2. Market analysis
3. Competitor analysis
4. Distribution channel review
5. Create Marketing mix
6. Evaluate Economics
7. Revise

I create 7 simple images from these items and then combine them into 1 single scene of interconnected images, that I imagine seeing scrolling from left to right outside my front door:

(1) An obese person consuming (2) Mark Zuckerberg and then consuming the (3) Google guys (facebook's competitor – of sorts). A (4) distribution lorry reverses into the obese guy and squashes him in a disastrous big splat. This splatted mixture is put into a big (5) mixing bowl, which is then set on a set of old fashioned weighing scales. Balancing out the marketing mix is a (6) cartoon wad of \$100 bills. (7) Repeat.

This may take 2 minutes to create and visualise. If the 7-step marketing strategy development is useful for you to know, or if you want to practise creating images, then take 2 minutes to do that now.

If not, then move on!



The second item in the chapter on marketing is the '*Buying process*' and I have created an image of a "BUY NOW" sign and have stored this just inside the front entrance.

The third item is '*Market segmentation*' and I have used the concierge desk inside my flat as the storage hook for this sub-topic, using an image of a tasty pizza cut into segments.

Adding information

As you deepen your learning of a particular topic, you can **add** to the existing images which you have stored in a particular location, so long as the new pictures are relevant. For example, if I have an image to encapsulate the Bank of England Act 1998, to recall that banking supervision was handed over to the FSA from the BoE, I can anthropomorphise the building of the BoE and imagine that the BoE is a supervisor standing at the front of a classroom full of squabbling banks. Into the room walks an anthropomorphised version of the FSA logo and takes over the supervision.

Let's now assume that I wish to add greater detail to this narrative and learn who is currently responsible for both organisations.

At the time of writing, Mervyn King is governor of the Bank of England, so it may be enough to place a crown on top of the image of the Bank of England, to know that it is run by a 'King'. For the FSA, Hector Sants is current chief executive. We could imagine the FSA logo striding into the classroom (full of banks) and he is covered in (s)ants. A 'Heck' of a lot of (s)ants at that.

Up-dating information

Erasing information that has become obsolete is easy to do. Simply "go" to the specific location where the information is stored and change the image so that the new image in place now supports the amended information. This is a useful tool to use where the structure of the information remains the same, but details often change.

The FSA changed structure in early 2012 to become 2 separate units; the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) initially headed by Andrew Bailey and the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA), initially headed by Martin Wheatley.

Revisit the logo where you stored the FSA logo covered in ants. Imagine the logo going into labour and giving birth to 2 new creatures – first an animated conductor (FCA) with big hands (Andrew) swigging from a bottle of Bailey's.

The second off-spring of the FSA lands next to the conductor and it is a Martian (Martin) nibbling at some wheetos (Wheatley). He is wrapped up in safety gear, harness and helmet, as he is being careful, (even prudent).

Now you have created greater detail and have updated information. All of which takes but a matter of a couple of minutes to create. As long as your new images are bold and with vivid colours, they will effectively replace the images that were there previously.

Keep a list of all your locations/routes

Keep a record of all your lists. Online cloud computing is handy for this, so that your lists can be accessed from anywhere in the world and can't be lost.

Among your notes should be the original information you are remembering together with a note, or better still a map of the route that you used, in order to remember the information. Also if you have a sketch of the images that you have used to codify the information that you are remembering, then that makes a huge difference to the speed of reviewing.

If you are more comfortable with traditional methods, then any folder, pen and paper will also work.

Now that you are comfortable creating and using longer routes/journeys, it's time to take it to the next level and introduce you to Memory Palaces.

Checklist 5. Method of Loci Part II

- I know the rules of using routes– one route, one body of knowledge
- I am going to use distinct locations for each route
- I am going to create routes quickly and learn what works best for me
- I will use one object to represent each hook and I will hang no more than 2 or 3 images on each hook
- I can add and update information easily, by adding more imagery to my visual stories
- I am going to keep a list of all my journeys

6

Method of Loci Part III Memory Palaces



In this chapter you will:

- Create a logical structure for storing an entire syllabus

You need never run out of storage space in your brain for new learning. Below I am going to show you how one of my MBA students and I created a memory palace as a template for retaining his course information.

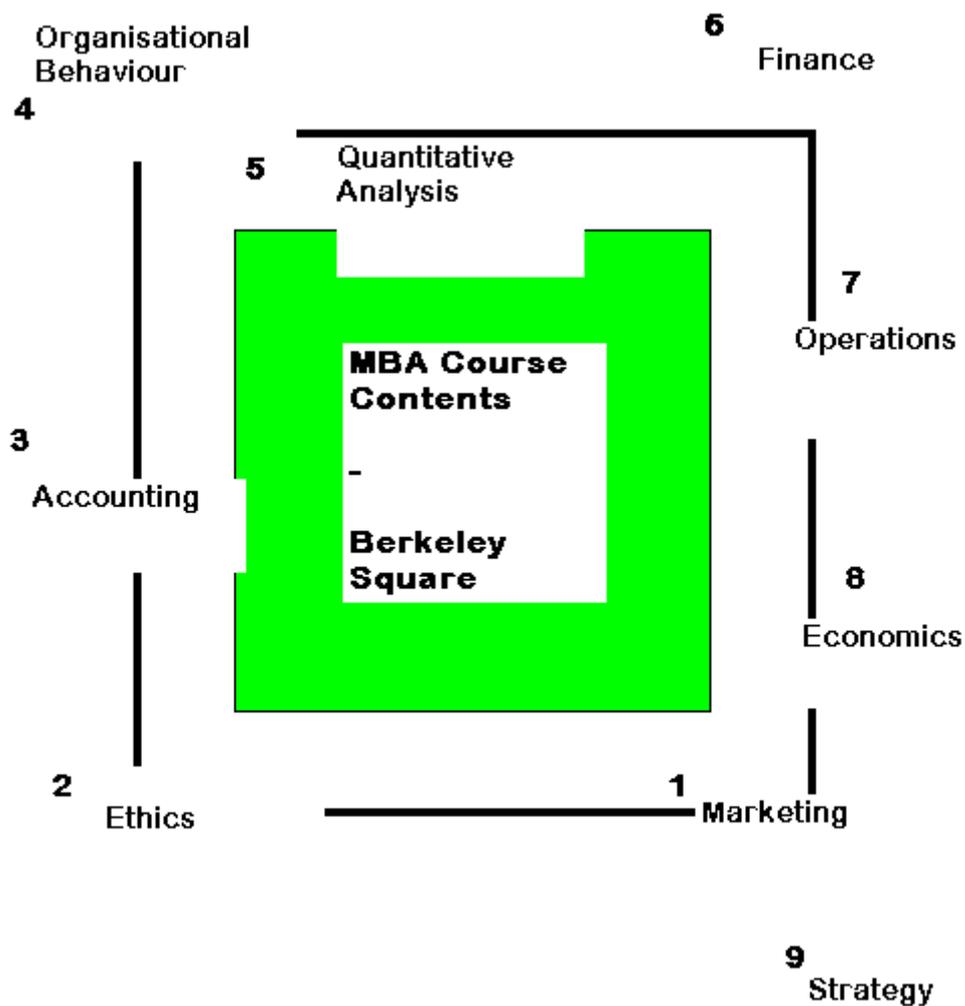
First of all, in order to chart the syllabus, we used a journey around Berkeley Square, London, as that is where my student worked, so the location was familiar to him.

An MBA consists of 9 main topics, so we allocated nine separate buildings, one per topic. Whatever your own subject, you need to choose a building(location) which corresponds in size to the amount of information which you have to store there.

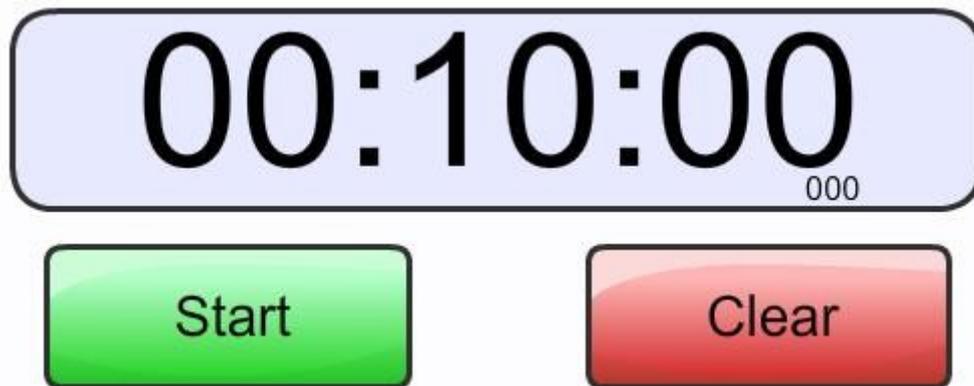
The MBA topics are:

1. Marketing
2. Ethics
3. Accounting
4. Organisational Behaviour
5. Quantitative Analysis
6. Finance
7. Operations
8. Economics
9. Strategy

A rough sketch of it looks like this:



If you haven't created a route to structure your course material, then take the time to do that now. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to create the route.



Your syllabus may be of a different size and structure to the generic MBA that I am using to exemplify, but the learning process is the same.

As we walked around we created a supporting image for each main topic (as in the introduction) and imagined actually seeing those images in their respective locations. Now you can do the same for your syllabus. Obviously there is far more detail to put in place than just a list of syllabus contents, but this is the start. Stop reading now and go to it! Set yourself an ambitious target of 30 seconds per image. That is 30 seconds to both create the image *and* imagine seeing it in location.



Going further into detail, we entered each building in turn in order to create the hooks for storing detailed information. For Marketing, we went into a building at the south west corner of Berkeley Square. Unfortunately, as security was tight as a drum, we were not allowed to wander around freely, so we had to employ another method. This is extremely useful for creating mega-structure memory palaces and the process is rather like something out of 'The Lion, The witch and the Wardrobe'.

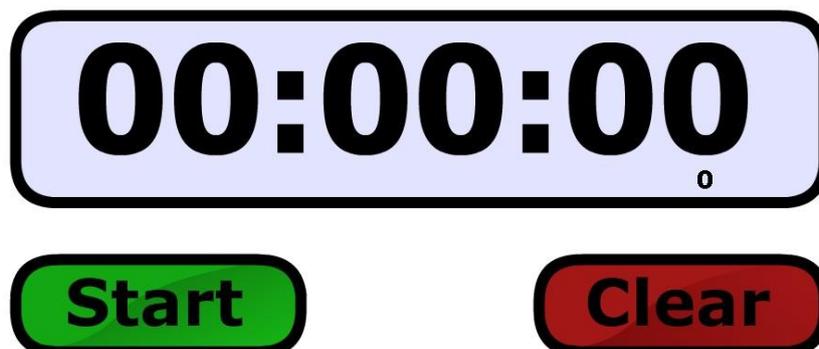
That is, when you approach a building along your journey, you imagine being teleported to the front door of another building that you know well. At the first point in Berkeley Square, we imagined being teleported to the front door of our respective homes. From there we created 13 separate locations within our own homes, in which to store the main points covered in marketing:

1. 7-step marketing strategy development
2. Buying process
3. Segmentation
4. Product life cycle
5. Perceptual mapping
6. Margins
7. Marketing mix
8. Positioning
9. Distribution channels
10. Advertising
11. Promotions
12. Pricing
13. Marketing economics

What to do if you run out of space?

If you are going to run out of space in your palace, then behind one of your doors simply add another portal. By using this particular trick, you can make any Memory Palace infinite in size.

Now that you know how to store your entire syllabus, have a go at creating your own Memory Palace. Create the structure, turn your syllabus into images and put them in place. Go for it. See how quickly you can do it.

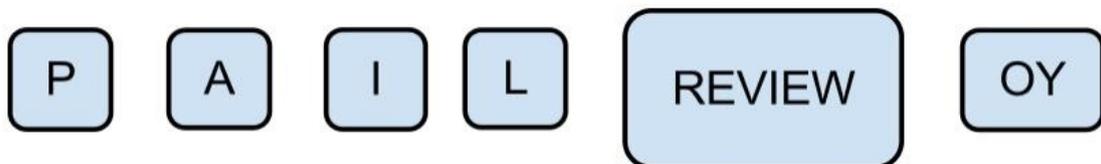


Checklist 6. Method of Loci Part III

- I can now create my own memory palace
- I can make my memory palace infinite in size
- I have mapped out my entire syllabus

7

Review When and How



In this chapter you will:

- Convert information from short-term to long-term memory
- Streamline your revision process, so that you carry out as few reviews as necessary for you to master your subject

Seven items is the average capacity for our short-term memory. This is how many items we tend to remember when given a list of things to remember. However, this is without using any specific system and relying on raw memory power alone. Even this limited information will stick in our mind for up to 24 hours unless we review it mentally or tell other people about the items on the list. Doing this is a form of repetition and will aid retention.

When to review

If we do not make a conscious effort to retain what we have learnt, our brain pares back some of the weaker neural pathways. It is a natural process that happens during sleep. It is by actively reviewing what we have learnt that we cement the knowledge into our brain.

It is possible to train your mind to recall all the necessary information from scratch. Repeating this process with an increased time lapse between reviews will ensure that the knowledge becomes fixed in long term memory.

The 5-stage review, also called **spaced repetition**, is structured to increase the time lapse between recall sessions, in order to reinforce the information that you have previously learnt.

It is conducted over the course of 6 months.

When you have learnt a body of knowledge, you will hang on to that information for a short while, but it is best to review it immediately. If this is done then that knowledge will remain with you for at least 24 hours.

This is the best point at which to carry out another review.
Then a week after the first learning.
Then a month after the first learning.
Then somewhere between 3-6 months.

Those 5 stages again:

Immediately

1 day

1 week

1 month

3-6 months

This is a rough rule of thumb that came out of research done by a German psychologist named Leitner, in the 1970's. His research now forms the basis for all systematised flashcard processes. It has been found to apply very effectively. An increase in time lapse is allowed between successive repetitions as the neural pathways in the brain become strengthened by being reactivated, thus the information is becoming cemented in the brain.

How important is it?

We have all learnt something in the past only to forget it. This is completely natural. However, if you want to remember something, then it is best have a structured system to enable this.

Having the discipline to follow through on the review process is as important as learning the information in the first place.

It is merely a question of committing to developing a good habit and being organised.

Diarise your review dates

As soon as you have learnt something, diarise all of your review periods immediately. (In actual fact you will only have to diarise stages 2-5, as your first one will be carried out on completion of your learning).

I find it useful to diarise my entries online as well as having a hard copy and wall planner.

For each of the stages 2 to 5, you should have a small number next to a topic. For example, if you have just learned about Property Law, then you will carry out your first review immediately and so will not need to diarise it. But you will need to diarise the reviews 2, 3, 4 and 5. Turn to tomorrow's date in your calendar or diary, write "Property Law" and put a number 2 next to it. Then, for one week later put "Property Law" with the number 3 next to it, and so on until you reach the 5th review.

Additionally, it is helpful to colour code your reviews, so that all 2nd reviews are the same colour (e.g. blue), all 3rd reviews red, all 4th reviews yellow and so on.

Having your review dates in full view with a colour-coded system is a very useful constant visual reminder of where you are at and when certain information will be in your long-term memory.

During my final year of university I had a wall planner with colour coordinated numbers. I knew when I saw a green dot that this was my 5th review of a specific topic, so that meant that by the time I reached it, I would be certain that I would know this information. It does take an initial period of organisation until this process becomes habitual, but it is well worth the effort.

Is setting a schedule for your reviews really effective?

It is absolutely essential to set a schedule for your reviews. Unless you do this, you will forget a lot of the information that you need for passing your exams.

Using this system streamlines the process of revision, so that you review your information the minimum number of times for it to be firmly lodged in your long-term memory. Having a level of self-awareness is crucial. Many times have I said to myself "I will remember this" only to forget ever having learnt it.

Know thyself. Make a schedule.

What's the best time of day to review?

If you can fit it into your schedule, morning is the best time of day to review information - before you are crowded with other thoughts. It also fits your brain's learning pattern most effectively, as there is more alpha brainwave function.

I know that for many people, the thought is that you aren't awake enough in the morning to be able to concentrate and that you are far better late at night. For some activities this fits, such as creative processes - sometimes far better late at night. However for learning and reviewing information shortly after waking is best!

Get into this habit and it will transform your learning.

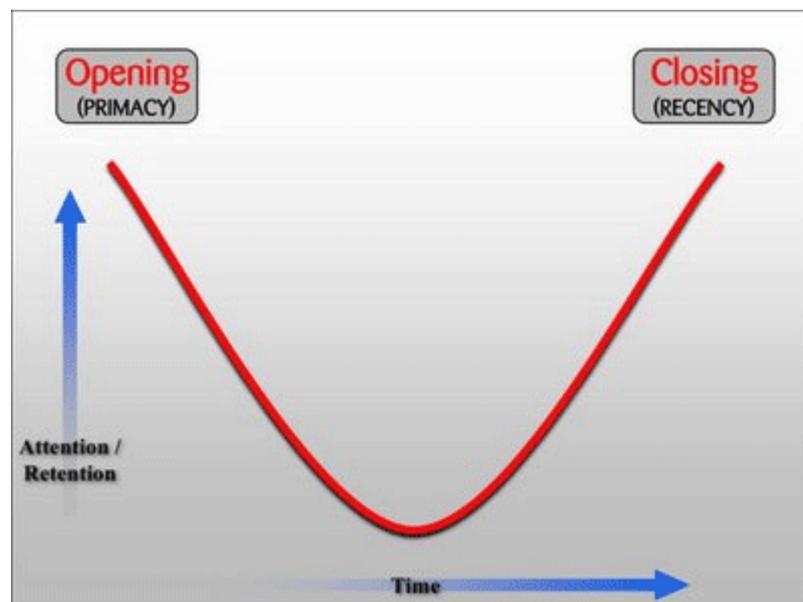
For the first few minutes of every day, spend some time reviewing what you learned the previous day as well as reviewing whatever else is scheduled for review that day.

When consuming new information, or even when sitting down to revise, break your learning into **half-hour slots**. You should be able to take a sufficient amount of information on board, but not so much that you won't be able to remember what is there.

Then at the end of every half hour slot, give yourself a **5- or 10- minute break**, making sure that in that time you mentally review the information from the half hour just past. This gives you the opportunity to digest it and to be sure that you can make sense of it.

I strongly recommend that you step away from your study area, keeping mobile so, that you encourage blood flow around the body.

By taking regular breaks, you are taking advantage of something known as the **primacy/recency principle**. That is, you are more likely to remember what is happening at the start and towards the end of your studying. So, the more regular breaks you take, the more beginnings and ends you have and so your concentration is kept high and you are more likely to remember more information.



How to Review – Active vs. Passive

What is active reviewing?

What many of my students tend to do is simply re-read their lecture notes, thinking that this will somehow make the information sink in. This is passive learning and is quite simply not as effective as the method detailed below.

Follow the system that I have laid out for you and you will not go wrong.

Start from scratch with a blank piece of paper and try to rewrite everything you can remember from the topic you are revising. For example, if you wished to review the first 20 elements of the periodic table you would **not** simply re-read the list. First you would test yourself, actively recalling the 20 images stored in your first memory route. Only after completion would you look at the original list.

The purpose of rewriting is not to produce several sets of exactly the same notes; it is so that you go through the process of **recalling** information from your mental filing cabinet. Although you do not need to replicate your notes, you do need to write enough to be sure that you have accurately recalled the information that you are testing yourself on.

Using a pen and paper will enable you to maintain your focus otherwise it is easy to drift off into daydreams. It is also useful because you will see where you have made any mistakes in your review and what pieces of knowledge you were a little bit hazy on, when you compare your review to your original notes.

How to make corrections

As you compare what you have written in your review with your original notes, look closely to see whether there are any differences, or even mistakes, which need correcting.

If there are, first of all, make a correction with a different coloured pen. That may be enough.

If not, and you continue to forget the same piece of knowledge after another review, then it is likely that the image you have used to symbolise that information is not working, either because it only translates in one direction, or because it isn't striking enough! So go back to the **checklist** in chapter 3 on **Imagination** and run through it to make this image more attention-grabbing and startling than before. This should do the trick.

What is the most useful attitude to adopt towards making mistakes?

Make mistakes!

When you are working through this book and when you are going about your daily life, make mistakes. Then you learn. The more mistakes you make, the more you learn. The reason we shy away from making mistakes is that we are very concerned about looking good. And not just some of the time. All of the time. One of the differences that I notice between teaching adults and children is that adults are more afraid of making mistakes.

If I ask a class of adults for a volunteer, then people are reluctant to come forward. In a class of children what do you think happens? Almost every hand goes up. "Pick me! Pick me!" And the reason is because a young person's metric for how good something has been is "how many goes did I have?"

This is a generalisation and so it need not apply to you. It need not apply to anyone!

As soon as you can get into the playful habit of just having a go at something, making mistakes and then learning from them, the more effective a learner you will be.

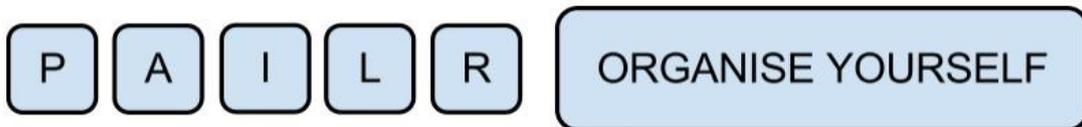
Remember that nobody is right all of the time, even though they may say so. Making mistakes is not a bad thing. When you make a mistake and make it mean something more significant than it is, then that is when mistakes are not good for you and a waste of time.

In your learning, rather than feeling as though you have to get it right, I invite you to adopt a child-like mindset of curiosity and playful exploration.

Checklist 7. Review

- I am going to use the 5-stage review for everything that I want to learn
- I do not want to have to relearn things that I have already learnt
- I am going to colourcode my 5-stage review in my planner
- I am going to diarise my 5 review periods immediately after the initial learning process
- I am going to recognise the urge to trick myself into thinking I am learning properly, when in fact I am not going about it in a way that will lead to long-term retention
- I recognise the difference between active and passive reviewing
- I believe that active reviewing is a more effective way to learn

Organise Yourself



In this chapter you will:

- Organise your everyday life
- Organise your studying
- Organise your revision

Organise your everyday life

I admit that being incredibly organised might seem to others to be overly obsessive, but actually all you are really doing is making your life easier. Ultimately you will have more time to spend doing the things you love and you will not have to live your life with things 'hanging over you'.

A good principle to adopt is: "If it needs doing, do it". It is simply a question of adopting good habits and being disciplined.

Let's look at some good practices:

- When you are dealing with a letter or other correspondence that requires you to take action, be resolved that you will

touch each piece of paper only once and then either file it, put it in the post or bin it.

- Resolve to be punctual. It is boring to arrive early and be kept waiting by other people but from now on you can use the spare time to revisit your memory routes. It is very gratifying to have a reputation for being on time. Aim to arrive at any engagement 5 minutes before the agreed time.
- Go to all your lectures. You give yourself a head start by attending lectures and taking good notes.
- Always write the date and title at the top of your lecture notes and number each piece of paper.
- Always file your lecture notes in well labelled files.

Organise your studying

Getting an overview of what you are studying before you start is essential. By doing this, you are giving yourself the context for the information you learn. Whenever you study, it now fits into a framework and makes sense, and enables you to see the bigger picture.

Before you start any new subject or sub-topic within a subject, take the time to create a route/journey/location for that body of information and assign a specific location to each sub-chapter. That way you have your blueprint for learning before you set out to learn. Once you have done this, you will have a clear view of what you know and also what you need to know.

Decide where you are going to study

Fix your location for studying. Make sure that you are comfortable with the location that you choose to sit down in. You can also fix the location for a period of time whilst you are studying a particular subject, then move to a different location to study a different topic.

This can also assist the process of recall.

Set a routine

Whenever you sit down to study, it helps to have a set routine to the process. It could be the act of turning off your mobile phone, or it could be the action of getting a glass of water and placing it on the table with your timer/clock on the table in front of you.

Whatever the routine is, make sure that you stick to it. These patterns of behaviour are physical anchors that put you into an appropriate frame of mind.

When are you scheduling time?

Although best to study in the morning, I know that for many this will not always be possible. Either way, set aside a specific time and make sure that you are sitting at your desk to do the work you have planned, as a matter of life and death. Once your routine becomes established you will move quickly through your work.

Make a weekly plan

Writing a week plan is essential if you have difficulty fitting a routine into your lifestyle. That way you can visualise the week ahead to see how you can fit in your studying. Creating that plan and committing to it is one of the most important things you can do. Seeing where you can fit in your work should provide you with a suitable sense of urgency as well. We all have busy lives, so if you can see how many hours you have in a week and how many hours of study you need to get done in total to be able to pass your exams, then this is enough to create a sense of drive and determination.

Have everything you need to hand

Make sure that when you sit down to start learning, you have everything you need with you. If necessary, make a mini-check list. You will definitely need pens and paper and your books. It also helps to have colours with you too. And it is vital to have a clock or a timer close by so that you can time your sessions. Remember, no longer than 30 minutes at any given time! Then take a 5-10 minute break, but no more than that!

Organise your revision for your exams

The beauty of adhering to the PAILROY system is that you do not have to feel overwhelmed by the prospect of exams. By the same token, do not allow yourself to be so underwhelmed that you leave your revision until the last minute.

You still need to revise for exams. Adopt the right mental attitude towards your exams. Look on them as an opportunity to show what you can do and be proud of your knowledge.

The first thing to do is to get an overview of your entire workload

Make a list of your subjects.

Underneath each subject heading, list all the sub-topics. That way you are really beginning to get a feel for how each subject is put together and how the different topics interrelate.

Next, how long is it until your exams start?

How much time, per day, can you spend on revision?

This will be determined by whether you work full time or whether you have study leave.

(Aim for a minimum of 2 hours every day between now and the exams. Obviously, spend longer on free days)

How many hours are there in total?

Write the number here:

When this is in place, you should plan how long you are going to spend on each subject as well as making sure that you have a separate memory route for each subject. Start by dividing the number of hours equally for each subject.

Obviously, fewer hours are required for subjects that you are most familiar with. Add these hours to subjects that require a lot of learning or practice. Follow this to ensure that you cover all of the material before your exams start. For each subject, half of the time should be used for revising and half of the total time should be allocated to practising past papers.

Allow yourself one day off per week.

This will give your brain some time for reflection and consolidation and it will also serve as a catch-up zone, should you have fallen behind with your schedule.

Plan to finish revising 1 WEEK before your exams start. This way, if you do over-run slightly, then this acts as a buffer also.

Now you can write your...

REVISION TIMETABLE

- **How many subjects**
- **How many topics within each subject**
- **How long until the exams**
- **How much revision time can I allocate**

As with your schedule of reviews, your exam revision planner could be online or it could be a hard copy.

Personally, I like to have both, as I find the process of crossing out tasks and days as they are completed to be rather satisfying, but I also want to be able to access my schedule on the go. Not only this, but it is easier to create colour coding for your planner if it is in a hard copy format. Using crayons and felt-tipped pens is simple. But each to their own.

When you have set your plan and are starting to work, use it daily. Cross off the tasks and days as you go.

Spend the first half hour of every day reviewing work that you have previously covered. Next, look at your planner and see what tasks are allocated, then start! Remember, 30 minute chunks, followed by a 5-10 minute break.

MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO - a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Make sure that you eat sensibly, particularly when you are revising and during the exam period. If your body is correctly nourished, your brain will function better. You will study more effectively if you avoid food which makes you sated and drowsy –

starchy, fat, sweet stuff. This is not rocket science, is it? Download a selection of healthy eating meal plans if you are really stuck.

Avoid excessive alcohol: your brain will be the sharper for it.

Take regular exercise as this will help ensure that you sleep well.

THE EXAMS

Write a checklist of all of the things you are going to need for your exam: pens, pencils, pencil case, geometry set, candidate number, lucky mascot, ID, drinking water if allowed.

Make sure you get plenty of sleep. Allow for getting eight hours of sleep before you have exams, so that you are rested. If you don't manage to get as much sleep as this, then it is fine too. No drama. You will still be able to perform.

Before you go to sleep have everything planned in preparation for the following day. Make sure that you have your clothes, food, exam stuff, wake up calls and travel arrangements etc. all sorted out the night before. On the day, there are more important things to be thinking about. On the day, it is a performance. So focus on the performance and nothing else.

Checklist 8. Organise Yourself

- I recognise that organising myself saves time and enables effective learning
- I am going to create a specific learning routine
- I am going to have all the things I need for my learning session with me when I begin
- I recognise that it is essential to have an overall plan
- I recognise that launching straight into work without a plan can be ineffective
- I am going to plan time off when I make my initial plan for learning

...and one last thing – good luck!



Acknowledgments

To those who have poured love, dedication and countless hours into me and this book, I am deeply grateful. In particular, thank you to Daniel James, for his excellent graphics and for his invaluable editorial input. Without his contribution this book would not have come out the way that it has. My mother provided her ongoing patience and careful eye, helping trim the manuscript from over 40,000 words down to the essential few that it now contains. This would not have been possible without her. To my loving sister, Claire, for never asking me about this project and to Barbara Bowdler, my Grandmother, for asking me every time we spoke.

I would never even have embarked upon this journey had it not been for Ben Dives being adamant that I should write this book. I am grateful to the Versteegh family for believing in me and to Gerard for reminding me to focus. I owe thanks to Tom Raber for introducing me to the MBA world and for pointing out that accomplishing a big task is like eating an elephant – one bite at a time.

To Simonides, the ancient Greek poet who is credited with creating the Method of Loci, way back in 500 B.C. for being one of the many giants whose shoulders we now stand upon.

This book is dedicated to Simon and Sarah Bowdler, my loving parents, to whom I owe everything.

About the author

Richard Bowdler was educated at Oxford where he trained himself to have an exceptional memory. He taught himself techniques for optimising retention of vast quantities of complex information whilst studying for his Masters degree in Chemistry. Richard later worked in the city as a stockbroker, requiring completion of the SII qualifications. Applying techniques he had learned previously, he went from no finance industry knowledge to being a fully fledged, FSA registered broker in less than one week.

Bowdler has guest-lectured at Chicago University Booth School of Business on the executive MBA program as well as working with a diverse range of clients from major investment banks including Goldman Sachs, Credit Suisse, Citigroup, and lecturing through BPP. He has trained a number of chief executives, heads of education, private investigators, lawyers, a branch of the British military, medics, professional students studying for their CFA's, SII, LPC, IMC, MBA's, psychologists and actors, to name but a few.

In the Education sector, Richard has coached thousands of school children to improve their ability to tackle exams, whether it be for common entrance, GCSE, A-level or SAT's. Many of his students have gone on to produce outstanding exam results - one pupil went from having to re-sit three A-level modules and achieved 99%, 99% and 100% after coaching. Understanding the need for many students and professionals alike to pass exams, he thought that his highly effective methodology would be an excellent partner to the need of many pupils and busy city folk.

When not coaching, Richard spends time competing in endurance events, having completed the 'Toughguy' competition and the London marathon several times apiece.