Memory Facts

Whether you’re remembering someone’s name, an answer on a test, or a simple physical task – your memory could fill volumes. But like all skills it needs to be practiced and enhanced...

The Three Steps of Memory

Input

Storage

Output

1. **Input**: is the simple absorption of information, like the words to a song, a familiar face, or facts for an examination. But to maximize the brain’s ability to memorize the data should be studied methodically and separately.

**When memorizing:**
- Avoid distraction
- Avoid tackling two similar mental tasks, one after another
- Give your memory a chance to hold on to the facts digested without confusion
- Review shortly before bed – uninterrupted rest gives the brain a better opportunity to absorb information

2. **Storage**: is keeping facts in the brain until you need them. To remember the material, you have to *want to remember it* and make an *active effort* to do so.

**When storing:**
- Use repetition and recall – cover up what you are reading and try to remember the important facts – do this frequently
• Break the material down into manageable components – creating an outline and highlighting key points are both tools that will help this process.

• Use visual and oral clues by transforming facts into memorable pictures. Or, devise a simple formula (like acronyms or mnemonics) or rhymes to enhance your memory.

3. **Output:** is being able to retrieve memorized material from your brain.

**When recalling:**

• **Output must be practiced** while studying for a test or it may be too difficult to do when taking your test.

• Be active with the material – write it, talk about it, summarize it, and test yourself.

• When you receive your test do a “data dump” – jot down all the facts you can remember in the margins or on scratch paper. Doing this will relax your brain and the facts will be much easier to retrieve.¹

¹ Developed by LLCC Learning Lab, Springfield, Illinois.