



## Memory Techniques Section

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## Tools for Improving Your Memory

This Mind Tools section helps you to improve your memory.

The techniques it explains are particularly helpful in studying for exams or in situations where you need to remember detailed, structured information. They also make things like learning foreign languages and remembering people's names much easier.

This section is split into three parts: first of all, the introduction explains the principles behind the use of mnemonics. We then discuss a range of individual tools that you can use to remember information. Finally we discuss how to use the skills in practice to remember peoples names, languages, exam information, etc.

While you are reading these articles, have a look at the memory technique book reviews and resources on the sidebars - these will help you to develop your memory skills further.

- [Introduction to Memory Techniques](#)
- [Remembering a Simple List](#) - The Link Method and Story Method
- [Remembering Ordered Lists](#) - The Number/Rhyme Mnemonic
- [Remembering Ordered Lists](#) - The Number/Shape Mnemonic
- [Remembering Middle Length Lists](#) - The Alphabet Technique
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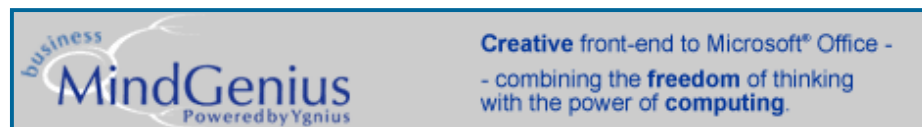
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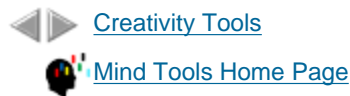
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## Memory Techniques - Introduction

These tools help you to improve your memory. They help you both to remember facts accurately and to remember the structure of information.

The tools are split into two sections. Firstly we will discuss the individual tools that you can use to remember information. Secondly we discuss how to use them in practice to remember peoples names, languages, exam information, etc.

As with other mind tools, the more practice you give yourself with these techniques, the more effective your use of them will be. This section contains many of the memory techniques used by stage memory performers. With enough practice and effort, you may be able to have a memory as good. Even if you do not have the time needed to develop this quality of memory, many of the techniques here are useful in everyday life.

### Mnemonics

'Mnemonic' is another word for memory tool. Mnemonics are methods for remembering information that is otherwise quite difficult to recall. A very simple example is the '30 days hath September' rhyme. The basic principle of mnemonics is to use as many of the best functions of your brain as possible to store information.



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Our brains evolved to code and interpret complex stimuli such as images, colors, structures, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, positions, emotions and language. We use these to make sophisticated models of the world we live in. Our memories store all of these very effectively. Unfortunately information we have to remember is almost always presented in only one way - as words printed on a page. While language is one of the most important aspects of human evolution, it is only one of the many skills and resources available to our minds.

This chapter of Mind Tools will show you how to use all these resources.

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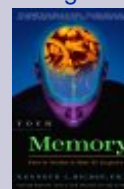


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Kenneth Higbee PhD



Kenneth Higbee's book is a classic in this area. As you would expect, it gives a good coverage of many different mnemonics, taking Mind Tools information to the next level of detail. A particularly good feature of the book is the way he relates his memory techniques to the latest medical and scientific research, as well as to practical experience with students. This book is not the easiest of reads on mnemonics, however it is certainly one of the most authoritative.

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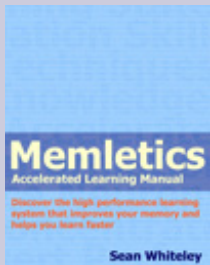
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Designed by Kevin Trudeau, founder of the American memory Institute, this detailed course shows you how to develop a strong memory for names, dates, numbers and general business information.

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## Using Your Whole Mind To Remember

By coding language and numbers in striking images, you can reliably code both information and the structure of information. You can then easily recall these later.

You can do the following things to make your mnemonics more memorable:

- Use positive, pleasant images. The brain often blocks out unpleasant ones
- Use vivid, colorful, sense-laden images - these are easier to remember than drab ones
- Use all your senses to code information or dress up an image. Remember that your mnemonic can contain sounds, smells, tastes, touch, movements and feelings as well as pictures.
- Give your image three dimensions, movement and space to make it more vivid. You can use movement either to maintain the flow of association, or to help you to remember actions.
- Exaggerate the size of important parts of the image
- Use humor! Funny or peculiar things are easier to remember than normal ones.
- Similarly rude rhymes are very difficult to forget!
- Symbols (red traffic lights, pointing fingers, road signs, etc.) can code quite complex messages quickly and effectively

## Designing Mnemonics: Imagination, Association and Location

The three fundamental principles underlying the use of mnemonics are imagination, association and location. Working together, you can use these principles to generate powerful mnemonic systems.

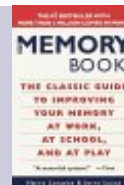
*Imagination:* is what you use to create and strengthen the associations needed to create effective mnemonics. Your imagination is what you use to create mnemonics that are potent for you. The more strongly you imagine and visualize a situation, the more effectively it will stick in your mind for later recall. The imagery you use in your mnemonics can be as violent, vivid, or sensual as you like, as long as it helps you to remember.

*Association:* this is the method by which you link a thing to be remembered to a way of remembering it. You can create associations by:

- placing things on top of each other
- crashing things together
- merging images together
- wrapping them around each other
- rotating them around each other or having them dancing together
- linking them using the same color, smell, shape, or feeling

As an example, you might link the number 1 with a goldfish by visualizing a 1-shaped spear being used to spear it.

*Location:* gives you two things: a coherent context into which you can place information so that it hangs together, and a way of separating one mnemonic from another. By setting one mnemonic in a particular town, I can separate it from a similar mnemonic set in a city. For example, by setting one in the town of Horsham and another similar mnemonic with images of Manhattan, we can separate them with no danger of confusion. You can build the flavors and atmosphere of these places into your mnemonics to strengthen the feeling of



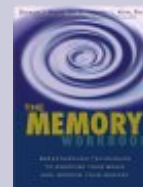
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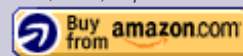
## The Memory Workbook

Douglas Mason et al.



This book takes a different approach to memory, focusing on helping older readers to understand, cope with and counter the memory loss than can come with age. This excellent book is well worth reading, particularly if you are starting to notice problems with your memory.

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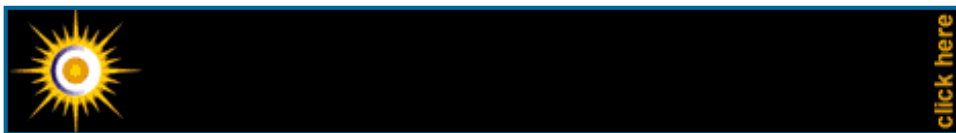


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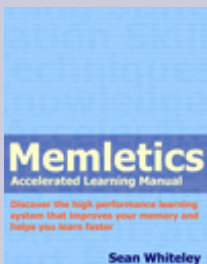


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## The Link & Story Methods - Remembering a Simple List

### How to Use the Tool:

The Link Method is one of the easiest mnemonic techniques available.

It works quite simply by making associations between items in a list, linking them either with a flowing image containing the items, or with a story featuring them. The flow of the story and the strength of the images give you the cues for retrieval.

Taking the first image, create a connection between it and the next item. Then move on through the list linking each item with the next. It is quite possible to remember lists of words using association only. However it is often best to fit the associations into a story: otherwise by forgetting just one association you can lose the whole of the rest of the list.

Given the fluid structure of this mnemonic, it is important that the images stored in your mind are as vivid as possible. Significant, coding images should be much stronger than ones that merely support the flow of the story. See the introduction to this chapter for further information on making images as strong as possible.

The Story Method is similar, except that the images are linked together as part of a story. This makes it easier to remember the order of events and create a memorable mnemonic.

Where a word you want to remember does not trigger strong images, use a similar word that will remind you of that word.

### Example:

You may want to remember this list of counties in the South of England: Avon, Dorset, Somerset, Cornwall, Wiltshire, Devon, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, and Surrey.

You could do this with two approaches, the link method and the story method:

### *Remembering with the Link Method*

This would rely on a series of images coding information:

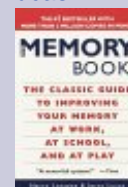
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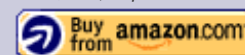
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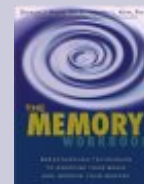
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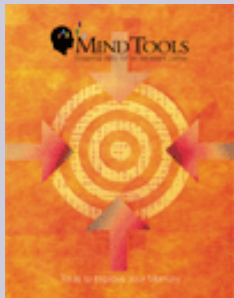


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- An AVON (Avon) lady knocking on a heavy oak DOoR (Dorset)
- The DOoR opening to show a beautiful SuMmER landscape with a SETting sun (Somerset)
- The setting sun shines down onto a field of CORN (Cornwall)
- The CORN is so dry it is beginning to WILT (Wiltshire)
- The WILTing stalks slowly droop onto the tail of the sleeping DEVil (Devon).
- On the DEVil's horn a woman has impaled a GLOSsy (Gloucestershire) HAM (Hampshire) when she hit him over the head with it
- Now the Devil feels SoRRY (Surrey) he bothered her.

Note that there need not be any reason or underlying plot to the sequence of images: only images and the links between images are important.

*Remembering with the Story Method:*

Alternatively you could code this information by imaging the following story vividly:

An AVON lady is walking up a path towards a strange house. She is hot and sweating slightly in the heat of high SUMMER (Somerset). Beside the path someone has planted giant CORN in a WALL (Cornwall), but it's beginning to WILT (Wiltshire) in the heat. She knocks on the DOoR (Dorset), which is opened by the DEVil (Devon). In the background she can see a kitchen in which a servant is smearing honey on a HAM (Hampshire), making it GLOSsy (Gloucestershire) and gleam in bright sunlight streaming in through a window. Panicked by seeing the Devil, the Avon lady screams 'SoRRY' (Surrey), and dashes back down the path.

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#### Key points:

The Link Method is probably the most basic memory technique, and is very easy to understand and use. It works by coding information to be remembered into images and then linking these images together.

The story technique is very similar. It links these images together into a story. This helps to keep events in a logical order and can improve your ability to remember information if you forget the sequence of images.

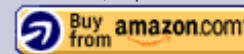
Both techniques are very simple to learn. Unfortunately they are both slightly unreliable as it is easy to confuse the order of images or forget images from a sequence.

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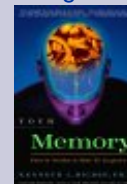
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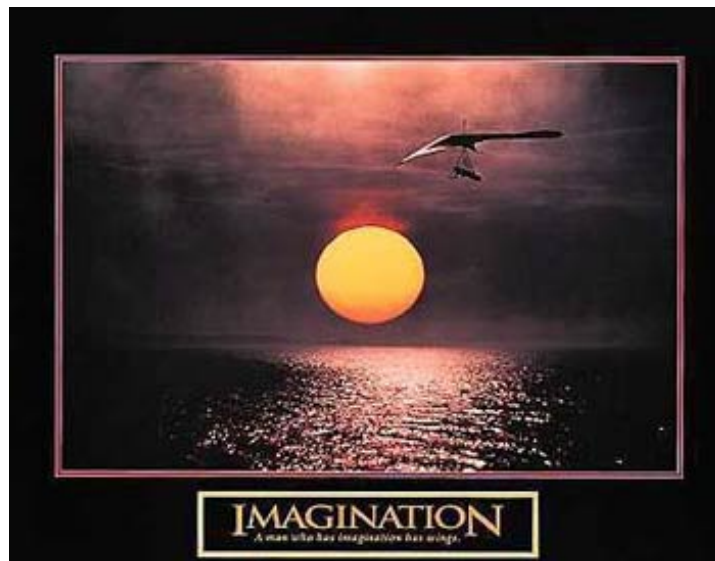
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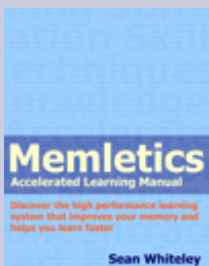
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## The Number/Rhyme Mnemonic - Remembering Simple Ordered Lists

### How to Use the Tool:

The Number/Rhyme technique is a very simple way of remembering lists in order.

It is an example of a peg system - a system where information is 'pegged' to a known sequence (here the numbers one to ten). By doing this you ensure that you do not forget any facts, as gaps in information are immediately obvious. It also makes remembering images easier as you always know part of the mnemonic images.

At a simple level you can use it to remember things such as a list of English Kings or American Presidents in their precise order. At a more advanced level it can be used, for example, to code lists of experiments to be recalled in a science exam.

The technique works by helping you to build up pictures in your mind, in which you represent numbers by things that rhyme with the number. You can then link these pictures to images of the things to be remembered.

The usual rhyming scheme is:

1. Bun
2. Shoe
3. Tree
4. Paw
5. Hive
6. Bricks
7. Heaven
8. Gate
9. Line
10. Hen

If you find that these images do not attract you or stick in your mind, then change them for something more meaningful.

Link these images to ones representing the things to be remembered. Often, the sillier the compound image, the more effectively you will remember it - see the

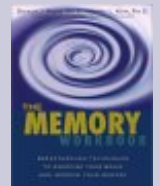
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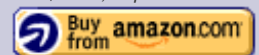
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### [The Memory Workbook](#) Douglas Mason et al.



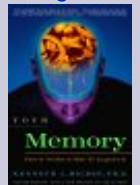
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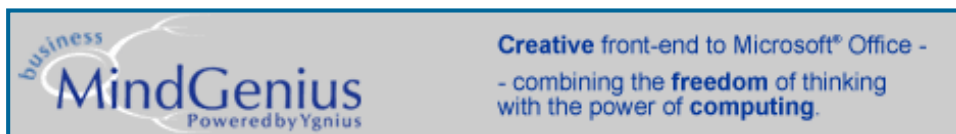
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**The Top 101 Experts**



introduction to this chapter to see how you can improve the image to help it stay clearly in your mind.



**Example:**

For example, you could remember a chronological list of ten Greek philosophers as:

1. Parmenides - a BUN topped with grated yellow PARMESan cheese
2. Heraclitus - a SHOE worn by HERACLes (Greek Hercules) glowing with a bright LIghT
3. Empedocles - A TREE from which the M-shaped McDonalds arches hang hooking up a bicycle PEDal
4. Democritus - think of a PAW print on the voting form of a DEMOCRaTic election
5. Protagoras - A bee HIVE being positively punched through (GORed?) by an atomic PROTon
6. Socrates - BRICKS falling onto a SOCK (with a foot inside!) from a CRATe.
7. Plato - A plate with angel's wings flapping around a white cloud
8. Aristotle - a friend called hARRY clutching a bOTtLE of wine vaulting over a gate
9. Zeno - A LINE of ZEN Buddhists meditating
10. Epicurus - a HEN's egg being mixed into an EPileptics's CURe.

Try either visualizing these images as suggested, or if you do not like them, come up with images of your own. Once you have done this, try writing down the names of the philosophers on a piece of paper. You should be able to do this by thinking of the number, then the part of the image associated with the number, and then the whole image. Finally you can decode the image to give you the name of the philosopher.

If the mnemonic has worked, you should not only recall the names of all the philosophers in the correct order, but should also be able to spot where you have left them out of the sequence. Try it - it's easier than it sounds.

You can use a peg system like this as a basis for knowledge in an entire area. The example above could form the basis for knowledge of ancient philosophy. You could now associate images representing the projects, systems and theories of each philosopher with the images coding the philosophers' names.

**Key points:**

The Number/Rhyme technique is a very effective method of remembering lists. It works by 'pegging' the things to be remembered to images rhyming with the numbers 0 - 9. By driving the associations with numbers you have a good starting point in reconstructing the images, you are aware if information is missing, and you can pick up and continue the sequence from anywhere within the list.

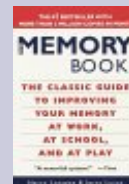
**Where to go from here:**

Kenneth Higbee's book is a classic in this area. As you would expect, it gives a good coverage of many different mnemonics, taking Mind Tools information to the next level of detail. A particularly good feature of the book is the way he relates his memory techniques to the latest medical and scientific research, as well as to practical experience with students. This book is not the easiest of reads on mnemonics, however it is certainly one of the most authoritative.

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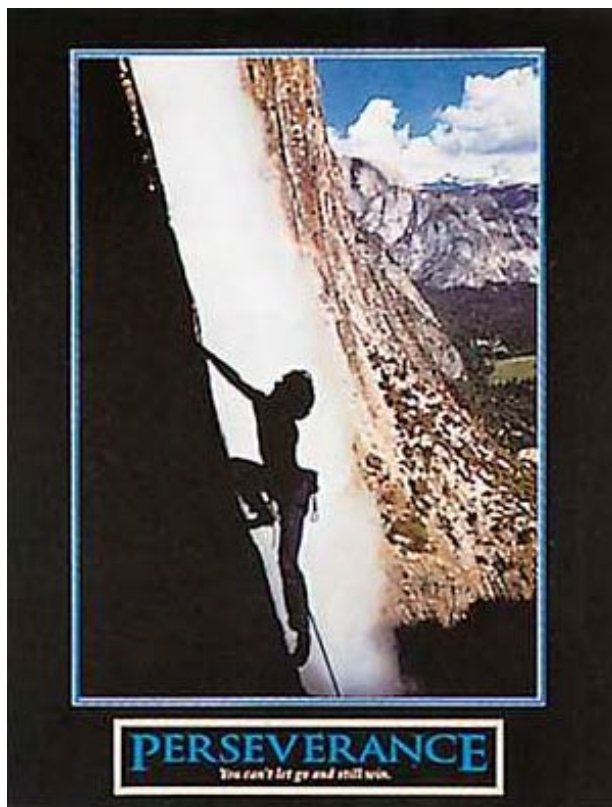
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## The Number/Shape Mnemonic - Remembering Simple Ordered Lists

### How to Use the Tool:

The Number/Shape system is very similar to the Number/Rhyme system. It is a very simple and effective way of remembering a list in a specific order. It is another example of a peg system.

The technique works by helping you to build up pictures in your mind, in which the numbers are represented by images shaped like the number. You can then associate these with the things you want to remember using striking images.

One image scheme is shown below:

1. Candle, spear, stick
2. Swan (beak, curved neck, body)
3. (rotate shape though 90 degrees!)
4. Sail of a yacht
5. A meat hook, a sea-horse facing right
6. A golf club
7. A cliff edge
8. An egg timer
9. A balloon with a string attached, flying freely
10. A hole

If you find that these images do not attract you or stick in your mind, then change them for something more meaningful to you.

As with the Number/Rhyme scheme, link these images to ones representing the things to be remembered.

In some cases these images may be more vivid than those in the number/rhyme scheme, and in other cases you may find the number/rhyme scheme more memorable. There is no reason why you cannot mix the most vivid images of each scheme together into your own compound scheme.

### Example:

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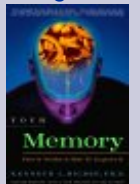


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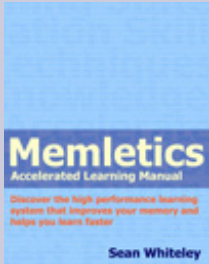
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We can use a list of more modern thinkers to illustrate the number/shape system:

1. Spinoza - a large CANDLE wrapped around with someone's SPINE
2. Locke - a SWAN trying to pick a LOCK with its wing
3. Hume - A HUMAN child BREAST feeding
4. Berkeley - A SAIL on top of a large hooked and spiked BURR in the LEE of a cliff
5. Kant - a CAN of spam hanging from a meat HOOK
6. Rousseau - a kangaroo SEWing with a GOLF CLUB
7. Hegel - a crooked trader about to be pushed over a CLIFF, HaGgLing to try to avoid being hurt
8. Kierkegaard - a large EGG TIMER containing captain KIRK and a GuARD from the starship enterprise, as time runs out
9. Darwin - a BALLOON floating upwards, being blown fAR by the WIND
10. Marx - a HOLE with white chalk MARKs around it's edge

### Key points:

The Number/Shape technique is a very effective method of remembering lists. It works by linking things to be remembered with the images representing the numbers 0 - 9. By using it in conjunction with the Number/Rhyme system, you can build potent images that can make very effective mnemonics.

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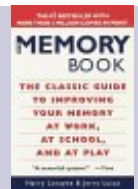
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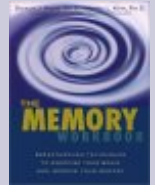
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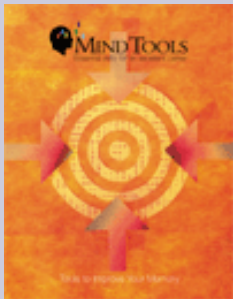
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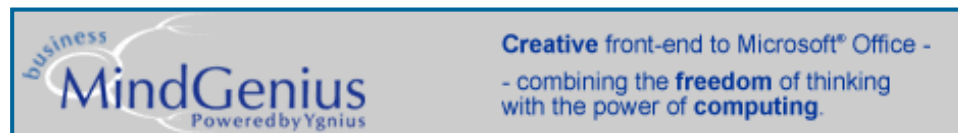
## The Alphabet Technique - Remembering Middle Length Lists

### How to Use the Tool:

The Alphabet system is a peg memory technique similar to, but more sophisticated than, the Number/Rhyme system. It is a good method for remembering longer lists of items in a specific order, in such a way that you can tell if items are missing.

It works by associating images representing letters of the alphabet with images you create for the things to be remembered.

When you are creating images for the letters of the alphabet, create images phonetically, so that the sound of the first syllable of the word is the name of the letter. For example, you might represent the letter 'k' with the word 'cake'.



Tony Buzan in his book '[Use Your Perfect Memory](#)' suggests using a system for creating vivid images that you can reconstruct if you forget them. He suggests taking the phonetic letter sound as the first consonant, and then, for the rest of the consonants in the word, using the first letters in alphabetical order that make a memorable word. For example for the letter 'S' (root 'Es') we would first see if any strong images presented themselves when we tried to create a word starting with 'EsA', 'EsB', 'EsC', 'EsD', 'EsE', etc.). This approach has the advantage of producing an image that you can reconstruct if you forget it. You might, however, judge that this is an unnecessary complication of a relatively simple system. In any case it is best to select the strongest image that comes to mind and stick with it.

One image scheme is shown below:

- A - Ace of spades
- B - Bee
- C - Sea
- D - Diesel engine
- E - Eel
- F - Effluent

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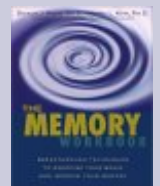
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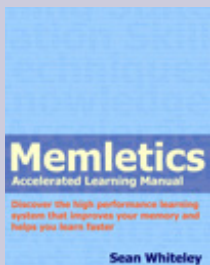


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- G - Jeans
- H - H-Bomb, itch
- I - Eye
- J - Jade
- K - Cake
- L - Elephant
- M - Empty
- N - Entrance
- O - Oboe
- P - Pea
- Q - Queue
- R - Ark
- S - Eskimo
- T - Teapot
- U - Unicycle
- V - Vehicle
- W - WC
- X - X-Ray
- Y - Wire
- Z - Zulu

If you find that these images do not attract you or stick in your mind, then change them for something more meaningful to you.

Once you have firmly visualised these images and have linked them to their root letters, you can associate them with information to be remembered.

See the introduction to this chapter to see how you can improve these pictures to help them stay clearly in your mind. Once you have mastered this technique you can multiply the it using the images described in the article on Expanding Memory Systems (see 7.2).

**Example:**

Continuing our mnemonic example of the names of philosophers, we will use the example of remembering a list of modern thinkers:

- A - Ace - Freud - a crisp ACE being pulled out of a FRying pan (FRiED)
  - B - Bee - Chomsky - a BEE stinging a CHiMp and flying off into the SKY
  - C - Sea - Genette - a GENerator being lifted in a NET out of the SEA
  - D - Diesel - Derrida - a DaRing RIDer surfing on top of a DIESEL train
  - E - Eagle - Foucault - Bruce Lee fighting off an attacking EAGLE with kung FU
  - F - Effluent- Joyce - environmentalists JOYfully finding a plant by an EFFLUENT pipe
  - G - Jeans - Nietzsche - a holey pair of JEANS with a kNEe showing through
  - H - H-Bomb - Kafka - a grey civil service CAFe being blown up by an H-Bomb
- etc.

**Key points:**

The Alphabet Technique links the items to be remembered with images of the letters A - Z. This allows you to remember a medium length list in the correct order. By pegging the items to be remembered to letters of the alphabet you know if you have forgotten items, and know the cues to use to trigger their recall.

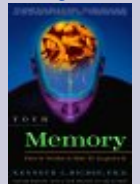
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The alphabet system takes a certain amount of learning.

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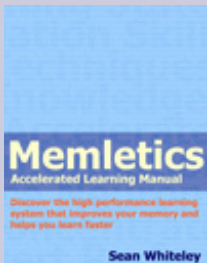
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**How to Use the Tool:**

The journey method is a powerful, flexible and effective mnemonic based around the idea of remembering landmarks on a well-known journey. It combines the narrative flow of the Link Method and the structure and order of the Peg Systems into one very powerful system.

You use the Journey Method by associating information with landmarks on a journey that you know well. This could, for example, be your journey to work in the morning; the route you use to get to the front door when you get up; the route to visit your parents; or a tour around a holiday destination. Once you are familiar with the technique you may be able to create imaginary journeys that fix in your mind, and apply these.

To use this technique most effectively, it is often best to prepare the journey beforehand. In this way the landmarks are clear in your mind before you try to commit information to them. One of the ways of doing this is to write down all the landmarks that you can recall in order on a piece of paper. This allows you to fix these landmarks as the significant ones to be used in your mnemonic, separating them from others that you may notice as you get to know the route even better.

To remember a list of items, whether these are people, experiments, events or objects, all you need do is associate these things with the landmarks or stops on your journey.

This is an extremely effective method of remembering long lists of information. With a sufficiently long journey you could, for example, remember elements on the periodic table, lists of Kings and Presidents, geographical information, or the order of cards in a shuffled pack.



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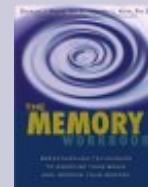


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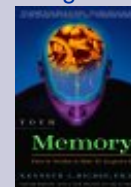
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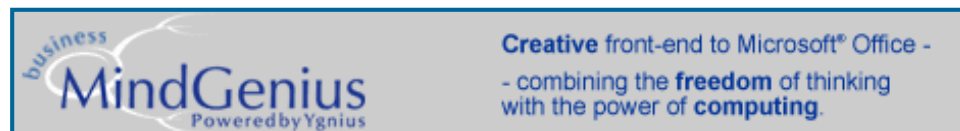
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The system is extremely flexible: all you need do to remember many items is to remember a longer journey with more landmarks. To remember a short list, only use part of the route!

One advantage of this technique is that you can use it to work both backwards and forwards, and start anywhere within the route to retrieve information.



You can use the technique well with other mnemonics. This can be done either by building complex coding images at the stops on a journey, or by linking to other mnemonics at each stop. You could start other journeys at each landmark. Alternatively, you may use a peg system to organize lists of journeys, etc.

See the [introduction](#) to this section for information on how to enhance the images used for this technique.

### Example:

You may, as a simple example, want to remember something mundane like this shopping list:

*Coffee, salad, vegetables, bread, kitchen paper, fish, chicken breasts, pork chops, soup, fruit, bath tub cleaner.*

You could associate this list with a journey to a supermarket. Mnemonic images could be:

1. *Front door:* spilt coffee grains on the doormat
2. *Rose bush in front garden:* growing lettuce leaves and tomatoes around the roses
3. *Car:* with potatoes, onions and cauliflower on the driver's seat
4. *End of the road:* an arch of French bread over the road
5. *Past garage:* with its sign wrapped in kitchen roll
6. *Under railway bridge:* from which haddock and cod are dangling by their tails
7. *Traffic lights:* chickens squawking and flapping on top of lights
8. *Past church:* in front of which a pig is doing karate, breaking boards
9. *Under office block:* with a soup slick underneath: my car tires send up jets of tomato soup as I drive through it
10. *Past car park:* with apples and oranges tumbling from the top level
11. *Supermarket car park:* a filthy bath tub is parked in the space next to my car!

### Key points:

The journey method is a powerful, effective method of remembering lists of information, by imagining images and events at stops on a journey.

As the journeys used are distinct in location and form, one list remembered using this technique is easy to distinguish from other lists.

Kenneth Higbee's book is a classic in this area. As you would expect, it gives a good coverage of many different mnemonics, taking Mind Tools information to the next level of detail. A particularly good feature of the book is the way he relates his memory techniques to the latest medical and scientific research, as well as to practical experience with students. This book is not the easiest of reads on mnemonics, however it is certainly one of the most authoritative.

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To use this technique you need to invest some time in preparing journeys clearly in your mind. This investment pays off many times over by the application of the technique.

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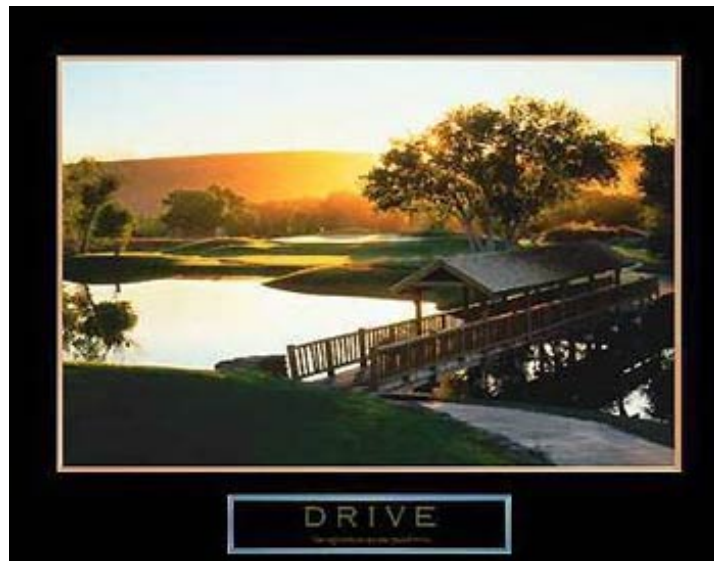


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## The Roman Room System - Remembering Grouped Information

### How to Use the Tool:

The Roman Room technique is an ancient and effective way of remembering information where its structure is not important. As an example, it serves as the basis of one of the powerful mnemonic systems used to [learn languages](#).

To use the technique, imagine a room that you know, such as your sitting room, bedroom, office or classroom. Within the room are objects. Associate images representing the information you want to remember with the objects in the room. To recall information, simply take a tour around the room in your mind, visualizing the known objects and their associated images.

The technique can be expanded by going into more detail, and keying information to be remembered to smaller objects. Alternatively you can open doors from your room into other rooms and use the objects in them as well. As you need them, you can build extensions to your rooms in your imagination, and fill them with objects that would logically be there.

You can use other rooms to store other categories of information.

There is no need to restrict this information to rooms: you could use a landscape or a town you know well, and populate it with memory images.

See the [introduction](#) to this chapter for information on how to enhance the images used for this technique.

### Example:

For example, I can use my sitting room as a basis for the technique. In this room I have the following objects:

*table, lamp, sofa, large bookcase, small bookcase, CD rack, tape racks, stereo*

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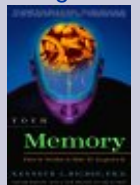


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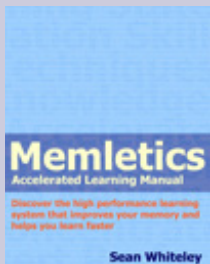
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*system, telephone, television, video, chair, mirror, black & white photographs, etc.*

I may want to remember a list of World War I war poets:

*Rupert Brooke, G.K. Chesterton, Walter de la Mare, Robert Graves, Rudyard Kipling, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, W.B. Yates*

I could visualize walking through my front door. Within this image, someone has painted a picture on it showing a scene from the Battle of the Somme. In the center of the picture is a man sitting in a trench writing in a dirty exercise book.

I walk into the sitting room, and look at the table. On the top is RUPERT the Bear sitting in a small BROOK (we do not need to worry about where the water goes in our imagination!) This codes for Rupert Brooke.

Someone seems to have done some moving: a CHEST has been left on the sofa. Some jeans ([Alphabet System](#): G=Jeans) are hanging out of one drawer, and some cake has been left on the top (K=Cake). This codes for G K Chesterton.

The lamp has a small statuette of a brick WALL over which a female horse (MARE) is about to jumping. This codes for Walter de la Mare.

etc.

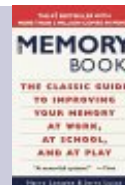
#### Key points:

The Roman Room technique is similar to the Journey method. It works by pegging images coding for information to known things, in this case to objects in a room.

The Roman Room technique is most effective for storing lists of unlinked information, while the journey method is better for storing lists of ordered items.

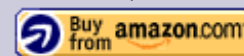
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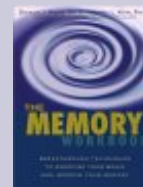
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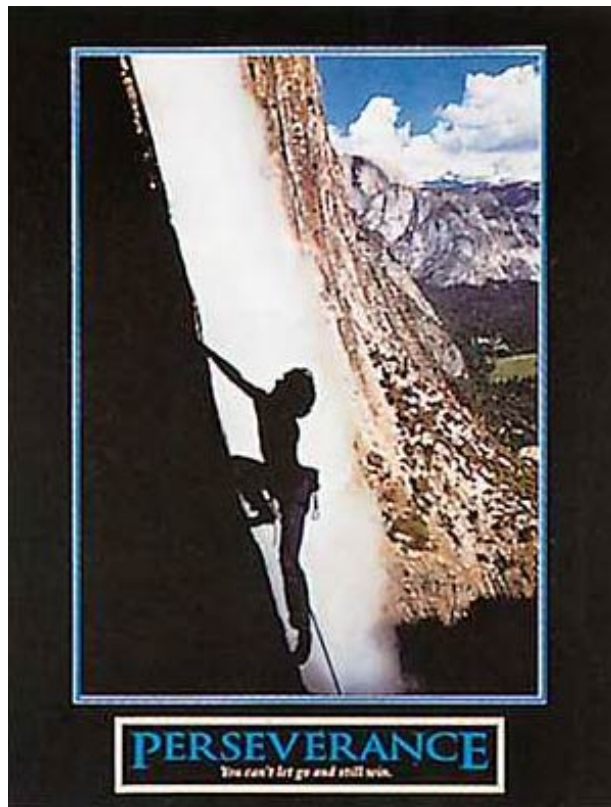
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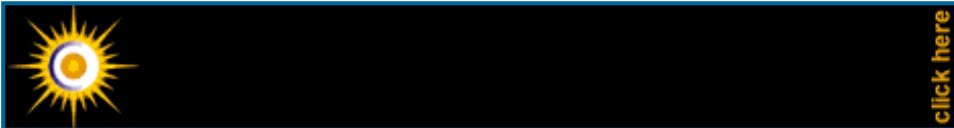
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## The Major System - Remembering Very Long Numbers

### How to Use the Tool:

The Major Memory System is one of the most powerful memory systems available. It takes a lot of time to master, but once learned is very powerful. The technique often forms the basis of some of the extraordinary, almost magical, memory feats performed by stage magicians and memory performers.

The system works by converting number sequences into nouns, nouns into images, and linking images into sequences. These sequences can be very complex and detailed.

The building blocks of the system are the association of the numbers below with the following consonant sounds:

- 0 - s, z, soft-c - remember as 'z is first letter of zero'
- 1 - d, t, th - remember as letters with 1 downstroke
- 2 - n - remember as having 2 downstrokes
- 3 - m - has three downstrokes
- 4 - r - imagine a 4 and an R glued together back-to-back
- 5 - L - imagine the 5 propped up against a book end (L)
- 6 - j, sh, soft-ch, dg, soft-g - g is 6 rotated 180 degrees.
- 7 - k, hard-ch, hard-c, hard-g, ng - imagine K as two 7s rotated and glued together
- 8 - f, v - imagine the bottom loop of the 8 as an eFluent pipe discharging waste (letter image of F in alphabet system)
- 9 - p, b - b as 9 rotated 180 degrees.

These associations need to be learned thoroughly before going further with the technique.

### Starting to use the Major System

The system operates on a number of levels, depending on the amount of time you are prepared to devote to learning the system.

The first level, which involves coding single digit numbers into small words, functions almost as a poor relation of the number/rhyme system. It is at higher levels that you can unleash the real power of the system. You should, however, learn to use this first level before moving on.

The trick with converting numbers into words is to use only the consonants that code

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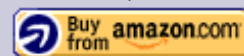
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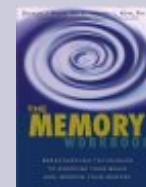
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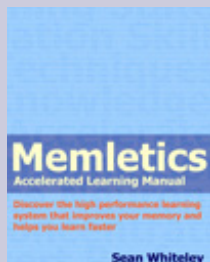
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information within the word, while using vowels to pad the consonants out with meaning. If you do have to use other consonants to make up a word, use only those that do not code for numbers - i.e. h, q, w, x, and y.

At the first level we code each number into a short noun. This is made up of the consonant coding for the number, and vowels that turn the consonant into a word. On a sheet of paper, write the numbers 0 to 9, and apply these rules to create your own memory words. Some examples are shown below:

- 0 - saw
- 1 - toe
- 2 - neigh
- 3 - ma
- 4 - ray
- 5 - law
- 6 - jaw
- 7 - key
- 8 - fee
- 9 - pie

You can use these words in association much like the other peg technique memory words.

### Moving to the second level

Similar rules apply to creating a standard word from two numbers. It is best not to try to use a single number word as a root, as this can confuse the image.

Write down the numbers 01 to 99, and apply the rules to create memory words for yourself.

A few examples are shown below:

- 09 - z, p - zap
- 17 - t, ch - tech
- 23 - n, m - name
- 36 - m, sh - mesh
- 41 - r,s - rose
- 52 - l, n - line
- 64 - ch, r - chair
- 75 - k, l - keel
- 89 - f, p - fop
- 98 - b, f - beef

### Taking the Major System Further

Just using double number words may be enough to make this a sufficiently powerful mnemonic for you. Alternatively you may decide to use triple number words, using the same construction rules as double number words.

Examples are:

- 182 - d, v, n - Devon
- 304 - m, s, r - miser
- 400 - r, c, s - races
- 651 - j, l, d - jellied
- 801 - f, z, d - fazed

Even though you can construct words from first principles each time, at this level of complexity it may be worth writing them down to make them easier to remember. You can then run through them many times to strengthen the link in your mind between the numbers and the associated words. This will help you to remember the appropriate word faster.

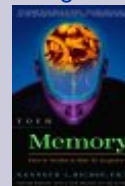
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## Using Words to Remember Long Numbers

Once you have come up with words and images to link to your numbers, you can start to apply the technique to remember, for example, long numbers. A good way of doing this is to associate Major System words with stops on a journey (see 7.1.5).

A very good freeware tool, [2Know](http://mywebpages.comcast.net/2know/), is available to help create the words and phrases that help you remember these numbers - this can be downloaded from <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/2know/>.

### Example:

The number Pi is 3.14159265359 (to 11 decimal places). Using the major system and the [journey system \(see example\)](#) together, I can remember this as:

- Passing my Ma (3) by the front door of my house
- Seeing Michelangelo's David (1,4,1) sleeping under the rose bush in the garden
- Someone has tied a loop (5,9) of yellow ribbon onto the steering wheel of my car
- I see a poster with a photo of a steaming pile of sausages and mashed potato, with the title 'glorious nosh' (2,7) at the end of the road
- A lama (5,3) is grazing on grass outside the garage forecourt
- Another loop (5,9) of yellow ribbon has been tied around the railway bridge. This is getting strange!

### Key points:

The major memory system works by linking numbers to consonants, and then by linking these into words. By using the images these words create, and linking them together with the journey system, large amounts of information can be accurately memorized.

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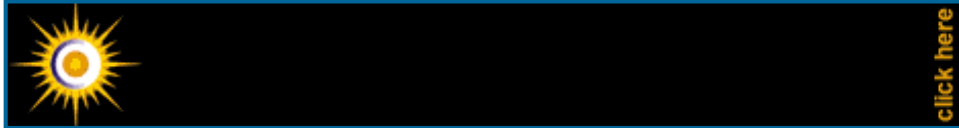
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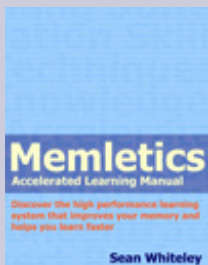
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**Using Mind Maps\* to Remember Structured Information**

\* "Mind Map" is a trademark of the Buzan Organization

**How to Use the Tool:**

Mind Maps are not formally mnemonics. They do, however, help you to lay out the structure of a topic as a clear 'shape' that you can remember easily. By seeing this shape in your mind, you can prompt yourself to remember the information coded within it.

This becomes even easier if you have coded this information using striking images. See the introduction to this chapter to see how to make information as memorable as possible.



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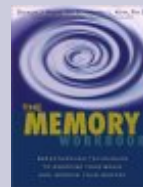


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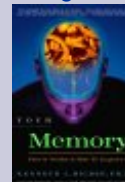
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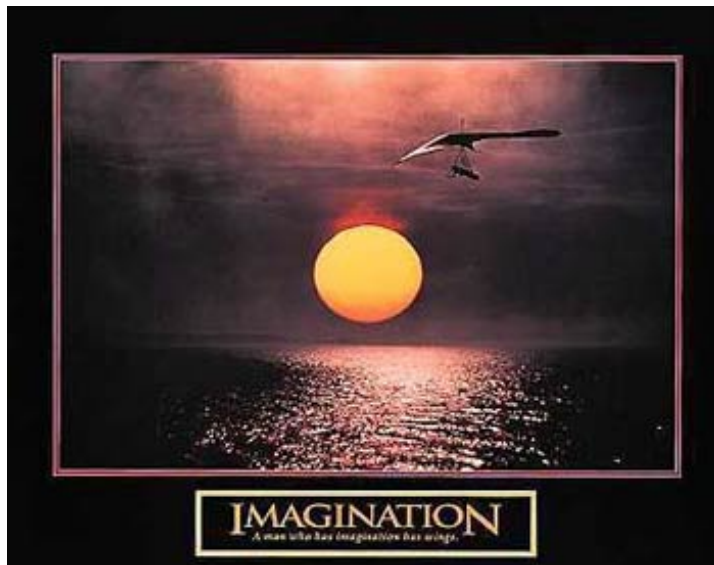
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## Using Aide Memoires

### How to Use the Tool:

An Aide Memoire (Memory aid) is a structured list of points or headings that should be considered when solving a particular problem. It tends to be specific to the type of problem being faced.

A good aide memoire can be a very powerful planning tool, as it will contain a great deal of the experience of the people who developed it. If you use a good aide memoire effectively, you can be reasonably confident that you will have considered all relevant factors. Often this makes the difference between carrying out a task effectively and making a mess of it, particularly when you are under pressure.

Aide Memoires are routinely used in areas as diverse as computer systems analysis, construction of financial proposals and military planning.

### Developing an Aide Memoire

If you are solving a common problem, then a good aide memoire may already exist for it. If you cannot find a good pre-prepared one, then you may have to develop it for yourself. This is worthwhile where you need to plan a number of similar jobs.

Developing an aide memoire is an iterative process: first you start by producing what you think is a definitive list of points or headings that should be considered. Use this to plan the job. After the job is complete, review the list, and see if there are any additional points that should be included. Every time an unforeseen problem arises on a project, ask yourself whether you need to prompt yourself on it on your list.

As your aide memoire improves, so will the quality of your planning.

### Example:

Business Analysts use a number of different aide memoires for designing computer software. The one used depends on the size and type of job being executed. An example of a simple one is shown below. This is used during preparation of a specification to ensure that relevant factors are considered.

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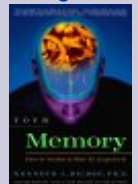


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## Customer Requirements:

- Stated Requirement and Purpose of Enhancement
- Special Requirements

## Project Analysis:

- Volumes of Data and Processing Time
- Technical Risks and Feasibility
- Implications: Hardware, Supporting software, etc.
- System-specific considerations
- Project Stages

## Project Implementation

- Detailed Design
- Quality Assurance/Test Plan
- Documentation
- Training
- Installation
- Follow Up Work

The analyst will run through this list of headings while preparing a specification to ensure that he or she has considered all aspects of a problem. Where headings are not relevant they are ignored. By using and developing the aide memoire, the analyst can be reasonably confident that all appropriate project stages have been taken into consideration. This ensures that a fair price is charged for work done.

## Key points:

An aide memoire is a standard list of points or headings that show what you should consider while you are planning to solve a problem. By using an aide memoire you ensure that you do not forget important factors.

Aide memoires should be improved continuously. If you find that have not included an important point, then update the list appropriately. This ensures that the next time you use the aide memoire you will remember to think about the point. This will improve the quality and depth of future planning that you carry out.

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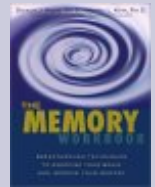
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### Mind Tools Ebook



## How to... Learn a Foreign Language

### Systems Needed:

- [Link Method](#)
- [Roman Room Mnemonic](#)

### Using the Tools:

Foreign languages are the ideal subject area for the use of memory techniques. Learning vocabulary is often a matter of associating a meaningless collection of syllables with a word in your own language.

Traditionally people have associated these words by repetition - by saying the word in their own language and the foreign language time and time and time and time again. You can improve on this tedious way of learning by using three good techniques:

#### 1. Using Mnemonics to link words

This is a simple extension of the link method described in 7.1.1. Here you are using images to link a word in your own language with a word in a foreign language.

For example, in learning English/French vocabulary:

- English: rug/carpet - French: tapis - imagine an ornate oriental carpet with a tap as the central design woven in chrome thread
- English: grumpy - French: grognon - a grumpy man groaning with irritation
- English: to tease - French: taquiner - a woman teasing her husband as she takes in the washing.

This technique was formalized by Dr. Michael Gruneberg, and is known as the 'LinkWord' technique. He has produced language books (an example is [German by Association](#)) in many language pairs to help students acquire the basic vocabulary needed to get by in the language (usually about 1000 words). It is claimed that using this technique this basic vocabulary can be learned in just 10 hours.

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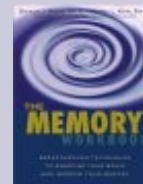
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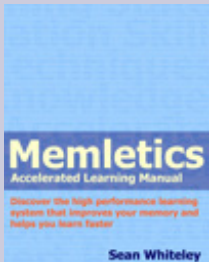
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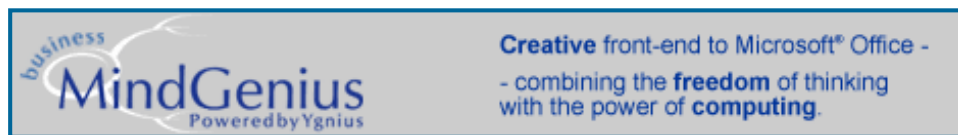


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## 2. The Town Language Mnemonic

This is a very elegant, effective mnemonic that fuses a sophisticated variant of the Roman Room system with the system described above.

This depends on the fact that the basic vocabulary of a language relates to everyday things: things that you can usually find in a city, town or village. To use the technique, choose a town that you are very familiar with. Use objects within that place as the cues to recall the images that link to foreign words.

### Nouns in the town:

Nouns should be associated to the most relevant locations: for example, the image coding the foreign word for book could be associated with a book on a shelf in the library. You could associate the word for bread with an image of a loaf in a baker's shop. Words for vegetables could be associated with parts of a display outside a greengrocer's. Perhaps there is a farm just outside the town that allows all the animal name associations to be made.

### Adjectives in the park:

Adjectives can be associated with a garden or park within the town: words such as green, smelly, bright, small, cold, etc. can be easily related to objects in a park. Perhaps there is a pond there, or a small wood, or perhaps people with different characteristics are walking around.

### Verbs in the sports center:

Verbs can most easily be associated with a sports center or playing field. This allows us all the associations of lifting, running, walking, hitting, eating, swimming, driving, etc.

### Remembering Genders

In a language where gender is important, a very good method of remembering this is to divide your town into two main zones. In one zone you code information on masculine gender nouns, while in the other zone you code information on feminine nouns. Where the language has a neutral gender, then use three zones. You can separate these areas with busy roads, rivers, etc. To fix the gender of a noun, simply associate its image with a place in the correct part of town. This makes remembering genders easy!

### Many Languages, many towns

Another elegant spin-off of the technique comes when learning several languages: normally this can cause confusion. With the town mnemonic, all you need do is choose a different city, town or village for each language to be learned. Ideally this might be in the relevant country. Practically, however, you might just decide to use a local town with the appropriate foreign flavor.

## 3. The hundred most common words

Tony Buzan, in his book 'Using your Memory', points out that just 100 words comprise 50% of all words used in conversation in a language. Learning this core 100 words gets you a long way towards being able to speak in that language, albeit at a basic level. The 100 basic words used in conversation are shown below:

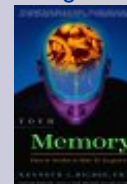
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16. (I) find	17. First	18. For	19. Friend	20. From
21. (I) go	22. Good	23. Good-bye	24. Happy	25. (I) have
26. He	27. Hello	28. Here	29. How	30. I
31. (I) am	32. If	33. In	34. (I) know	35. Last
36. (I) like	37. Little	38. (I) love	39. (I) make	40. Many
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56. Other	57. Our	58. Out	59. Over	60. People
61. Place	62. Please	63. Same	64. (I) see	65. She
66. So	67. Some	68. Sometimes	69. Still	70. Such
71. (I) tell	72. Thank you	73. That	74. The	75. Their
76. Them	77. Then	78. There is	79. They	80. Thing
81. (I) think	82. This	83. Time	84. To	85. Under
86. Up	87. Us	88. (I) use	89. Very	90. We
91. What	92. When	93. Where	94. Which	95. Who
96. Why	97. With	98. Yes	99. You	100. Your

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### Summary

The three approaches to learning foreign languages shown here can be very effective. They help to point out:

- the most important words to learn
- show how to link words in your own language to words in a foreign language, and
- show how to structure recall of the language through use of the town mnemonic.

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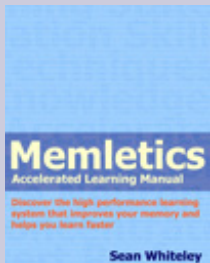
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### Advanced Mega Memory

by Kevin Trudeau



## How to... Remember Information for Exams

### Systems Needed:

- [The Number/Rhyme Technique](#)
- [The Number/Shape Technique](#)
- [The Alphabet Technique](#)
- [The Journey Technique](#)
- [Concept Maps](#)

### Using the Tools:

A very effective way of structuring information for revision is to draw up a full, cloud coded [concept map](#) of a subject. This will help you to see the overall structure of the topic and show you the associations between pieces of information. A good concept map can be an effective mnemonic in its own right.

The problem with this is that you can forget the label on a line on a concept map. A more reliable method is to take your concept map, and break it down into a numbered list of important points. You can then use one of the peg techniques (see [links above](#)) to remember the items on the list. Alternatively you can use the [journey technique](#) for longer lists.

By associating items on a list with a peg system or journey, you can check that you have retrieved all items held by the mnemonic. Supporting facts can be associated into images or sub-mnemonics. These could be triggered by the pegs for the peg systems, or at landmarks if you use the journey system. Alternatively you can loosely associate this information with the facts coded.

Retrieving all the facts necessary to answer an exam essay question becomes as simple as running through the mnemonic in your mind. As you go, jot down the retrieved facts that are relevant to the question. Once you have written these down, you can apply any other mnemonics you have coded, or note any associated facts and connections that occur to you. This should ensure that you have all possible information available to you, and should help you to produce a good essay plan.

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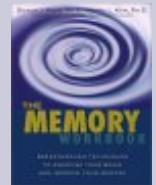
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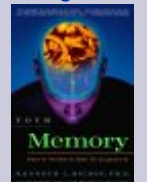
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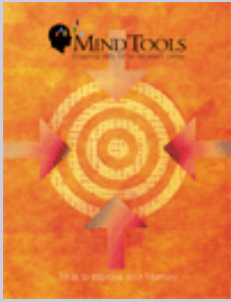


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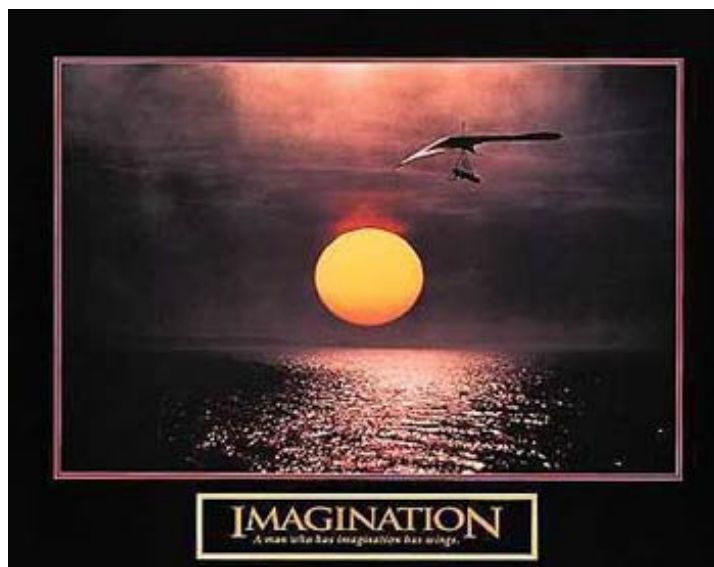


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### Advanced Mega Memory

by Kevin Trudeau



## How to... Remember People's Names

### Systems Needed:

- [The Link Method](#)
- [The Roman Room Mnemonic](#)

### Using the Tools:

Remembering people's names needs a slightly different approach from all the others explained so far in this section. The techniques used, though, are quite simple:

#### 1. Face association

Examine a person's face discretely when you are introduced. Try to find an unusual feature, whether ears, hairline, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, complexion, etc.

Create an association between that characteristic, the face, and the name in your mind. The association may be to link the person with someone else you know with the same name. Alternatively it may be to associate a rhyme or image of the name with the person's face or defining feature.

#### 2. Repetition

When you are introduced, ask for the person to repeat their name. Use the name yourself as often as possible (without overdoing it!). If it is unusual, ask how it is spelled or where it is comes from, and if appropriate, exchange cards. Keep in mind that the more often you hear and see the name, the more likely it is to sink in.

Also, after you have left that person's company, review the name in your mind several times. If you are particularly keen you might decide to write it down and make notes.

### Summary

The methods suggested for remembering names are fairly simple and obvious, but are useful. Association either with images of a name or with other people can really help. Repetition and review help to confirm your memory.

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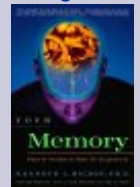


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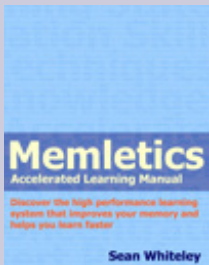
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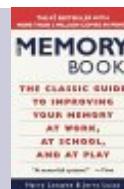
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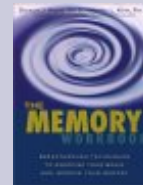
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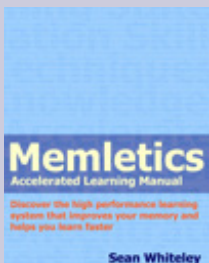


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### Memletics Accelerated Learning



## How to... Remember Lists and Long Numbers

### Systems Needed:

- [Link Method](#)
- [The Number/Rhyme Technique](#)
- [The Number/Shape Technique](#)
- [The Alphabet Technique](#)
- [The Journey Technique](#)
- [The Major System](#)

### Using the Tools:

Remembering lists are what many mnemonics are for. You can code almost any information into these mnemonic lists. All that you need is the imagination to come up with the relevant associations.

To memorize short lists, use:

- [The Link or Story Methods](#)
- [The Number/Rhyme System](#), or
- [The Number/Shape Method](#)

To remember intermediate and longer lists, use:

- [The Alphabet Technique](#), or
- [The Journey Technique](#)

As with lists, using mnemonic systems, remembering numbers becomes extremely simple. There are a number of approaches, depending on the types of numbers being remembered:

#### 1. Short numbers

The easiest, but least reliable, way of remembering numbers is to use simple [Number/Rhyme](#) images associated in a [story](#).

A better way is to use a simple peg system, where, for example, you can associate digits from the [Number/Rhyme System](#) into positions organized with the [Alphabet System](#).

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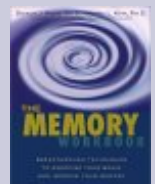
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### 2. Long numbers (e.g. Pi)

You can store long numbers most effectively with the [Journey System](#). At a simple level, single numbers can be stored at each stop on the journey using [Number/Rhyme](#) or [Number/Shape](#) images. At a more advanced level you can increase the number of digits stored at each stop by using the [Major System](#).

By using all the simple techniques together you should be able to store a 100 digit number with relatively little effort. Using the more powerful systems, holding it to 1000 digits might not be too much of a challenge.

### 3. Telephone Numbers

These can be remembered simply by associating numbers from the [Number/Rhyme](#) system with positions in either the [Alphabet Technique](#) or the [Journey System](#). You can then associate these with the face or name of the person whose number you are remembering.

For example, to remember that someone's phone number is 735-3458, I can imagine myself traveling to their flat: with my destination firmly in mind, I envisage the following stops on my journey:

1. Front door: the door has sprouted angel's wings, and is flying up to heaven! (7)
2. Rose bush: a small sapling (tree, 3) is growing its way through the middle of the bush.
3. Car: some bees have started to build a hive (5) under the wheel of my car. I have to move it very carefully to avoid damaging it.
4. End of road: a tree (3) has fallen into the road. I have to drive around it.
5. Past garage: Someone has nailed a door (4) to the sign. Strange!
6. Under railway bridge: the bees are building another hive (5) between the girders!
7. Beside the river: A rusty farm gate (8) is blocking the road.

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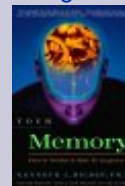
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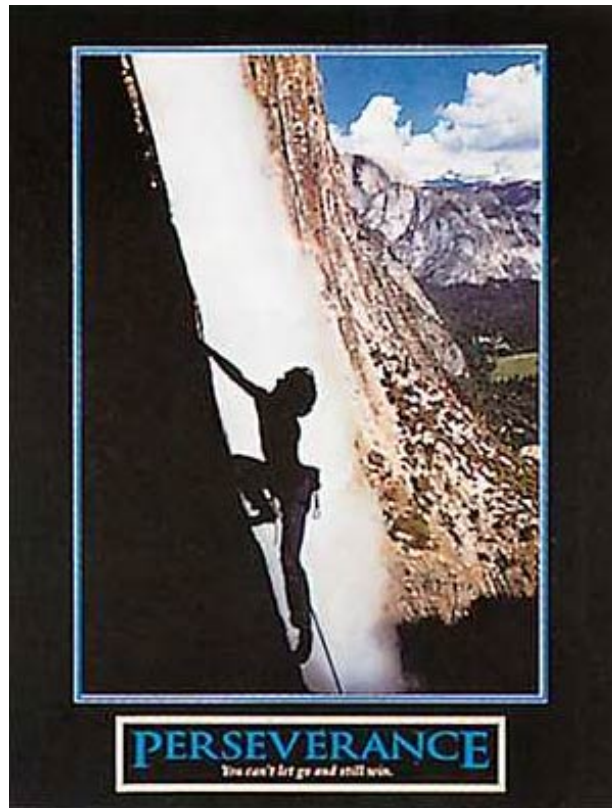


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