

Mnemonic Devices

A mnemonic device is more than just a hard-to-pronounce word. It's actually the name for a style of memorization that works well with information that needs to be recalled, but not necessarily understood. Mnemonic devices can be particularly useful for remembering steps in a process, historical dates or lists of information.



Grouping

- Classify lists based on a common characteristic.
- Remembering the key element of the group is the key to remembering all items.
- EXAMPLE:** Grouping minerals by 'metal' and 'stone'.

Rhymes & Music

- Set what you need to remember to a common rhyme or a piece of music.
- EXAMPLE:** It's easy to recall when Columbus discovered America by remembering the rhyme, "*In fourteen hundred and ninety-two Columbus sailed the ocean blue.*"

Acronyms

- Are helpful when needing to remember a list of words or concepts.
- The first letter from each word in a list forms a key word, name or sentence.
- EXAMPLE:** In music, the phrase "*Every Good Boy Does Fine*" stands for the lines on the treble clef (EGBDF).
- EXAMPLE:** The acronym D.A.R.E. stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

Method of Loci

- Visualize a room or route that is familiar to you, placing each item along the route and "pick it up" as you mentally walk around the room.
- EXAMPLE:** To remember the Presidents of the United States in order, you might come up with a dramatic image of each president in locations along your imaginary route.

Mnemonic devices are most helpful for remembering items in a list or in a sequence. However, they do not help you to *understand* the material; it will only help you to recall the information and its order. These memory tactics also work best when they are as dramatic and off-the-wall as possible – the more unique a mnemonic device you create, the easier it is to remember!