

Study Techniques

Below you will find some suggested study techniques. Don't be afraid to experiment to find the strategies that work best for you. You may also find it helpful to vary and adapt your study techniques according to the content and format of the information you wish to retain.

- Use **flash cards** to record key information
- Design **quizzes and questions** to test your knowledge
- Synthesise information by **writing summaries** in your own words
- Write skeleton essay plans or outlines for **practice or past exam questions**
- Study with friends and take turns to **teach** particular topics to **each other**, or share ideas and find solutions to questions and problems together
- Vary the **format** of the information you are learning: create **timelines, cycle/flow charts, grids, or labelled diagrams**, or read your notes aloud
- Take **photos** of important diagrams, quotations or information to refresh your memory at any time
- Use **mind maps** or **spider diagrams** to chart each subject, lecture or theme. This helps with drawing **connections** and **comparisons**, as well as identifying **gaps** in your knowledge
- Make your notes visually appealing and easily memorable with **colour, pictures, and patterns**
- Use **voice notes** to summarise information or to record definitions of key terms concepts, then play these back regularly to refresh your memory



Consider your **study space** – is it the right environment for productive, distraction-free study? How could you minimise distractions?

Time management is key to effective study: see LDS resources on this topic

For further information on this topic, or any other area of academic skills, email lds@qub.ac.uk.

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Optimising your Memory

In order to get the most from your study sessions, consider using the techniques below to optimise your memory.

- Use **nonsense words** and **acronyms** to recall lists and strings of information (e.g. ROYGBIV for colours of the rainbow).
- Formulate **rhymes or songs** to which you can recite information
- Use '**journey pegs**': build associations between the important points of a topic and the the milestones of a familiar journey. This can help you remember lists of information in a particular order.
- Make **numbered lists**.
- **Summarise** notes, and then distill these into **bullet points** on index cards for easy recall.
- **Test yourself**: divide a page into two columns and write key summary points or diagrams on one side, with corresponding notes on the other side. Test yourself by looking at the key word, thinking around the point, and then checking to see if you have recalled the information required/
- The '**look-and-cover**' **technique**: after reading or learning a piece of information, cover the page and write down what you remember. Check what you got right, note what you omitted, and try again.
- The '**practise and review**' technique: read your notes, write out the key points, and rewrite it. Challenge yourself to rewrite the information after a short break (e.g. 10 minutes), then a longer break (e.g. an hour) and again one day later. If you struggle to remember the topic or leave out points at each stage, then repeat from the start.
- At the end of each revision session, **review** key points for reinforcement.

Planning and goal setting are essential for getting the most from your study sessions. Divide your work into smaller, achievable tasks, establish targets and milestones to meet deadlines, and set a clear focus for each revision session.

Allow yourself **incentives** and **rewards** for reaching your goals, and build in time for **rest** and **relaxation** in your study timetable.

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