

Use these tools to refine your study habits.

Memory Principles

Below is a list of memory or learning principles with a brief definition of each.

★ Making an Effort to Remember ★

- **Interest** - The brain prioritizes by meaning, value and relevance. To have meaning, you must understand what you are learning. In order to remember something thoroughly, you must be interested in it and think that it has value and relevance in your life.
- **Intent to Remember** - Your attitude has much to do with whether you remember something or not. A key factor to remembering is having a positive attitude that you get it right the first time. Attention is not the same as learning, but little learning takes place without attention.
- **Basic Background** - Your understanding of new materials depends on what you already know that you can connect it to. The more you increase your basic knowledge, the easier it is to build new knowledge on this background.

★ Controlling the Amount and Form ★

- **Selectivity** - You must determine what is most important and select those parts to begin the process of studying and learning.
- **Meaningful Organization** - You can learn and remember better if you can group ideas into some sort of meaningful categories or groups.

★ Strengthening Neural Connections ★

- **Recitation** - Saying ideas aloud in your own words strengthens synaptic connections and gives you immediate feedback. The more feedback you get, the faster and more accurate your learning.
- **Visualization** - The brain's quickest and probably the longest-lasting response is to images. By making a mental picture, you use an entirely different part of the brain than you did by reading or listening.
- **Association** - Memory is increased when facts to be learned are consciously associated with something familiar to you. Memory is essentially formed by making neural connections. Begin by asking, "What is this like that I already know and understand?"

★ Allowing Time to Solidify Pathways ★

- **Consolidation** - Your brain must have time for new information to establish and solidify a neuronal pathway. When you make a list or review your notes right after class, you are using the principle of consolidation.
- **Distributed Practice** - A series of shorter study sessions distributed over several days is preferable to fewer but longer study sessions.

The information on this page is from [Practicing College Learning Strategies, 3rd edition](#) by Dr. Carolyn Hopper published by Houghton Mifflin, 2003