

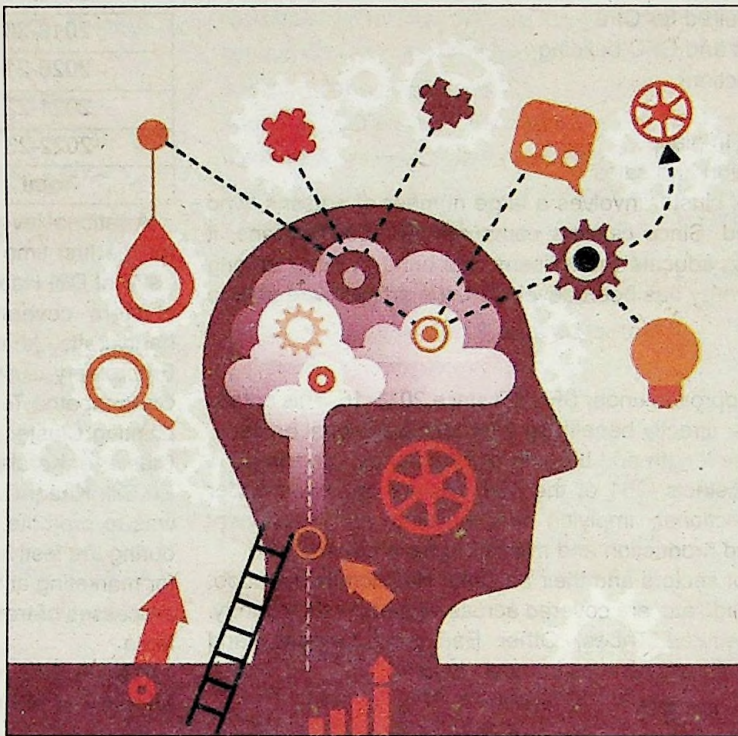
Ten Best Memory Techniques for Competitive Exams

Ruchi Shrimalli

Whether you are preparing for a bank exam or the UPSC exam or any other competitive exam, you need to memorize a lot of facts and details. Fortunately, there are some research-based memory techniques that you can use to improve your ability to recall information quickly and accurately during exams. Here is a list of the 10 best research-based memory techniques which will help you in your preparations for competitive exams:

Mnemonic Devices

One of the best memory techniques that you can use to remember information for a competitive exam is to use mnemonic devices. These are acronyms, rhymes, and stories that will help you to remember the facts quickly and easily. For example, if you need to remember the planets in order from the sun to the furthest, you



can use the mnemonic device "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles" (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune).

Some of the popular mnemonics for the General Studies paper are:

HOMES - Great Lakes of North America.

H - Huron

O - Ontario

M - Michigan

E - Erie

S - Superior

BAPU KA HATH - Kings of ancient India who practised Buddhism

B - Bimbisara

A - Ashoka

P - Prasanjeet

U - Udaysen

KA - Kanishka

HATH - Harshavardhana

TARIK - Countries around the Caspian Sea

T - Turkmenistan

Continued on page 61

EN QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Readers' views elicited on important issues

Last date for entry submission: 04/01/2023

FREE SUBSCRIPTION FOR WINNERS

BEST ENTRY on page 63

Continued from page 1

Ten Best Memory Techniques for Competitive Exams

- A - Azerbaijan
- R - Russia
- I - Iran
- K - Kazakhstan

Indian Rabbits Seem Chubby and Jovial - Rivers in North West India

- I - Indus
- R - Ravi
- S - Satluj
- Ch - Chenab
- J - Jhelum

BHAJSAB - Mughal Rulers

- B - Babar
- H - Humayun
- A - Akbar
- J - Jehangir
- S - Shah Jahan
- A - Aurangzeb
- B - Bahadur Shah Zafar

Chunking

The famous memory research paper "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two" states that an average adult human being can only hold about 7 items at a time in short-term memory. Hence, grouping related items into larger chunks can help them remember more for the short term (and for the long term ultimately).

For example, if you have to study 'Modern History' for an exam, you could break it down into the following chunks:

- India in 1750 - Decline of the Mughal Empire, rule of later Mughals, and emergence of successor states
- The British expansion in India - East India Company, Presidencies, Governors-General, and battles
- The changes introduced by the British in India
- Popular uprisings and revolts against the British
- Socio-religious movements in India
- India's struggle for independence: The Indian freedom movement

Clubbing information like this helps in easier memorization and faster recall during exams.

Imagery

This technique involves forming mental images of words or ideas to remember them better. For example, if you need to memorize the periodic table of elements, you can create an image in your mind of a table with each element labelled with its symbol and atomic number.

Some of the tricks to create more memorable images to remember better are:

- Link the image with something funny or silly for easier recall. For example, if you need to remember that nitrogen has the atomic number 7, imagine a nitpicking monkey wearing a number 7 jersey.
- Use vivid and colourful images that stand out in your memory. For example, you are more likely to remember the name of SAARC countries if you imagine a brightly coloured map of South Asia with each of the countries marked in different colours.
- Create an imaginary scene rather than just a single object. For example, imagine a room full of historical personalities discussing their ideologies instead of trying to memorize their names and affiliations.

Visualization

This technique involves using visual images to help you remember facts and figures. For example, if you need to remember the capitals of different countries, you can create an image in your mind of a map with each country labelled with its capital.

But visualization is more than using imagery. You can visualize a whole scene or drama involving the facts or figures you need to memorize. For example, if you need to remember all the movements of Mahatma Gandhi and the events associated with them, imagine a scene where he is actively doing something related to that movement and how events are unfolding. The more vivid and realistic your visualization is, the easier it will be for you to remember what you need to. You can 'feel' smells, sounds, tastes, emotional states, and physical sensations when you visualize. This will help to strengthen your memory and recall.

Spaced Repetition

This technique involves studying the same material multiple times at regular intervals over a period of time. This method of studying has been proven to be the most effective way to remember information for a long period.

Experts recommend that at the beginning of the learning process, the intervals of revisiting a topic should be shorter (for example, one hour, four hours or one day). Once the student feels that the topic or concept is fully understood, they can systematically increase it to four days, one week and two weeks. The idea is that one should review the material before they forget it - to cement it in their long-term memory.

You can either use the offline 'Box' method or an online or mobile spaced repetition app to review what you need to study at the designated intervals.

In the 'Box' method, you need to make three boxes:

- When you study a new topic, create flashcards for it and place them in the first box. Review them within 24 hours.
- Once you recall what's written on the flashcard correctly, place it in the second box which contains flashcards that you need to review within a week.
- If you still recall the material on your flashcard correctly after a week, place it in the third box which contains flashcards that you need to review within a fortnight.

If you can't recall some material, place related flashcards in the first box once again.

This is a very effective way of remembering and retaining information.

Elaborative Rehearsal

This technique involves actively engaging with the material by asking yourself questions about it and making connections between related concepts. For example, if you are learning about different types of economic systems, you can ask yourself questions such as "What are the similarities and differences between a mixed economy and a command economy?"

This is a very effective memory strategy for the in-depth processing of the material. Elaborative rehearsal helps you to create meaningful links between related concepts and understand them in greater detail. As you link new information with what you already know, you develop your critical thinking and analytical reasoning abilities which are some of the key skills you need to ace competitive exams. This memory technique is especially effective for learning complex topics that have many interrelated elements.

Acronyms

This technique involves creating an acronym to help you remember a series of facts or figures. For example, if you

need to remember the six measuring tools of trigonometry (sine, cosine, tangent, cotangent, secant and cosecant), you can create an acronym such as "SCTCSC".

Those who are preparing for IBPS Recruitment Exams, UGC NET or CSIR NET, IIT JAM, SSC, and RRB exams will need to learn a lot of standard abbreviations, such as:

- ARDR - Agricultural and Rural Debt Relief
- ASEAN - Association of South-East Asian Nations
- BCSBI - Banking Codes and Standards Board of India
- BIFR - Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction and more.

To learn them, you can write them several times or create flashcards that can be used for self-testing or reviewing the material from time to time.

Memory Palace

This technique involves creating a mental image or map of a place that you are familiar with, such as your house or school. You then place the information that you need to remember within the map to recall it more easily.

A candidate preparing for the CA exam, for example, can place the key concepts related to accounting such as depreciation and accounts receivable in one room of their memory palace, while the information related to auditing such as verification and testing can be placed in another room. In this way, you create a series of mental connections between facts or figures that are easier to remember.

Memory palaces can be also used for memorizing quotes, formulas and equations.

When you use this technique, you need to think like an architect. You should create an elaborate mental image that contains as much detail as possible. You can organize the material into categories such as colours, shapes or stories to make it easier to remember.

Memory palaces are especially useful for remembering detailed information that needs to be recalled in a specific order. They can help you ace those competitive exams which require long-term retention of knowledge.

Once you have created your memory palace, practice using it on a regular basis to strengthen the association between the material and the mental image. This will help you recall information more quickly and accurately when it comes time for your exam.

Rhymes, Songs or Parodies

When you start feeling drowsy, overwhelmed or bored while studying, this technique can be a great way to re-energize your study session. To use it effectively, you need to create a song, poem or parody that incorporates the facts and figures that you are trying to learn.

When preparing for an exam such as SBI PO or similar banking exams, you can use this technique to remember the names of the various banking committees and their chairpersons. For example:

- RBI - Shri Shaktikanta Das
- FSDC - Nirmala Sitharaman
- SEBI - Madhabi Puri Buch

You can put these words to the music of your favourite jingle or song, and keep on singing them until you learn them. You may even choreograph dance moves (a foot tap or a shake of the head) to the words to make them even more memorable. During the exam, if you are forgetting a certain answer, it will be easier for you to recall it by doing the related move.

Using All Your Senses

This technique involves using all five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell and taste) to help you remember information. For example, if you are studying a topic such as human anatomy, you can create vivid mental images of each organ and its functions and recall them by associating them with particular smells or tastes.

Research proves that using incense sticks or sniffing a certain scent while studying can help you remember information more easily. Some students prefer to listen to music while studying. You might try eating a different flavour for each set of information or rubbing your hands on a specific texture while learning a specific type of information.

When you use different senses to learn, it helps to create more powerful associations between what you are learning and the information itself. This is why writing information while repeating it loudly and drawing diagrams are considered effective ways to memorize something - because you exercise all your senses at once.

Overall, these memory techniques can help you to better prepare for your competitive exams and improve your understanding of the material. It is important to practice using them regularly to maximise their effectiveness.

These days, you can find many mnemonics online for a variety of topics. A little bit of research can go a long way in making your study sessions more effective and enjoyable. But remember, coming up with your own acronyms, parodies or mnemonic devices can be even more effective as they will be tailored to your own learning style and preferences.

Don't be afraid to get creative in your study sessions, it might just hold the key to a better score. Good luck!

(The author is a career counselor based in New Delhi and can be reached at rruchishrimalli@gmail.com)

Views expressed are personal.

Employment News

R. Chidambaranathan

General Manager

Manogyan R Pal

Senior Editor

Shikha Baraily, Editor

Ikra Khan, Editor (Advt.)

D.K.C. Hrudhainath

Joint Director (Production)

Sanjay Kumar Pandey

Assistant Director (Prod.)

Abhishek Chaturvedi

Editor (Circulation)

Employment News

7th Floor, Sochna Bhawan

C.G.O Complex

Lodhi Road

New Delhi-110003

Circulation:

sec-circulation-moib@gov.in

Advertisement:

sec-advertise-moib@gov.in

Grievance:

engrievance@gmail.com

Editorial : 011-24369443

Advertisement : 011-24369429/30

Tele Fax : 011-24369430

Circulation : 011-24365610

Accounts (Advt.): 011-24369419