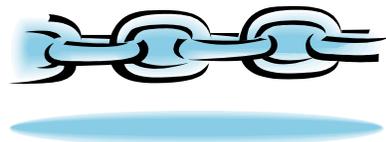




## Mnemonic Devices

Mnemonic devices are tricks to help you remember material. There are many types of mnemonic devices. Some fit certain types of material better than others, but the more techniques known; the better the chances are of pulling out a useful strategy when it's needed! Whatever techniques you know, **remember to give the material attention, organize it, and link it to known information. At that point, reciting it in your own words, repeating it, writing it down, reducing distractions, and relaxing can all facilitate the learning process.**



In addition to the above guidelines, there are specific mnemonics which are designed to aid memory. These systems reduce long strings of material into focused material to be learned. Perhaps the oldest mnemonic device is **loci**, or place. We imagine that various items to be learned are located in different places. Recall is accomplished by visualizing the **houses on your street** or the rooms on a residence hall floor and attaching pieces of information to each location. You know you won't forget who lives in what rooms and attaching the desired information to them, in a realistic or amusing manner, will aid your retrieval of the information.



Another mnemonic device is **rhyme**. You may have learned “i before e, except after c” or a system like, “One is a bun, two is a shoe, three is a tree...” The rhyme would be helpful when the first piece of information is visualized as having something to do with a bun; the second item is visualized with a shoe, and so on. The entire rhyme can be found at [http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/A3\\_ASPECTS/pages/onebun.htm](http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/A3_ASPECTS/pages/onebun.htm)

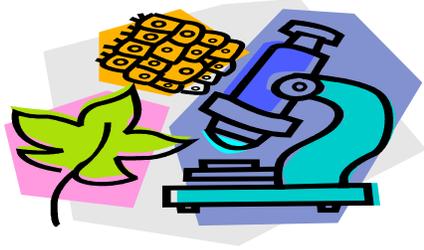
A third association can be made by creating an **acronym**. This is an abbreviation to which you attach meaning. You may have learned the Great Lakes by using the acronym of HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior). Be creative and make your own! For example, if you are trying to remember 3 fossil fuels, you can make a flashcard and put “What are 3 fossil fuels?” on one side and CON on the other. Under CON, write: “Coal, Oil, Natural gas.” Now you are making a connection between the answers and an acronym. In mathematics, when someone is multiplying or factoring 2 binomials they may use the FOIL method (First, Outsides, Insides, Last) to indicate which terms to multiply.

**Acrostics** are similar to acronyms. They are handy when a series or sequence of material is needed to be learned. One common way to construct an acrostic is to take key words in the sequence, pull out the first letter of the key words, and make another word or sentence out of these new words. The new sentence may or may not have any relationship to the content of the material.

#### MATH/SCIENCE RELATED EXAMPLES OF **ACROSTICS**:

- The prefixes of the metric system (Kilo-, Hecto-, Deca-, Unit, Deci-, Centi-, Milli-) could be remembered using the phrase “King Hector Doesn’t Usually Drink Cold Milk”
- The order of operations for math could be remembered by the phrase, “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally” with the beginning letters in each word related to the order Parenthesis, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, and Subtraction.

- The Order of Taxonomy in Biology can be remembered with the phrase, “King Phillip Cuts Open Five Green Snakes” to remember to the order Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus, and Species
- “My very educated mother just served us nine pizzas” is useful in memorizing the order of the planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto).



**BE PROACTIVE ABOUT GETTING HELP RATHER THAN REACTIVE AFTER IT  
IS TOO LATE!!!**