

WEEK 4: HOME LEARNING

EFFECTIVE REVISION: CREATING FLASHCARDS

Task 1: Read through the information over the following pages

Task 2: Use this to create 10x flashcards (I want to check them in class before you make any more) on topic areas you have found more challenging so far this term. *If you create these effectively, using the guidance in this pack, your flashcards will take between 30-45 mins to create.*

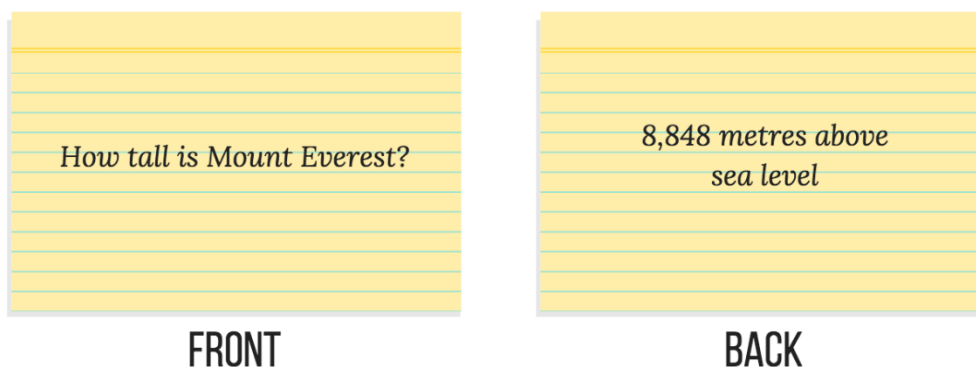
Task 3: Use these flashcards over the coming week using the methods discussed in point 4. In total you should spend around 50 minutes of your home learning on your spaced revision (5x goes at 10mins per session).

Task 4: Ensure the flashcards are in your folders so I can check them in the first lesson of next week and give you feedback.

Task 5: Refer to Teams for the list of remaining home learning activities

What are flashcards?

Flashcards are sets of small, double-sided cards used to learn and revise details, keywords and vocabulary. They are useful for learning the relationship between two pieces of information. You write a question or key term on the front and then the answer or definition on the back.



1. Flashcards are for testing not summarising

Flashcards should be used to test your knowledge, not just as a way to condense your notes further.

Use flashcards as a quick way of testing what you know.

1. On the front of the card, write a key term or question
2. On the back of the card, answer that question or write the definition for the term
3. Try to guess the answer/definition on the front before checking the answer on the back.

There is some value in summarising your notes. Creating notes in your own words requires you to process the information and create connections in your brain. Summarising these further requires you to draw out the key points and choose between pieces of information.

See points 2 & 3

But the value does not continue as you reread your notes over and over.

Once you have notes written in your own words and summarised – move onto testing yourself quickly.

2. One idea, one flashcard

Your goal isn't to fill your flashcards with points to make the most of the space. The most effective flashcards include one question followed by one answer (or one term/image followed by one definition).

Don't force your brain to remember a complex and wordy answer. It's easier for your brain to process simpler information so split up your longer questions into smaller, simpler ones. You will end up with more flashcards this way but your learning will be a lot more effective.

Why?

You may only remember part of a wordy answer so you could trick yourself into thinking you understand it all. Or you could waste time repeating a long question over and over to try and remember all parts perfectly.

Splitting the information allows you to learn each part separately at your own pace which should save time and improve your memory retention.

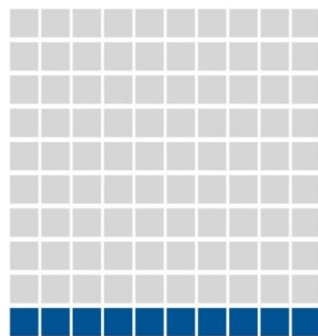
3. Boost your memory by combining pictures and words

The [Pictorial Superiority Effect](#) (PSE) explains that our brains find it easier to recognise and recall visual inputs – pictures are easier to remember than words.

John Medina, memory expert (and developmental biologist), explains that text is pretty inefficient as words are actually viewed by our brains as lots of tiny little images that it has to process to find meaning. This takes time so ***pictures beat text – especially in the revision world.***

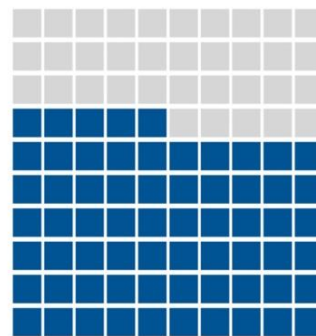
Medina discovered in his research that, ***after three days, someone is likely to remember around 10% of information they read. If an image is added to text this figure increases and 65% of information is remembered.***

Memory retention after 3 days



10%

Text or Audio Only



65%

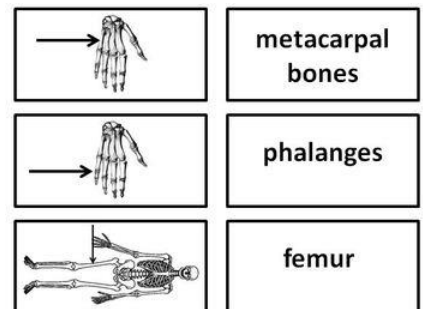
Text + Picture

Image from ['Cool Infographics'](#) by Randy Krum

For you to gain the memory benefits of PSE, add pictures and diagrams to your flashcards. You may not think you can come up with pictures for a lot of your revision material – but here's some ideas.

- Authors and people – draw a simple portrait or stick figure
- Places – a quick map
- Figures and data – a chart or graph
- Dates and sequences of events – a timeline
- Process or system – a flowchart.

These pictures should not be works of art – quick and simple sketches are great.



4. Use spaced repetition to memorise your flashcards

Great revision strategies share the same principle: testing your learning multiple times.

Flashcards are simple to create and quick and convenient for testing yourself. You can only realise the power of flashcards if you give yourself enough time to review them multiple times.

But testing yourself with each flashcard ten times could be a waste of your precious revision time.

There will be some concepts you struggle to learn and remember, but others you might become confident with quickly. This is where spaced repetition comes in: a technique to help you revise what you need to, when you need to.

Spaced repetition is the technique of testing yourself multiple times, at intervals dependent on how well you know the concept.

The concepts you should retest most often are those you're struggling to learn and commit to memory. The time between these retests should be low. Therefore, the concepts you feel confident you understand and remember should be retested less frequently. Once confident, you should retest these flashcards just enough to not forget them.

A simple way of implementing this tip is to sort your flashcards as you revise with them

After you answer a flashcard, put it into one of three piles:

- I have no clue about this (might go into a red envelope)
- I'm not too sure about this (could go into an amber envelope)
- I really know this (could go into a green envelope)



The 'no clue' pile should be tested soonest. As you retest your knowledge, your flashcards should change piles until (hopefully) all of them are in the 'I really know this' pile.

5. Don't just use flashcards

Flashcards are a great revision tool but they do have disadvantages like every other technique. Flashcards allow you to learn the answers to simple questions and the relationship between two pieces of information. What they don't allow you to do is apply this information to situations, understand it in depth or in a wider context.

Flashcards should be part of your revision formula – but you need to add other techniques too such as:

- Mindmaps can illustrate all the key ideas and details of a concept or topic.
- Quizzes can test your knowledge of broader and deeper ideas.
- Practice exam questions allow you to apply your knowledge to a situation for example, engage in critical analysis, synthesise ideas to create new understandings...and practice for your exam!

This blog has been adapted from <https://chloeburroughs.com/flashcards/>