
NOTECARDS

To succeed in college, important ideas from lectures and textbooks must be *identified, organized, recorded, practiced, and stored in long term memory* for recall when needed. Consistently using notecards as a study method can assist students in testing their ability to recall information and improve retention of information.

SETTING UP NOTECARDS

- 1) Purchase notecards or use computer programs to record main ideas and details. The size of notecards depends on the amount of material to be recorded.
- 2) Turn main points from lectures and textbooks into questions. Place a question on one side of the notecard and its answer on the other. With math or science problems, put a problem on one side and the solution, step by step, on the other.
- 3) Place only one question and its answer on a notecard. This makes it easier to organize and reorganize the ideas into meaningful groups, categories, or sequences, if needed.
- 4) Avoid complete sentences or spelling out every work. Use short phrases for sentences and symbols and abbreviations for words.
- 5) Group notecards according to chapters in the textbook or from lecture notes. Identifying where and when information was introduced is helpful in organizing information into sections.

REVIEWING AND RECITING NOTECARDS

Reciting questions and answers will lead to faster learning and more accurate recall and reveals what has and has not been learned. The more often notecards are recited, the more likely it is for information to move from short term memory to long term memory. Incorporate all senses by reading questions and reciting answers aloud, drawing pictures, diagrams, charts, or tables, and writing answers.

- 1) Read a question aloud or look at a problem from the notecard.
- 2) Without looking, recite the answer aloud as if lecturing a class. If you are a hands-on learner, write the answer or solve the problem on a separate sheet of paper.
- 3) If the answer is accurate and complete, place notecard in the “I know this” pile and continue to next card.
- 4) If the answer recalled is incorrect, reread the question and answer, then place notecards in the “I do not know this” pile to be reviewed after completing all the notecards.
- 5) Shuffle and review notecards several times each week to check your knowledge and increase retention.