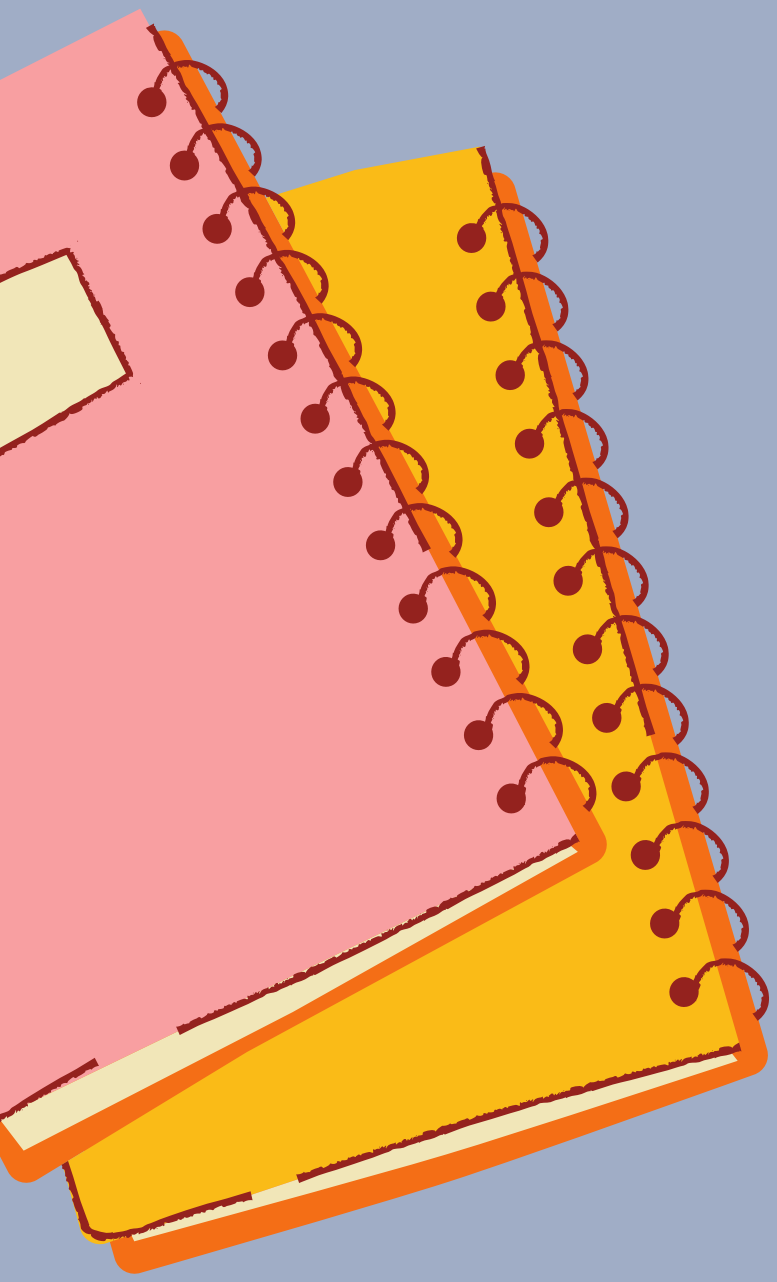


Review Hacks: The Most Effective Review Methods

Introduction

Most students resort to highlighting, rereading and rote memorization when reviewing in preparation for exams. These review methods require minimal time and effort, which is why they are so common, but studies have shown that these are not the most effective ways to learn. Reviewing is important to help you consolidate your learning and retain knowledge for a longer duration. Effective reviewing will not only allow you to achieve better grades, but it will also help you identify areas of confusion, allow you to think critically about the material that you learn in class, and transfer information from your short term to your long term memory. In this guide, we will go over some of the most effective review methods to help you through your learning process.

Topic Flags

While going through this handbook, you'll likely notice these little icons at the edges of the page. These are used as markers to help you, as a learner, identify the types of strategies that are best suited for your goals.

Learner Flag

To indicate if this method is for visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or all types of learners!

Expertise Flag

To indicate if this method is student suggested and tested, or scientifically researched!

Click the flag to access a more in depth explanation of an expert method.

Visual Learner

Auditory Learner

Kinesthetic Learner

Student Reviewed

Expert Reviewed

Note from Webstraw

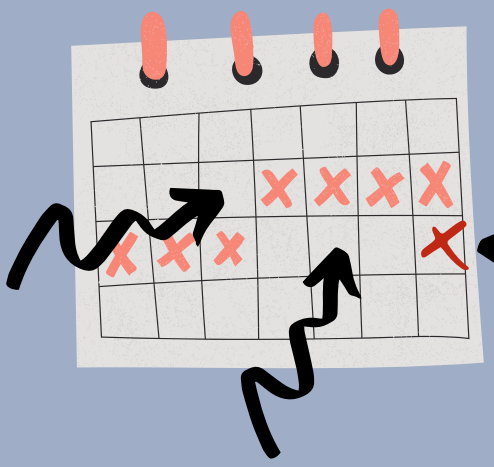
Thank you for opening this resource! At WebStraw, we have researched the most effective review methods to share with students because we recognize that students are taught what to learn, but not necessarily how to learn. We hope that you find this compilation of review methods useful in your studies and we wish you all the best in your endeavours!

Table of Contents

Reviewing vs. Studying	3
Comparisons	4
Identifying Weaknesses	5-6
Handwritten Summary	7
Networking	8-9
Studying Diagrams Effectively	10
Studying in Groups	11
Concrete Examples	12
How to Test Yourself	13

Reviewing vs. Studying

To review means to survey and to look broadly over the material that has already been learned, as well as to consolidate the information that you have been studying. On the other hand, studying involves going through material for the first or second time after you have been exposed to it in class. Studying consists of filling in gaps that you may have missed while taking notes in class and going over specific topics that you may have found more difficult. This guide looks at two categories of review strategies: review hacks and in-depth review, with the main difference between the two being how much time you have before the test to review your content.



Review Hacks vs. In-Depth Review

When there is only 1-2 days before a test, students typically resort to memorizing content without actually understanding it. Review hacks are aimed at providing tips to help you quickly understand the content when time is limited and ideal for those time crunch situations! The following strategies are review hacks:

a. comparions
b. identifying weaknesses
c. handwritten summary
d. networking

The in-depth review section covers all the strategies that can be used to guarantee a full in-depth understanding of the content. These learning strategies will help you explore each topic extensively to reduce stress during exams. These in-depth review strategies are most useful when used 1-2 weeks before a test. The following strategies are for in-depth review:

e. studying diagrams
f. studying in groups
g. concrete examples
h. how to test yourself

A | Comparisons

Introduction

This strategy is intended to help you minimize confusion between concepts by creating a comparison chart to visualize the similarities and differences between two topics that need to be memorized. Although this method can be used for any subject, it is highly recommended for memorization-heavy courses such as biology, psychology, etc.

Instructions

Step 1: Choose two topics that are heavily studied during the course and have similarities and differences (it is crucial that these two ideas have both similarities and differences).

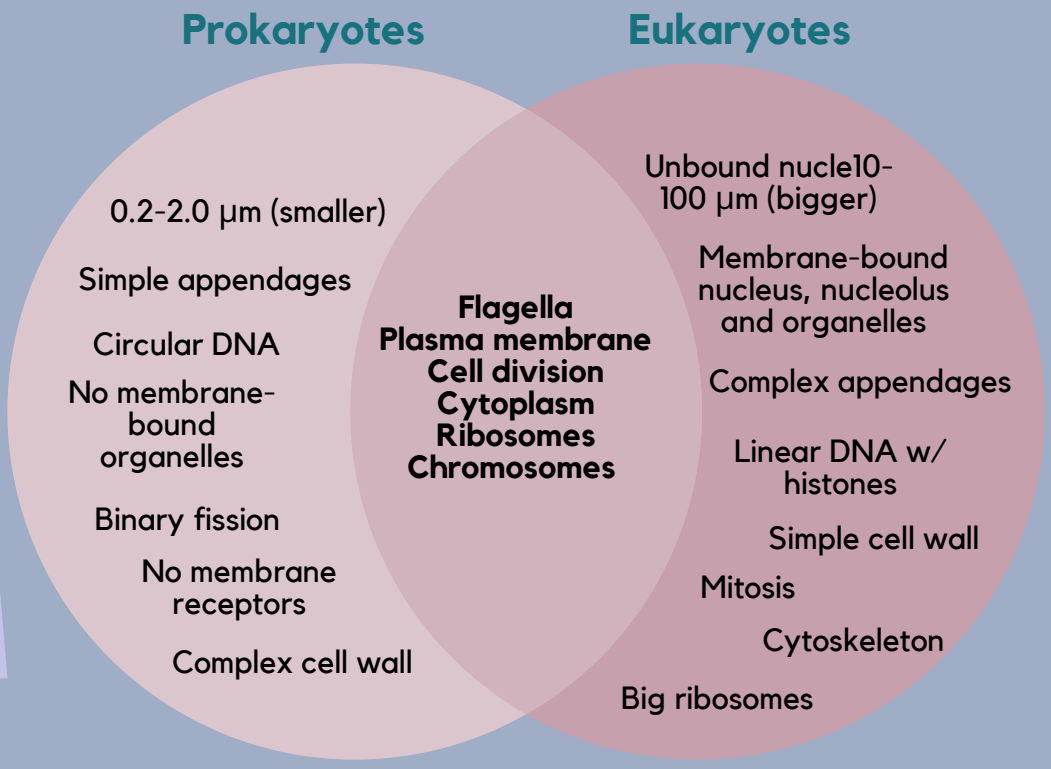
Step 2: Create a list with three columns: one for the first topic, one for the similarities between the topics, and one for the second topic.

Step 3: Write as many keywords and symbols as possible without referring to notes in each of the columns.

Step 4: Compare your chart with your notes from class and make sure you have not missed anything. If you use keywords and symbols make sure you will know what these mean in the future.

Example

AVOID: Do not only copy down material from class. Try to come up with your own comparisons as this will help foster active learning and critical thinking.



B | Identifying Weaknesses

Introduction

This strategy will take you through the steps of creating a specifically formatted chart that helps you identify areas of weakness. It can be created when you are short on time and have not yet mastered all concepts. It helps you visualize the content and see what you know versus do not know.

Instructions

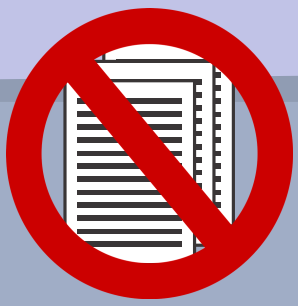
Step 1: Create a chart with 3 columns:

a. column 1 = definitions and examples
b. column 2 = names, dates, and formulas
c. column 3 = learn

Step 2: Complete the first 2 columns within 5 minutes.

Step 3: Look through your notes and fill in anything you missed. This is the content you need to review.

AVOID: Do not write too much because this strategy is only helpful for identifying your areas of confusion and if this takes a long time, you may not have enough time to study your areas of confusion. Try to use one page at max for the bigger topics that you are studying.



Make these three columns:

Definitions and Examples

Names, Dates, Formulas

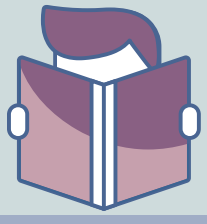
$f(x)$

Learn

Example: Identifying Weaknesses

Topic: Psychology of Stress

Definitions and Examples	Names, Dates, Formulas	Learn
stress response: primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, judgements, appraisal of the personal meaning life event scales: gauge severity of stressor by measuring intensity general adaptation syndrome (GAS): alarm reaction, resistance, exhaustion	Bandura: people learn from those they admire; stress could work like this transtheoretical model: PCPAMT (acronym) hormones secreted by adrenal gland -> catecholamines: epinephrine and NE (boosts immune system) corticosteroids: mainly cortisol (damages it)	the difference between personality type A and B disadvantages of yo-yo dieting the different types of stressors how to treat PTSD



C | Handwritten Summary

Introduction

The goal of this learning strategy is to create a summary of the main ideas from your courses and relay them in your own words. However, the extra component here is to handwrite your summaries as this has shown to increase attention span and mimic a test writing environment without spending too much time writing notes

Instructions

Step 1:

Make a list of all the important topics, such as definitions, formulas, and concepts that you need to know.

Step 2:

Group your topics into categories: make headers, sub-headers, and bold important information.

Step 3:

You should be able to place each of your listed topics under each of these headers. It should make logical sense.

Step 4:

Personalize it! Add in questions that you may still have, annotate, or add sticky notes to help you understand harder topics.

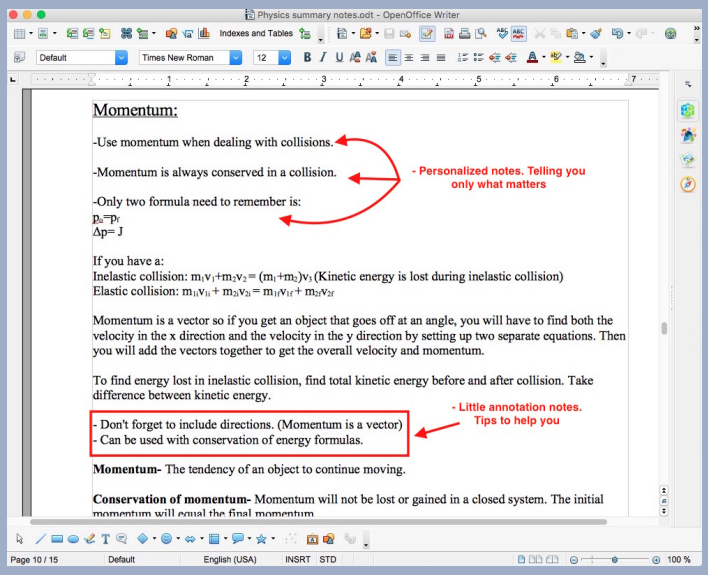
remember to handwrite this information

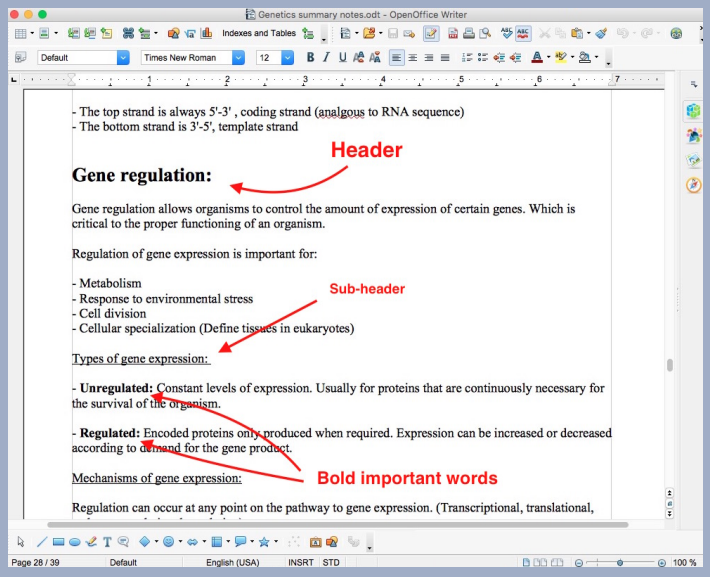
Benefits

Summary notes are great for studying, they're personalized, and make for a solid resource you can reference back to in the future!

AVOID: Do not do this for small details and be very selective about what you write about. Also, do not assume that headers of bolded words represent the main ideas. These bolded words can be incorporated into your handwritten summary.

Example





D | Networking

Introduction

The goal of this learning strategy is to create a mind map that connects the main ideas learned in the course and show how they relate to each other. It is designed to mimic the human memory which is organized as a network of ideas or concepts (nodes) and named relationships between these concepts (links).

Instructions

Step 1: Make a list of the main ideas, which will be used as the nodes.

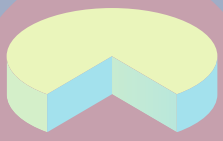
Step 2: There are four different types of links that you can connect to the nodes: 1) type, 2) part, 3) leads to, and 4) description. Not every node will have all four links.

Step 3: Write the node at the top and draw arrows to each of the links. On top of the arrows, write what type of link it is.

Step 4: Try to find as many links as possible and try to categorize them to the best of your ability. The more links you have, the better your mind map will be.

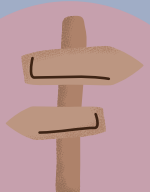
Links

Type



Part

Description

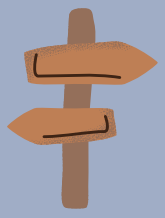


Leads to

AVOID: Do not write too much text as it will clutter the visual and make it difficult to navigate.

Examples of Links

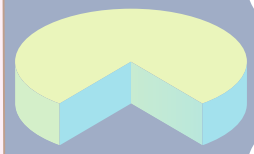
"Leads to" Link Example: Fear of failure *leads to* studying



Object, action, concept → Object, action, concept

Fear of failure → Studying

"Part" Link Example: Fingers are *a part of* the hand



Object, action, concept → Part of object, action, concept

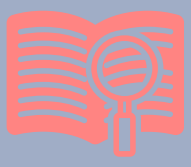
Hands → Fingers

"Type" Link Example: A cheetah is *a type of* feline

Class or category of object, action, concept → Member or examples of class

Feline → Cheetah

"Description Link Example: A male parakeet *has a* blue patch on its beak



Object, action, concept → Description

Male parakeet → Blue patch on beak

E | Studying Diagrams Effectively

Introduction

This strategy is to help you learn how to effectively study diagrams so that you can better understand concepts. You should be able to redraw and annotate diagrams from memory before any test. Diagrams are highly tested and they often cover main ideas so ensuring that you understand them is very important to doing well.

Instructions

Step 1: After learning a concept, redraw the associated diagrams.

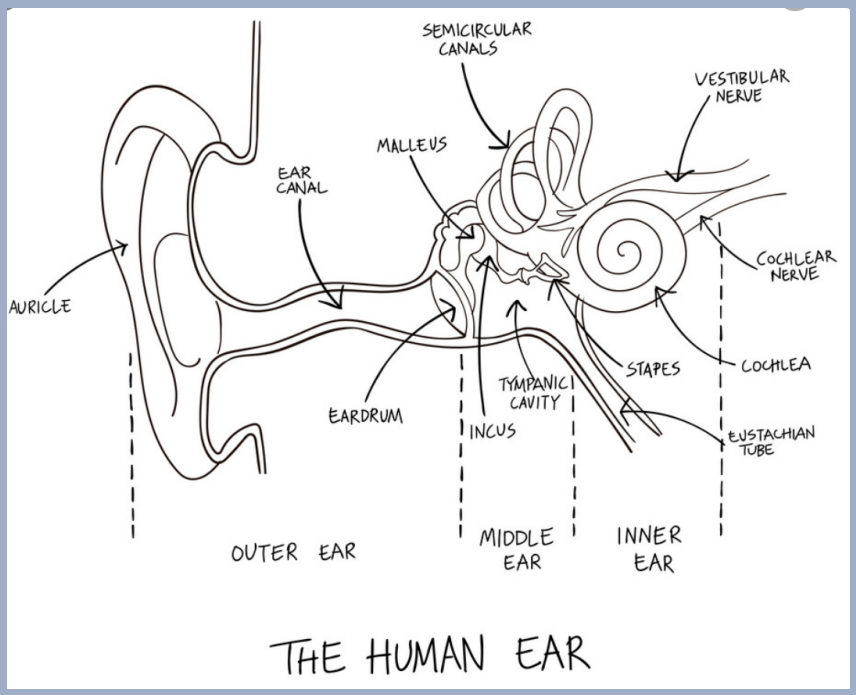
Step 2: Annotate the diagrams with anything you want to remember, or questions you want to make sure you can answer. Try doing it from memory first, and then refer back to your notes to fill in anything you missed.

Step 3: Put the diagrams somewhere you can see them, so you are constantly reviewing them.

AVOID

- Do not copy down annotations word for word
- Do not spend too much time drawing the diagrams to make them aesthetically pleasing

Example



F | Studying in Groups

Introduction

Studying in groups of 2-5 students is a highly effective way to review content. You can go over concepts and prepare for an exam together. You can also teach and test each other on the material. Studying in groups allows you to engage in course material with other students who have different viewpoints and levels of understanding. You can identify your areas of weakness and clarify concepts. It can keep you on track and committed to learning the material.

Instructions

Step 1: Create a group of 2-5 students that are in the same course as you.

Step 2: Set up a time and place to meet in person or online. It helps to keep the time and place consistent.

Step 3: Decide what you are going to review before the session, so you can prepare questions or materials beforehand.

Step 4: During the session, review the content together, ask and answer questions, and afterwards, summarize what you learned that day.

AVOID

- Do not form groups of over 5 students
- Do not make the group exclusive to your friend group because it is easier to get distracted with friends than it is with strangers.

G | Concrete Examples

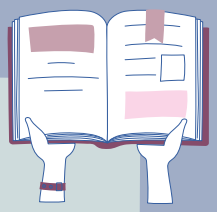
Introduction

Abstract ideas are vague and hard to grasp. Human memory does a better job of remembering concrete ideas than abstract ones. By creating your own examples to represent a concept, you are strengthening the connections between ideas and reinforcing the material in a way that is relevant, relatable, and customizable to you.

Steps

AVOID: Do not use an example that does not accurately represent the concept, or is too vague. Be careful not to stretch your examples too far.

1



Look for examples in your lecture, textbook, or online that help you understand the material or that serve as inspiration for your own examples. Get creative with those examples!

2

Think about each of the examples: how does it relate to your topic? Make sure you understand how each example illustrates the concept.

3

Share the example with someone else. Explain it in your own words to deepen your understanding.

Example

Instead of trying to remember this abstract definition...

Trying coming up with a more intuitive example

Anchoring bias is the tendency to rely too heavily or use the first piece of information we see as an "anchor" or reference point to form a conclusion.

Your budget for a gift is $50. You see the perfect pair of earrings for $100, then see another pair for $75 — you're more prone to see the second pair as cheap even though both are above your budget.

H | How To Test Yourself

Introduction

The best way to prepare for an exam is by doing practice tests! By simulating the same test-taking conditions as your real exam (which means no glancing at your notes for a closed-book exam), you are actively retrieving information from your brain, which leads to a greater ability to recall later on.

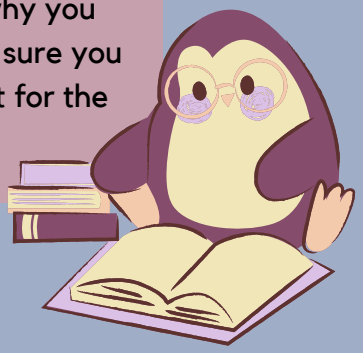
Benefits

- Identify knowledge gaps
- Build confidence and alleviate test-anxiety
- Track your progress
- Increases efficiency; by identifying where you need more practice, you spend less time on information you know and more time on information you don't know.

Reminders

It's tempting to look up each answer as you go through the questions, but refrain from checking your answers until the end.

It's just as important to understand why you got an answer right and why you got it wrong. Make sure you got an answer right for the right reason.



Instructions

Step 1: Obtain practice tests from either your course instructor, other colleagues, or anything that is available to you online. If you cannot find any practice tests relevant to your course, you can make your own!

Step 2: Use these practice tests and try to stimulate the conditions you will experience on the real test — keep in mind the time limit, resources allowed, and location.

Step 3: After completing the entire test, go over your answers. Even if you got an answer right, make sure that your thought process is correct and that you did not just get lucky with a guess.

Step 4: For the ones you got wrong, figure out why you made a mistake (was it a gap in your knowledge, a careless mistake, or did you misinterpret the question?) and then review that concept again.