

How to use Flash Cards

Interesting Facts!

1. Researchers state that memory has a limitless capacity. Everything is stored in there but, without rehearsal, memories become harder to access.

2. When something comes to mind quickly, i.e. we do no work to recall it, no learning occurs. When we have to work hard to bring it to consciousness, something positive happens: we learn.

3. It turns out that for long-term retention, memories are more easily recalled if learning is mixed up. Therefore you should use a variety of revision methods to aid memory recall.

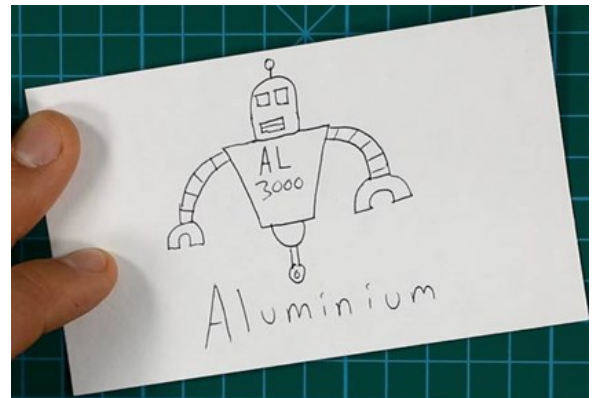
Flash cards are one of the classic study tools, and for good reason – they promote studying through **active recall**, which is one of the practices through which our brains learn most effectively.

However, many students use flash cards in ways that aren't very efficient. This guide will outline the most effective ways to use flash cards.

How to use Flash Cards

1. Make your own flash cards. This creates strong neural pathways in the brain. When you use pre-made flash cards, you're skipping that entire part of the process.

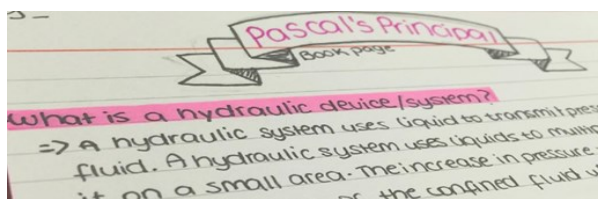
2. Mix pictures and words. Adding pictures to your cards can make them a lot more memorable.



3. Use mnemonics. The use of mnemonics helps to create mental connections. A classic mnemonic that almost everyone knows is ROY G. BIV – the acronym that helps you remember the order of the colours in the visual light spectrum.

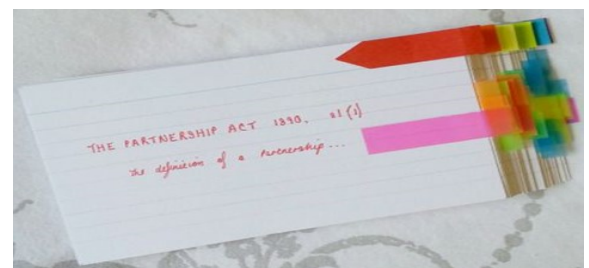
4. Write only one question per card. By including multiple facts on one card, you're more likely to run into illusions of competence. These happen when you think you know something that you actually don't – a situation that usually arises when your brain mistakes recognition for recall.

5. Break complex concepts into multiple choice questions. Some concepts or ideas are too complex to be encapsulated in one question. These kind of concepts need to be broken down into multiple questions in order to be studied well using flash cards.



6. Say your answers out loud when studying. By having someone else quiz you, you will be forced to say the answers out loud. By doing this there is no way that you can 'fudge' the answer.

7. Study your flash cards in both directions. When you're studying your flash cards, make sure you review them from both sides. By doing this, you're going to build strong neural pathways that can be traced easily in both directions. If you *don't* do this, you increase the probability that you'll only be able to recall one side of the card.



8. Place flash cards into piles. When you answer the questions, place the cards into two piles. One pile for the ones you answered correctly and one pile for the ones you got wrong. Next time you use the cards start off with the 'wrong' pile. Be careful not to miss out going back over the 'right' pile as you may forget these too if you leave them out to often.

9. Use other methods of revision too. As well as making flash cards you can use other revision strategies. These may include creating a quiz, using mind maps or venn diagrams or practice past examination questions.