

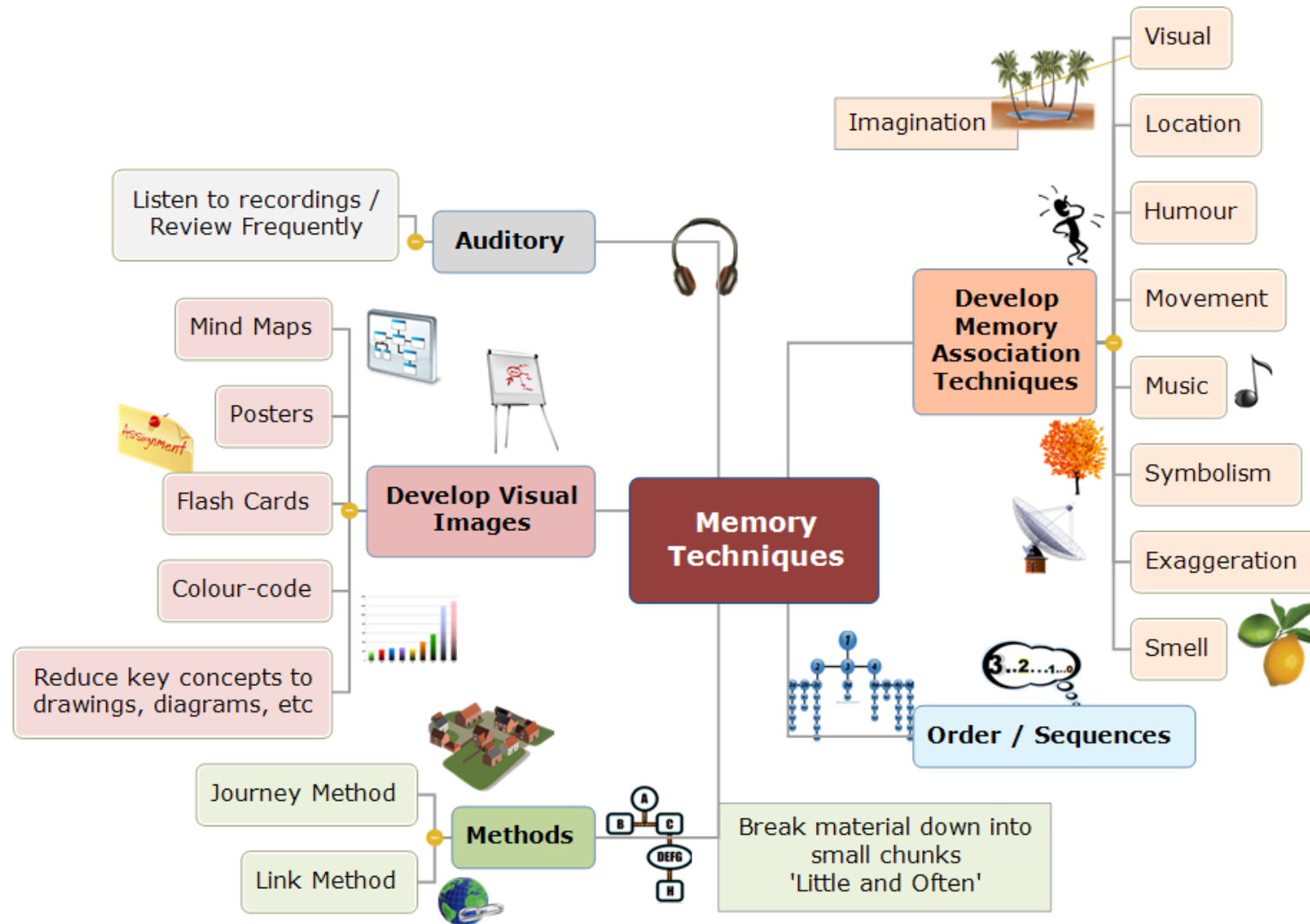
# **Study Skills Tips: Memory Techniques**

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# Memory techniques are...

- **Personal** – some techniques work well for some of us, but not for others.
- **Sensitive to over-use** – some techniques work well for a few batches of information, but can overload memory if they are over-used. E.g. mnemonics.
- **Better suited to some types of information than others** – the type and structure of the information can affect which type of memory technique works best. Mnemonics can work for a short sequence (order of the planets, colours in the spectrum), method of loci can work well for more complex sequences of information i.e. where the order of information is important.
- **Worth exploring** – but you may find that carefully structuring work (lecture notes, structured revision notes etc.), the use of assistive technology and so on, works better for you.
- **What we do know is...** the more ways the information to be learned is introduced to the brain, reinforced and reviewed, the better it will be remembered.

# Memory techniques: visual representation



# Technique to try 1: using imagination

- **Try being creative** with your thinking and visualise imaginative scenarios to remember your information. For example, try creating an imaginative scenario containing a celebrity or a cartoon/comic character and then link the various elements you are memorising with what is going on in your story.
- Within your visualisations, **exaggerate to extremes** what you are trying to imagine. For example, large sizes of characters, bright colours, loud noises, etc.
- **Use humour** to help make your image or scenario funny or stupid. The more ridiculous your visualisation is, the better you will be able to remember it.
- The more you return to **review the visualisation** the better your recall will become.



# Technique to try 2: location

- Place what you want to remember in imaginary pleasant locations that are familiar and meaningful to you.
- Establish a route round objects or places to link to the items you need to remember. For example, when you walk into your home, 'pin' mental pictures of what you want to remember on your front door, then as you walk through your home, by a picture in the hall, then by a light switch as you enter the kitchen, etc.
- Similarly, to remember key texts write them on colour coded post-it notes, flash cards, mind maps or create posters which can be placed around the home in strategic places. For example, for a student nurse, place a diagram about the digestive system on the fridge door, the urinary tract system on the toilet door, and so on.

# Technique to try 3: mnemonics

A mnemonic refers to a technique that can be used to help remember information, often lists or the order of parts of something.

- A mnemonic can be a song, rhyme or acronym (the initial letter of each part to be remembered helps trigger a phrase e.g. 'Richard of York Gained Battles in Vain')
- A mnemonic can also be an image, with features that help you remember the sequence of information.
- The use of colour to 'paint' and group sets of objects to link with items to remember can help.
- The use of numbers to remember the sequence of items can sometimes help, perhaps in combination with colour, the image of a clock face etc.



# Assistive Technology

Assistive technology provides numerous alternative ways to engage more actively in learning and remembering. Examples include:

- Text-to-speech software to listen whilst you revise
- Mind-mapping software to create visual posters
- Record yourself talking about your subject materials or reading aloud from text books. Listen to recordings frequently.
- In the same way that PowerPoint helps to organise thoughts and visual aids for a presentation, it can be used to organise subjects/topics for revision and incorporate visual material such as charts, cartoons etc. to aid memory.
- Apps for notetaking, exam timetables/planners, creating subject flashcards, quizzes, speed-reading, etc