Overview

The ability to memorize information is more important than ever, in school and beyond. Although viewed by some as an outdated practice with the belief that it doesn’t contribute to the current focus on deep thinking and understanding, memorization through mnemonics builds a base of facts and information that is essential for thinking and understanding. In addition, students gain confidence when they’re able to learn facts easily and remember them long term. For some it makes the difference between *I’ll never get this* and *I can do this!* And, as we know, confidence leads to competence and motivation.

Mnemonics are strategies to memorize information and include acronyms, keywords, anchoring to locations, songs, rhymes, and storytelling. They strengthen focus, association, and picturing, giving meaning to the information students are learning. When information has meaning it becomes more memorable, maximizing learning.

Awareness of focus, association, and picturing empowers students to encode information into long-term memory making it easy to retrieve when needed.

- **Focus**: Pay attention and focus on the one thing – the topic.
- **Association**: Make connections between new information and current knowledge—something that’s familiar.
- **Picturing**: Create specific and vivid images in the mind.

It’s important that learners are specific in the images they create and the associations they make. The more specific the images and associations, the more meaningful the content becomes and the more easily it is remembered!

Students who focus, associate, and picture—**make it stick**!

Junior Forum students practice these strategies by applying them to learning people’s names. These same strategies apply to remembering any kind of content.

Mnemonics

There are many mnemonics (memory techniques) to facilitate memorization. Different types of information are suited to different memorization strategies, so the more mnemonics we have to assist us in remembering information, the better.

- **Power Pegs**: This strategy utilizes a standardized list of “pegs” on which to “hang” items to be memorized, creating associations that enhance learning.
- **Narrative Chain**: With this technique the learner creates a story to connect and facilitate memorization of a series of facts that are related to one another.
- **Clockface**: Often we need to remember information in a particular order, and sometimes with numbers. Clockface is a location memory technique that links each number on a clock with a story that triggers the information being learned and connects it to that number.

There are, of course, many more mnemonics than these. It’s interesting to note that central elements in all mnemonics are **focus, association**, and **picturing**.