

Study Skills for Different Learning Styles

Kinaesthetic Learners

Some people are kinesthetic learners: people who need motion to learn. These people can't exactly learn the best from just hearing something said or from seeing it—they need to do it

1. Chew

It might sound strange, but chewing gum can help some people remember as they study. Caution: chewing gum, alone, will not help if you don't also use an active method of study. Also, if you are thinking about chewing gum at school, check with school rules first. If chewing is permitted, be considerate. No one else wants to hear you chewing, smacking or blowing bubbles.

2. Color

Colors help some kinesthetic learners but slows others down. Try using colour on your notes. It may help. Pull out some colored pencils, highlighters, or whatever you have available, and color code your information! Pay attention to what you're coloring. This may also help you if you are a somewhat visual learner as well.

3. Jitter

This can really annoy people, but sometimes silently tapping your leg or bouncing your foot can be the stimulus you need to learn or maybe even pay attention in class. Again, try not to annoy others around you by too much distracting motion. Also, whatever motion you select should be silent – **DO NOT MAKE NOISES** (e.g. clicking a pen, tapping a pen on the desk, making clicking noises with your tongue, etc.).

4. Type or Write

CAUTION HERE – typing notes out on the computer can be a “mindless/inactive” activity if you are a really typist. You need to **FOCUS** on what you are typing. Pay attention as you type, and experiment with different fonts and coloring. Try writing out your notes by hand. Some people find this method the cement for their memories, especially some forms of visual learners. ***If trying this method, you do have to pay attention to what you're writing and can't just run on autopilot.***

5. Walk

Some folks' personal favorite: walking. Take your notes and repeat them to yourself while walking. If you're in a rush, walking faster or bouncing while you walk can sometimes help, though this method's effectiveness might vary with subject.

7. Yo-yo

As crazy as this might sound, some people have their best results from this one: studying while yo-yoing. The motion and sound (the yo-yo has a type of buzzing sound while twirling on the string) make this method especially useful to audio-kinesthetic learners. If you try this one, you'll probably find yourself walking while studying, as well.

Active Motion Ideas:

1. Study Twister

- get a group together and create a series of questions you expect may be on the test/exam. Have possible answers taped to the circles (or written in non-permanent pen or erasable crayons). Have someone call out a specific hand or foot and a question and each person actively attempts to touch the correct answer with the proper body part. Make your own rules as it makes sense for a fun, motion-filled, learning intense game.

2. Study Hopscotch

- Play hopscotch by the traditional rule, but as you get to the “block” with your marker, you need to answer a question from a stack of questions. If you get it wrong, you are asked another question until you answer correctly. Play continues until all questions are answered correctly each time (or you pass out from exhaustion – lol)

3. Study Basketball

- Each player needs to make a foul shot while answering a question. If they answer correctly it is the next players turn. If they answer incorrectly, they need to keep taking shots and answering questions until they get the correct answer. Play continues until all questions can be answered by all players correctly every time.

4. Study Handball

- Using a soft foam ball (think Dollar Store happy face balls or small nerf balls), tape themes, major topics, terminology, etc. on a pieces of paper and post them on walls around your room or on outside walls. Have one person read questions while other contestants (or yourself if studying on your own) sit or stand in a central area. As a question is asked, the contestant(s) throw the ball at the correct “sign”. Play continues until the contestant throws the ball at the correct sheet each time.

5. Study Skipping/Hula Hoop

- Have someone call out questions while the others skip or hula and shout out answers. Action continues until each person can answer all the questions without mistake.

6. Stormy Seas Study

- This is similar to the Handball game above, but instead of tossing a ball they run from one sign to another, but must return to the “center” spot first. Tape themes, major topics, terminology, etc. on a pieces of paper and post them on walls around your room or on outside walls. Have one person read questions while other contestants stand in a central area. As a question is asked, the contestant(s) move as quickly as possible to the correct “sign”. To move right, they must shuffle right, shuffle left, run forward, back peddle backwards. Play continues until the contestant correctly touch the correct sheet each time.

7. Take your favorite active pastime and turn it into a study opportunity.

Chances are, even if you are a kinesthetic learner, some of these methods will be worthless to you—especially if you, like me, can’t yo-yo. Experiment with these methods, and pay attention to what you naturally do when trying to pay attention to someone (even if you’re usually reprimanded for doing it). Perhaps your natural tendency can be adjusted into something that won’t get you into trouble; maybe, instead of picking your nails, you can bounce your foot.

Visual Learners

Most people are visual learners: people who learn by seeing. You can say something to them, or have them work through it, but if they don't see what they're doing... they will not store the info in their longterm memory.

Even within the "visual" type, subtypes exist, as do different learning type combos. For most, pictures work best, but this is not the case for everyone. Some do better from words (arguably called the "verbal" learning style). You'll probably find a combination of the methods below to help you.

1. Black & White

Some visual learners, like me, do best with a "monochromatic" setting: black and white. Colors can actually hinder learning in people like this. Highlighters are a big no-no. If faced with something in color that you have to learn, making a grayscale photocopy to study can help.

2. Colored

Make a copy of what you're studying and color or highlight it. The coloring itself might help those with a kinesthetic leaning, but if that's not you, pay more attention to the finished product. If colors help you, think of yourself as a "polychromatic" visual learner, requiring "many colors."

3. Computer Screen

Study off your computer screen. You do read things differently on computer (due to the technicalities of monitor function); a minority of visual learners who prefer computer screens undoubtedly exist. Visual learners in general might also find it better to study things they'll only use on computer (like HTML) onscreen rather than off a printed page.

4. Pictures

Are there pictures in your textbook or notes? Study them. In areas that you don't have pictures, find some, so you can study the pictures to help you remember. (Google image search can work well.) If this works best for you, always try to get a map when going places instead of written directions, too, unless you like being lost, of course.

5. Sketch

When studying something, pay attention to its context in the entire page. You'll be glad you did later when you successfully recall the answer by sketching the page layout on your scrap paper. Granted, this doesn't always work; nor does it work for everyone, but it's a pretty standard recall assistant for visual learners.

6. Text

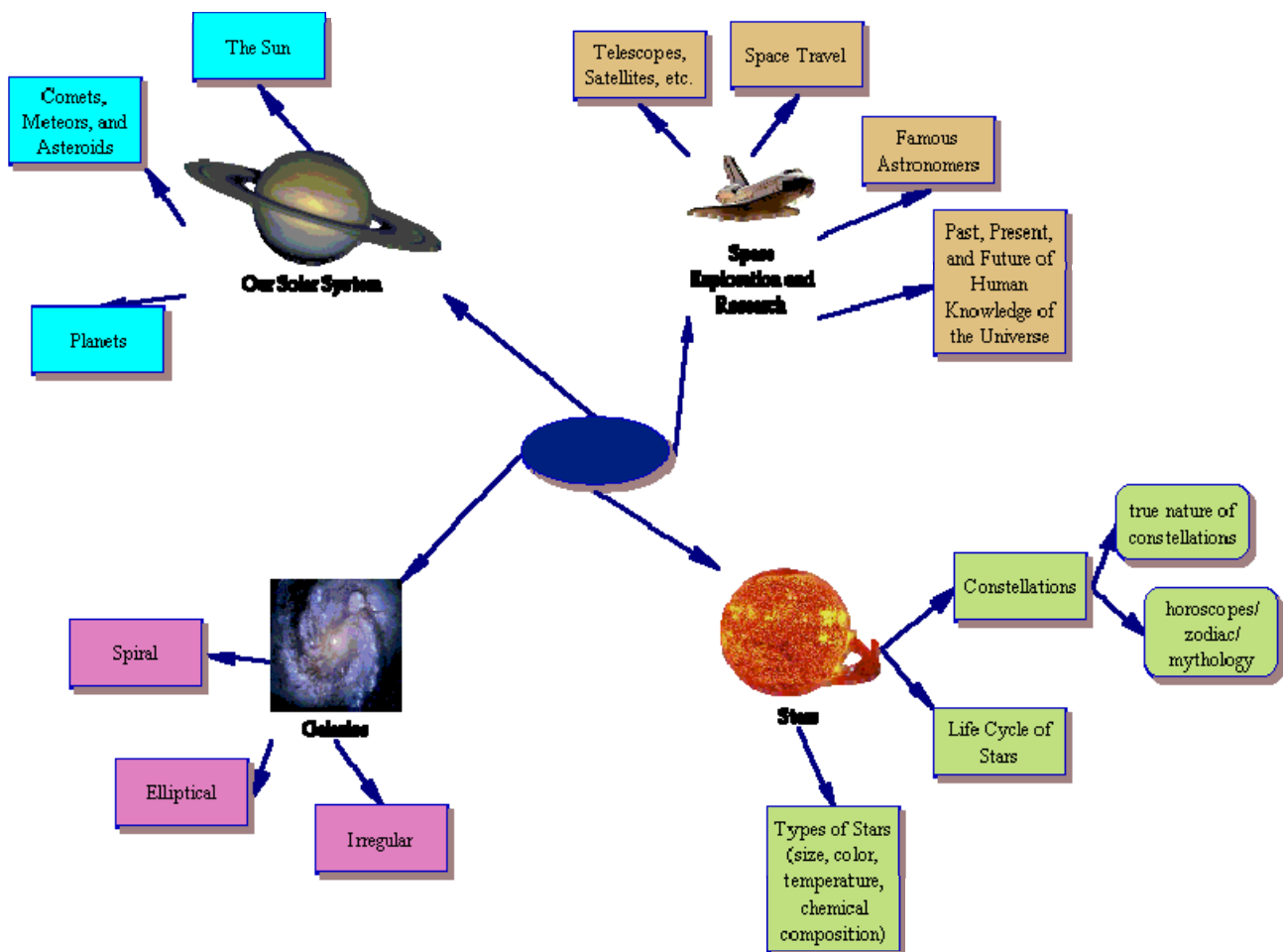
Study text, but experiment between handwritten notes and printed typed-out pages. Experiment with cursive and print on the handwritten side (unless you're one of those people who struggle to read cursive). Those who prefer type will probably prefer a standard font like Times New Roman or Verdana, but you should probably at least test a non-standard font to make certain that isn't your mental preference.

7. Watch

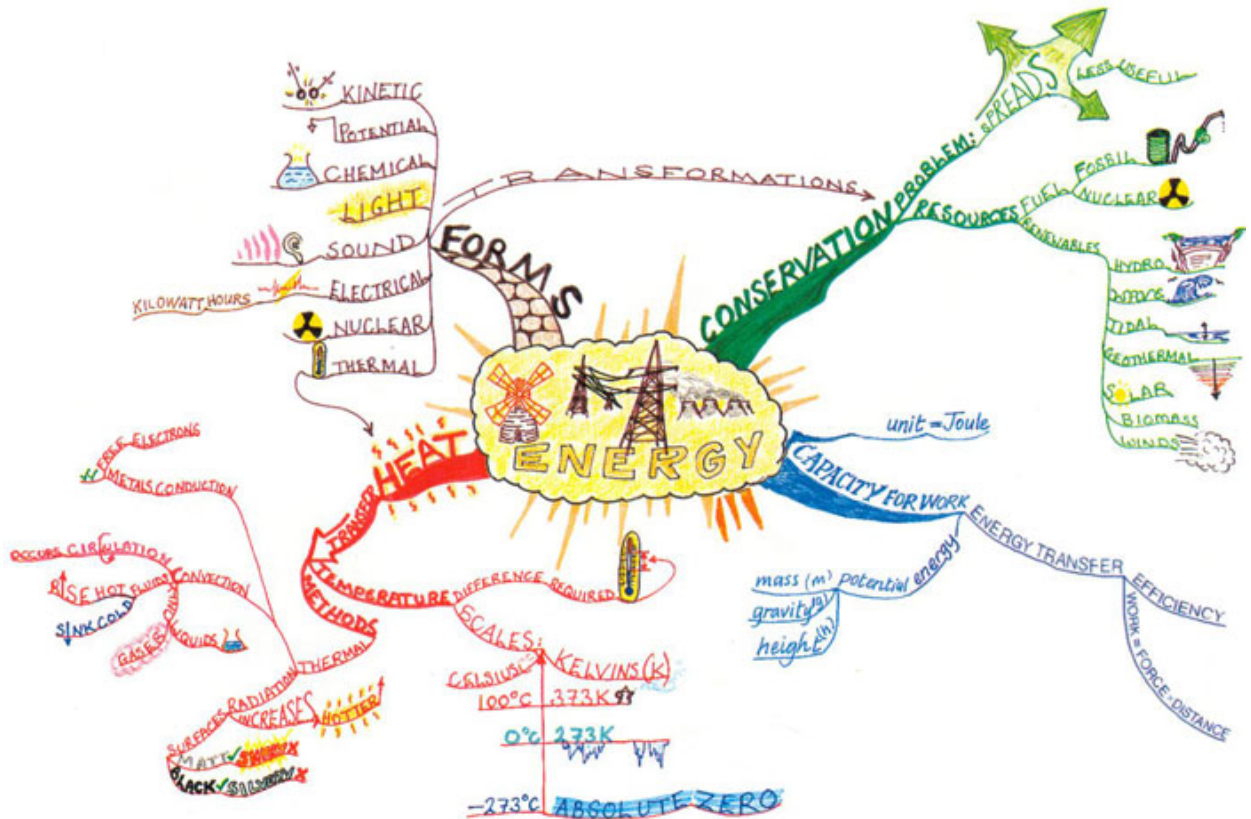
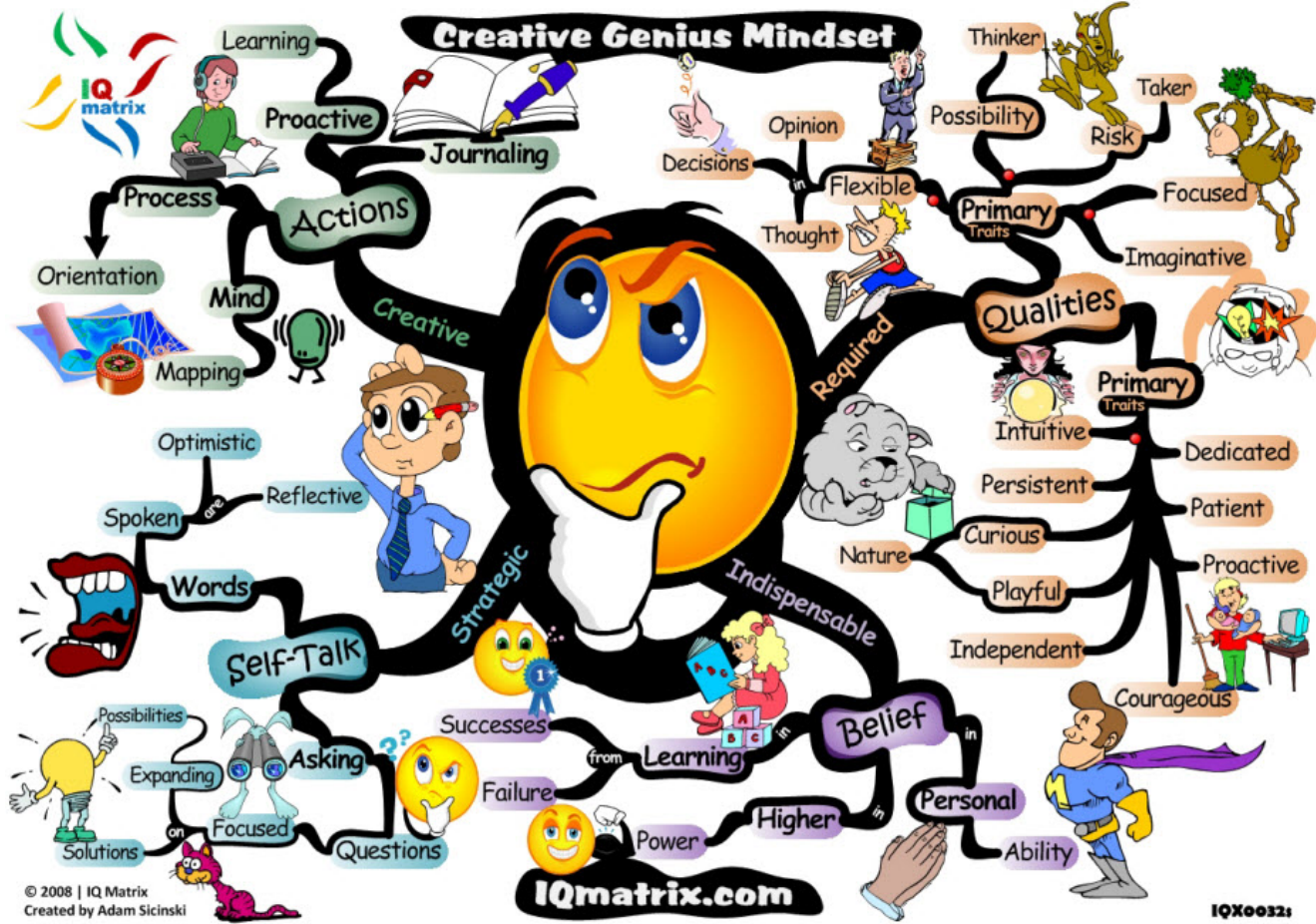
Find a film documentary or TV show talking about the subject, especially if you're also an auditory learner. The films don't even have to be professionally made; maybe you could find some short homemade ones online. Can't find that? You could even try to make your own, if you have to, and have access to a camcorder, which would particularly help visual-kinesthetic learners.

You'll have to mix and match these suggestions to find what works best for you. Pictures might work better than text, but monochromatic or polychromatic ones? Should you print the pictures or will viewing them on your computer screen be better? Finding the proper combination for you will take work. But it'll be well worth it.

Concept Maps



Mind Mapping



Auditory Learners

Auditory learners remember best when they hear the information. If you have recognized yourself as being an auditory learner, there are a few simple adjustments you can make to your studying routine to help maximize how much you learn and retain.

Auditory learners are generally helped by things that they hear. Rather than endless notes, they prefer to listen to tapes and recordings, and have a tendency to read aloud to themselves, which also helps the learning process.

Study Tips

1. Use some kind of recording device to record lectures and classes and play them back to yourself in the following days, and later on for revision. You can also use the recorder to record yourself reciting key facts, figures or equations that you need to remember and listen to them while doing other tasks, for example housework, traveling or working out.
1. Sit towards the back or side of a classroom or lecture hall. This way you will not be affected by any visual distractions such as diagrams, or even the facial expressions and gestures of the teacher, and you can fully concentrate on listening.
1. Repeat facts and figures, or anything you have to remember, over and over to yourself with your eyes closed. This avoids any mental stimulation from other sources, and you will be solely hearing yourself and the information you need to learn.
1. Take part in study groups which gives you the opportunity to talk through what you have learned with your fellow students. Not only will you be reinforcing key points through what you say yourself, but you will also be listening to other people, who may be rephrasing what has been taught in a different way, helping you process the information.
2.
 1. Use word association techniques, mnemonics or songs as an aid to memorizing. This can be especially useful in language learning. For example, the mnemonic Never Eat Shredded Wheat to remember the compass points (North, East, South, West). Many more such word associations and mnemonics can be found with a quick internet search and will help these rules stick like glue.
Turn information into SONGS or RAP and perform it for yourself.
1. Find an good place to study. Needless to say a library will not be the best place, as you will end up disturbing others with your repetitions, songs and mnemonics. A bedroom or study would be ideal where you can be alone and not feel ridiculous as you read aloud to yourself, and repeat facts and figures.

Try some or all of these study tips and discover how easy it can be to retain information. While we tend to fall mainly into one of the three learning styles, there may be some elements of the two that you find useful, so check out the articles on visual and kinesthetic learning that can be found on this site.