

Revising with Flashcards/Revision cards?

One of the strategies that most students use is the use of Flash cards, this is an effective retrieval/testing method. This involves bringing information to mind from your memory.

Why does it work?

“Memory is the residue of thought.”
We need to engage in higher-order thinking
if knowledge is going to go into the long-term memory



Retrieval works because the student is having to think hard about what they have learnt, simply the process of forgetting can help a student remember the next time.

How to make Flashcards

- ✓ Ensure that the flashcards have a **question or key term** on one side and the **answer or definition** on the other.
- ✓ The flashcard must work the memory.
- ✓ If flashcards only contain notes then no **retrieval practice** will be happening.
- ✓ Ensure the right questions and knowledge are on the cards.
- ✓ Keep information as short as possible.
- ✓ Write clearly. You should be able to read what you wrote at a very quick glance.

Alternatively you can buy them ready made from exam boards

How to use Flashcards

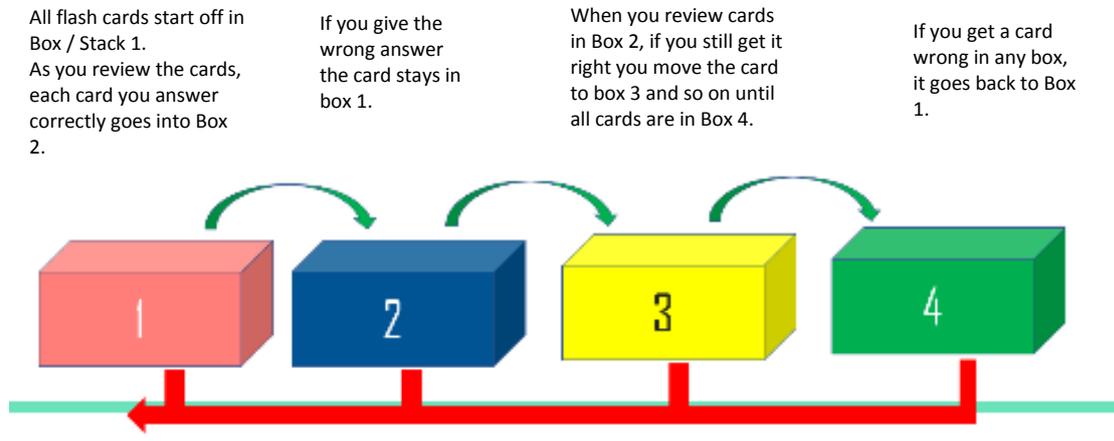
- ✓ Studies have found that it's more effective to **review a whole stack of cards in one sitting** rather than to carry them around with you and glance at them every so often
- ✓ **Use spaced repetition** - Review your cards at specific, increasing intervals: for example on Day 1, Day 2, Day 4, Day 8 and so on.
- ✓ Make sure you have a **'thinking pause'** after picking one up and reading the question, then turn the card over to read the information.
- ✓ Once you get an answer right using your flashcards – **DO NOT DISCARD IT!** You need to keep **repeating the questions** even if you get it right multiple times otherwise it will fall off your memory
- ✓ **Try writing the answer or definition in your own words and giving examples.** This will help your learning and recall.
- ✓ **Try 'interleaving'.** Once you have several decks of flashcards for different subjects and topics, try mixing them up. This will test your knowledge across subjects in a single session. Make sure **you are confident** enough to do this every so often.

Using flash cards is a repetitive method. Repetition will help you remember what you have learnt.

Pitfalls

However sometimes **familiarity is not always knowledge.**

The **Leitner system** is a well-known and very effective method of using flashcards. It's a form of **spaced repetition** that help you study the cards you don't know more often than the cards you already know well.



The key is that the cards you know less well are reviewed more frequently than the cards in the higher boxes.