

# STUDY SKILLS

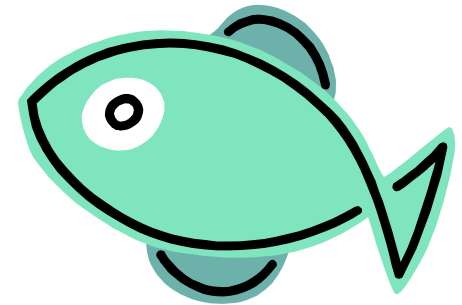
a road to autonomy

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*If you give a man a fish  
You feed him for a day*



*If you teach him to fish  
You feed him for a lifetime*

(Chinese proverb)

# STUDY SKILLS

- **abilities** and **strategies** that can make your learning more effective and autonomous
- **“tools”** that can make you the “manager” of your study, ready to cope with difficult situations in your learning process

# STUDY SKILLS (1)

- Understanding without a dictionary
- Exploiting the dictionary effectively
- Expanding your vocabulary and storing information

# STUDY SKILLS (2)

- Reading fast and better
- Making anticipations and predictions
- Skimming
- Scanning

# STUDY SKILLS (3)

- Taking notes (linear notes vs mind maps)
- Making schemes
- Summarizing
- Making an outline for a short paper or speech

# STUDY SKILLS (4)

- Managing your time and organizing your study for an exam
- Writing down your curriculum
- Facing an interview

# THE GOOD LANGUAGE LEARNER

- has a **positive** attitude towards study
- is actively **involved** in the learning process
- is ready to take **risks** or at least to make experiments
- is **curious** to know more
- is good at **guessing** and making hypotheses
- has a strong wish to **communicate**
- is **persistent** and determined
- is well **organized**



*I hear and I forget*

*I see and I remember*

*I do and I learn*

In order to **LEARN HOW TO LEARN** you should try out, not just read, the strategies and techniques suggested and find the ones that suit you best (we are all different!)

# UNDERSTANDING WITHOUT A DICTIONARY

when you come across a word you don't know, do you:

- ask your teacher?
- ask the school friend beside you?
- look it up immediately in a dictionary?
- read on ignoring the word?
- just panic and think you are a failure...?



UNDECIDED

What does it  
mean???



SELF-CONFIDENT

I think I know!!!  
It reminds me of  
something...!

Asking your teacher or the dictionary is a short-sighted approach!

Instead of spotting all the words you don't know, rely on the ones you know!

And if an unknown word seems essential, try and work out the meaning by exploiting your “mental storehouse”!

# STRATEGIES TO DEDUCE THE MEANING OF A WORD BY MAKING HYPOTHESES

1. decide what **part of speech** it is (verb? noun? adjective? adverb?)
2. analyze its **structure**: divide it into parts and see if you recognize some you are familiar with (*wrongdoer* = *wrong*, *to do*)
3. consider the **context**: the words that come before and after can offer important clues
4. exploit your **general knowledge**

## PART OF SPEECH

*biphical frantliness*

*strooked sherpism intrically*

even in a nonsensical sentence made up of imaginary words you can still detect the nouns, the verb, the adjective, the adverb, by exploiting **SUFFIXES**

# STRUCTURE OF THE WORD (1)

if you exploit both **SUFFIXES** and **PREFIXES**, you can split the word and infer the meaning of the various parts:

**un - success - ful - ly**  
opposite          root          full of          adverb

## STRUCTURE OF THE WORD (2)

The various parts of a word can be singled out even more clearly in **compounds**, so common in English!

Another big group of words belong to the field of compounding and combinations: the so-called **phrasal verbs**, or multi-word verbs, so difficult to learn!

Let's see some hints to grasp their meaning.



# STRUCTURE OF THE WORD (3)

## Phrasal verbs

Here are some of the most common meanings of some common prepositions in phrasal verbs:

<b>down</b>	decrease	turn the volume down
		cool things down
		cars slow down
	on paper	write something down
<b>out</b>	exclusion	leave the date out
	away from	get out of my reach
	discovery	find out a solution

# Phrasal verbs

<b>off</b>	separation	the plane took off
		break off an agreement
		a storm can pass off
	closure	switch off the lights
<b>on</b>	starting	switch the cooker on
	continuation	she can go on talking for hours
<b>up</b>	increase	turn the radio up
	event	a new problem came up
	completion	eat up your soup!

# CONTEXT

- RUSTY
- this machine is getting RUSTY
- this machine is getting RUSTY  
because it's exposed to the rain
- can you see the red-brown spots?  
this machine is getting RUSTY  
because it's exposed to the rain

# CONTEXT

- BLUNT
- this knife is BLUNT
- this knife is BLUNT, I want a sharp one
- this knife is BLUNT, I want a sharp one which cuts better

# CONTEXT

- SWALLOW
- don't swallow it!
- don't swallow it, chew everything carefully
- don't swallow it, chew everything carefully or you won't digest

# CONTEXT

- MORGAGE
- I got a MORTGAGE
- I got a MORTGAGE to buy a new house
- I got a MORTGAGE to buy a new house and I'll pay it back for 20 years

# CONTEXT

- DRAUGHT
- you'll be in a DRAUGHT
- don't sit here, you'll be in a DRAUGHT
- don't sit here, you'll be in a DRAUGHT: the window doesn't close properly

# KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD

Exploit the data coming from your 'knowledge of the world':

- does the word suggest something positive or negative?
- any clue from the topic of the text?
- any association with known objects or events?
- any suggestion from the sound of the word?  
(see onomatopoeias)
- any similarity with our language?



If you exploit similarities with your language, watch out!

Some problems arise when we bump into **false friends**.

If you misunderstand them, they'll mislead you!

# FALSE FRIENDS

	IT MEANS	IT SEEMS	
actual →	reale	attuale →	present
advice	consiglio/i	avviso	notice
annoyed	irritato	annoiato	bored
brave	coraggioso	bravo	clever

# EXPANDING YOUR VOCABULARY AND STORING INFORMATION

Once you have understood them, how can you memorize the words you need?

Let's not forget different learning styles!

If you are - methodical  
- organized  
- persevering

here are some good ideas...

## some good ideas...

1. group words in **topic areas** (*Sport, School*)
2. arrange them according to the **same root** (*apply-application-applicant*)
3. organize them into **synonyms** and **antonyms** (*brave, courageous / cowardly*)
4. split **compound-words** into their parts (*windscreen = wind, screen*)
5. write words in **context**
6. note down the Italian **translation**

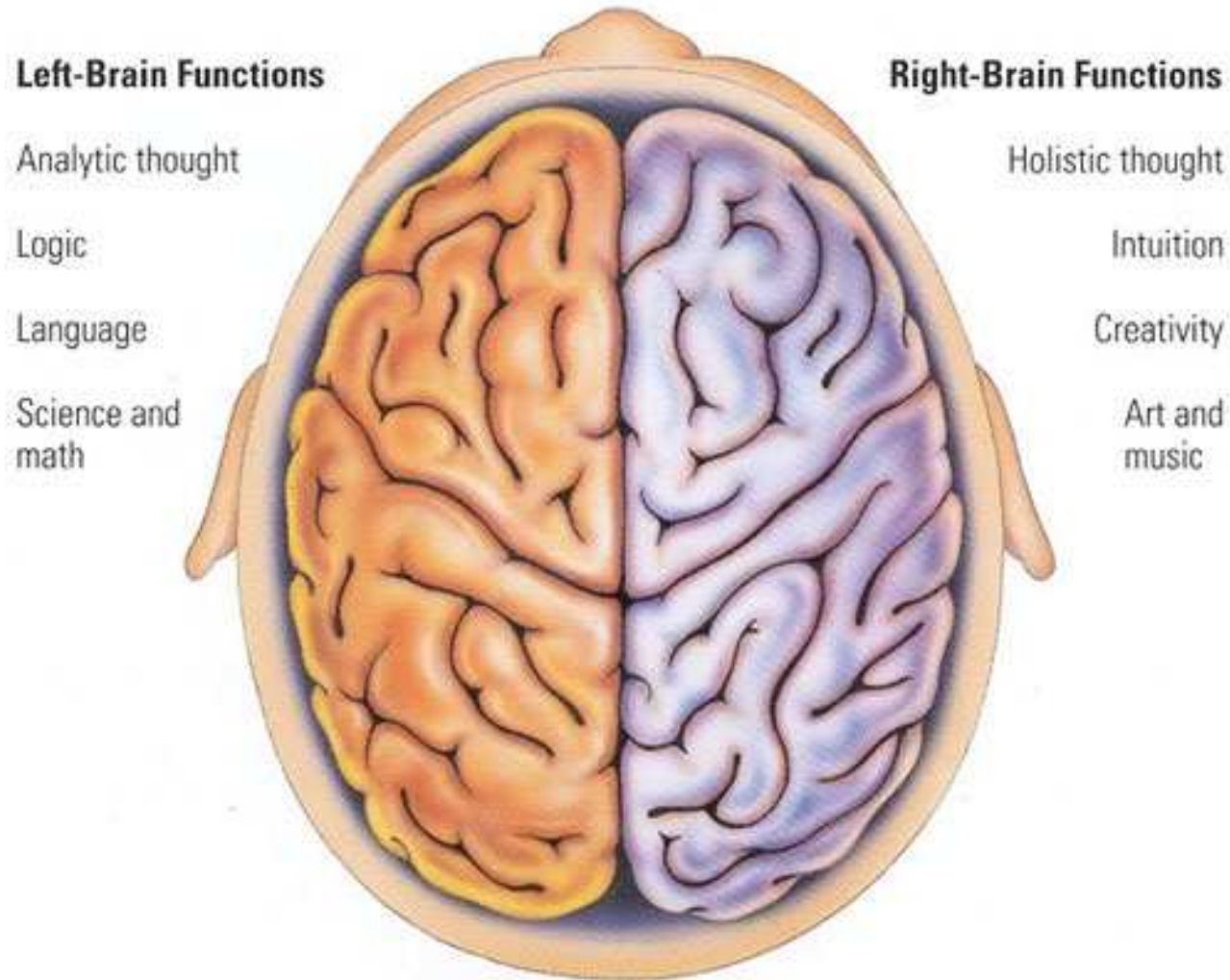
If you are - imaginative  
but  
- inconstant  
and  
- time-lacking

here is our suggestion...

## our suggestion...

1. match words with a **picture**
2. associate them with a **mental image**  
(colour, shape, feeling, physical sensation)  
(*dreary: something grey, unpleasant*)
3. connect the **sound** of the new word with its  
meaning (onomatopoeia: *slurp, splash*)
4. relate the sound of the new word with the  
sound of an **Italian word** (*MONEY-mani*)
5. use **stickers**

# LEFT BRAIN – RIGHT BRAIN



# TOPIC AREAS

It's easier for your brain to store words if they are grouped according to the same lexical area, because one word can lead you to the others.

Words listed in alphabetical order have proved to be useless for most students

(how can you remember a list of miscellaneous words starting with "f"?)

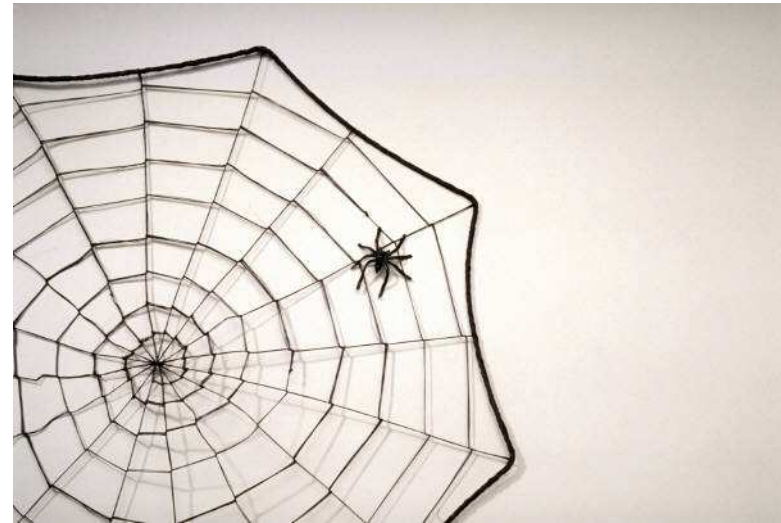


# TOPIC AREAS

How can you arrange words belonging to the same semantic field?

Make 'open pages' with lexical sets where you store new words as you meet them:

- word-trees
- networks
- spider charts
- tables



# TOPIC AREAS

If your needs are more specific, you could work with:

- **collocations**, words that are often combined (e.g. *loud noise*)
- stages of a **process** (e.g. *when you start a car or build a house*)
- words in a **scale** (e.g. from *boiling hot* to *freezing cold*)

# SAME ROOT

VERB	NOUN (person)	NOUN (object)	ADJ.	ADVERB
criticize	critic	criticism	critical	critically
lose	loser	loss	lost	
rely (on)		reliability	reliable	reliably
survive	survivor	survival	surviving	

# SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

	SYNONYM	ANTONYM
eager	keen	apathetic
fussy	choosy	uncritical
humble	modest	conceited
rough	uneven	smooth

# PICTURES

You can exploit pictures not only for objects but also for feelings and moods.

Even a few strokes or a quick sketch can show a lot!



**ENRAGED**



**FRIGHTENED**



**ENVIOUS**

# MENTAL IMAGES

Research has proved that a word can trigger off a variety of personal associations and this can be exploited to memorize words.

You must appeal to all your senses!  
You can work with shapes and have fun 'drawing' words...

INCREASE



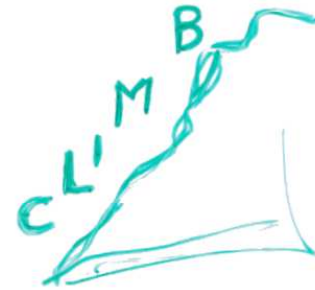
SPREAD



SQUARE



AROUND



FIRE

HIGH

LOW

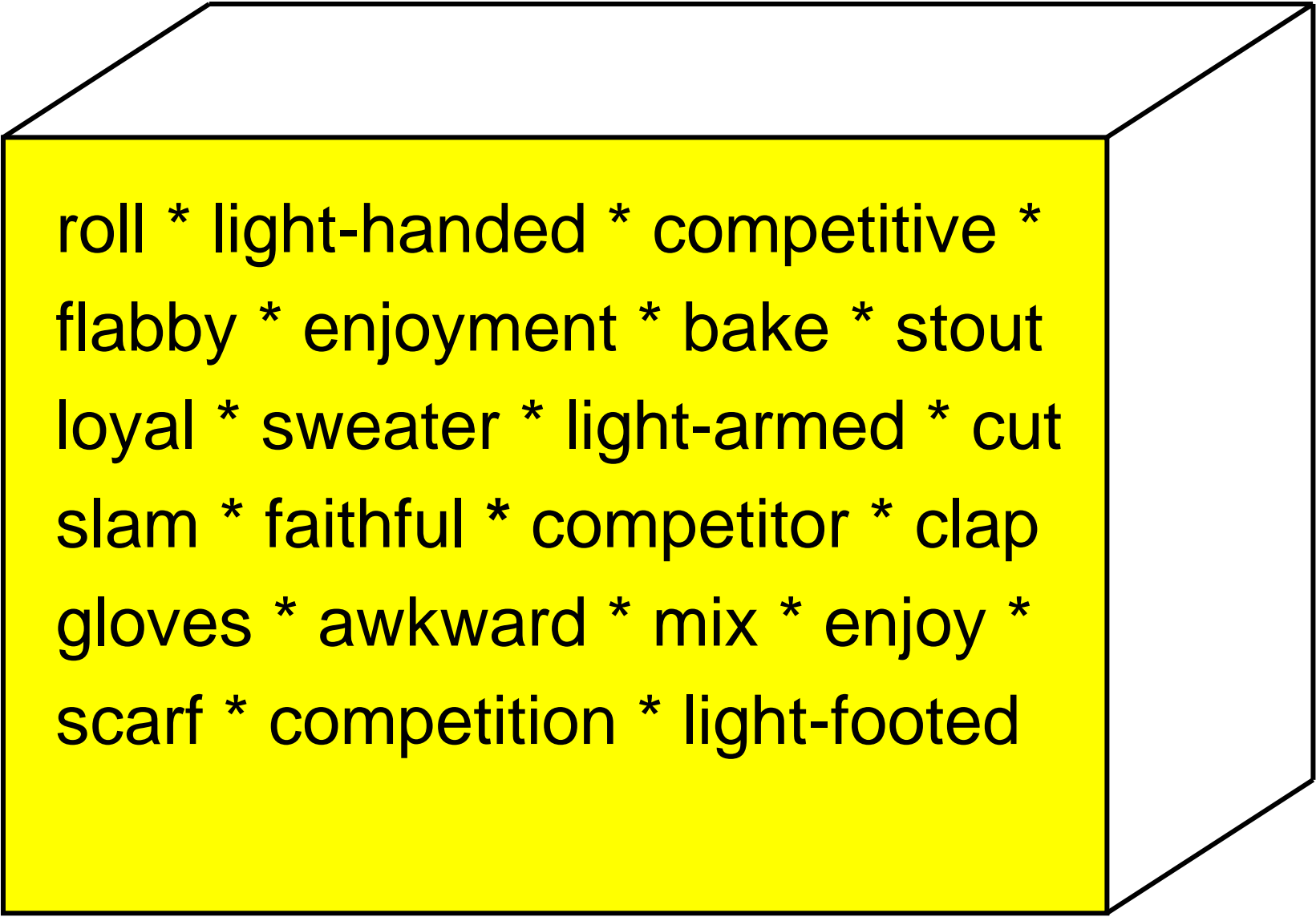
SHATTER



Knot

After being presented with so many methods and suggestions, decide which are best to organize and record the words in the following box...





roll \* light-handed \* competitive \*  
flabby \* enjoyment \* bake \* stout  
loyal \* sweater \* light-armed \* cut  
slam \* faithful \* competitor \* clap  
gloves \* awkward \* mix \* enjoy \*  
scarf \* competition \* light-footed

# FAST READING

Lots of readers stop at every single word and often skip back in an attempt to understand more.

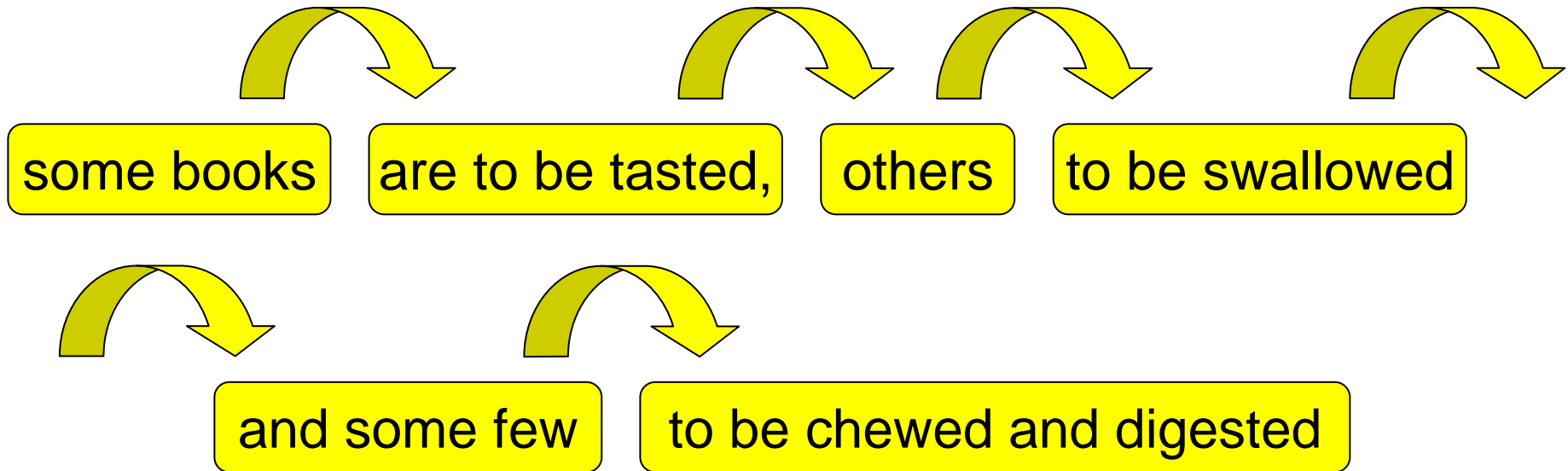
**Wrong!**

A fast reader understands much more than a slow reader!

Why?

# FAST READING

some books are to be tasted, others to be  
swallowed and some few to be chewed and  
digested



# FAST READING

- A slow reader has to add the meaning of every single word to the meaning of each following word, so after a while his eyes and his brain are very tired!
- A fast reader reads in **chunks (sense groups)**, that is expands his field of vision, jumps from one block of words to another, so he makes less physical work, gets less tired and understands more because he has a more complete view of the passage.

# FAST READING

You don't need a complete line to recognize words and understand a passage.

**For an indoor lighting system  
we looked outside**

# FAST READING

## THE CURSE OF THE TOURIST

People travelling, flocking to parks and monuments.

tons of garbage . cars  
pollute . tear down trees  
taint the water.

, environmentally sensitive expeditions,  
effort minimize  
damage. encouraging, but unless  
change behaviour,  
running out of places to go.

# FAST READING

## THE CURSE OF THE TOURIST

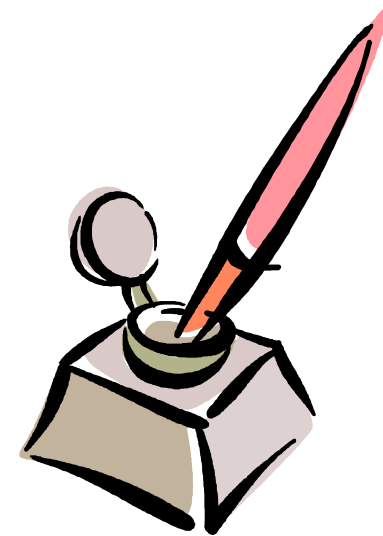
People are travelling as never before, flocking to the world's greatest parks and monuments. They leave tons of garbage behind them. Their cars and buses pollute the air. They tear down trees and taint the water.

Ecotours, environmentally sensitive expeditions, are springing up in an effort to minimize the damage. That's encouraging, but unless vacationers dramatically change their behaviour, they will start running out of places to go.

# NOTE-TAKING

*the palest ink is better than  
the most retentive memory*

(Chinese proverb)





# Why take notes?

- to reach **concentration** and keep your mind active
- to **understand** what we read or hear more effectively
- to **record** what we are studying and remember it better



# NOTE-TAKING

## How?

- select main points (key words)
- find relationships between them
- re-arrange them

# Highlighting the text

Instead of (or before) taking notes, you can:

- underline once or twice or make a dotted line
-  and  words
- draw vertical lines in the margin
- use many different colours
- comment the text with lots of symbols to show agreement/disagreement, etc...
- list main points with letters and numbers to mark an order or hierarchy

# NOTE-TAKING

## Useful hints (a decalogue!)

1. use a **loose-leaf** system with a ring-binder
2. record the **source**
3. use a lot of **headings**, subheadings, numbers, letters
4. use **indentation**
5. vary the character of your handwriting:  
use **CAPITALS**, **bold type** and *italics*.

# NOTE-TAKING

## Useful hints (a decalogue!)

6. make **drawings** and diagrams
7. employ also your **own words**
8. leave **space** for additions and changes
9. use **abbreviations and symbols**, even personal ones!
10. don't write too much!

# LINEAR NOTES vs MIND MAPS

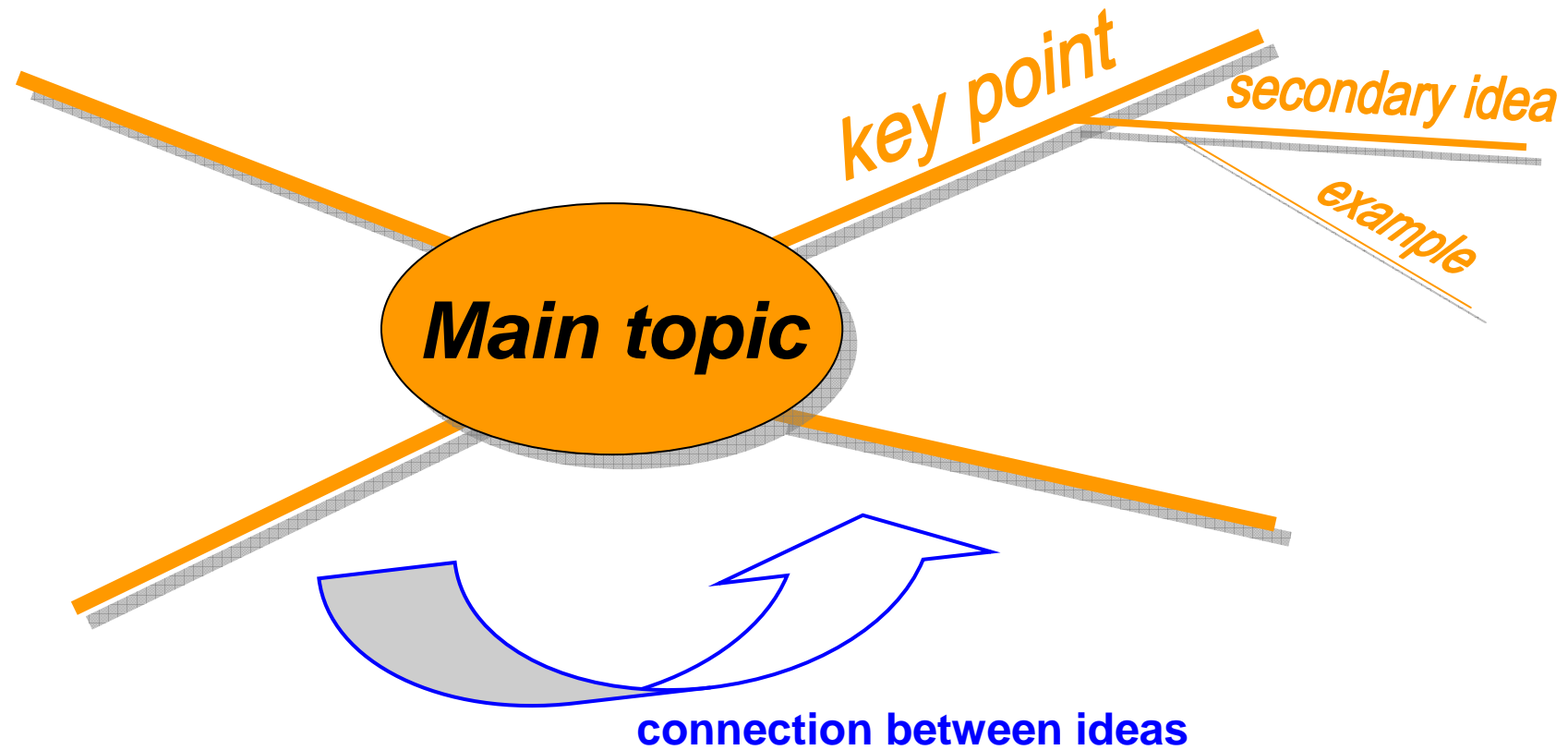
- **linear** system: single words or short phrases one under the other
- **mind maps**: the same key-words but with a different layout (**branching** system)

whatever you choose, the visual layout is very important: the more varied the page, the more memorable!

# MIND MAPS

- write the **main topic** in the centre
- draw **branches** with headings when you meet key points
- leave plenty of space around each branch for other **subdivisions**
- make **connections** between different points (with linking lines)

# MIND MAPS





# MIND MAPS Advantages

- they drive to think and link
- the visual pattern helps memorization
- it is simpler to add details

however, the linear system is better if you have to note the step by step logical structure of an argument

# Notes from lectures

- see if you can **anticipate** something through the title
- pay special attention to **signal phrases**
- notice the **tone** of the speaker, facial expressions and gestures
- exploit repetitions, summaries and **overviews** made by the lecturer
- leave space to insert headings

# REVISION

R

ecord

ephrase

educer

earrange

evise

ecall

# HOW TO SUMMARIZE

- **select** the gist (at least 1 topic sentence for each paragraph)
- **organize** main points
- **paraphrase** them in order to simplify
- exploit all you've learnt about note-taking!

# HOW TO MAKE AN OUTLINE FOR A SHORT PAPER OR SPEECH

In note-taking you had to pick up the 'bones' of a text and leave out the 'flesh'.

Here it's the opposite: you have to draw the '**bones**' of a given topic and then you'll add the '**flesh**'!

The main subject will be in the middle and the ideas will spray out around it.

# HOW TO MAKE AN OUTLINE FOR A SHORT PAPER OR SPEECH

practical hints:

- study the **title**
- jot down the ideas that come to your mind, even in a **scrambled** order
- **organize** these ideas into groups
- point out the **relationships**
- add **examples**

# STUDY ORGANIZATION: healthy habits (1)

- **plan** your study-time in advance (considering time available and quantity of topics)
- choose a **quiet** place and try to avoid distractions and interferences
- set yourself **goals** (short-term and long-term)
- study the hardest points when you are at your **peak**
- **alternate** the 4 skills and the use of the 5 senses to keep the level of concentration high

# STUDY ORGANIZATION: healthy habits (2)

- **revise** your notes regularly (after 1 day, 1 week, 1 month)
- take frequent but short **breaks** (every 40-45 minutes)
- find some time for physical exercise or at least **relaxation**
- don't try to learn most of the material in the last few days
- get enough **sleep!**



# SPECIAL HINTS FOR EXAMS (1)

- ask yourself **questions** about the exam
- get all the **info** about the syllabus and look for past exam papers
- find a **study-partner** to teach each other things or discuss main points
- organize your revision with **summarizing tables** (to connect and compare different points)
- make striking and outstanding schemes

# SPECIAL HINTS FOR EXAMS (2)

- memorize new notions **connecting** them with others
- go immediately to the **heart of the matter** when questioned
- **support** your answer with examples and references
- use **quotations**: they are a very effective and striking instrument
- turn negative into **positive** statements!

**A**ilities

**U**sefulness

**T**rainning

**O**rganization

**N**otetaking

**O**riginality

**M**otivation

**Y**es, you got it!



I can  
manage the  
situation!

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