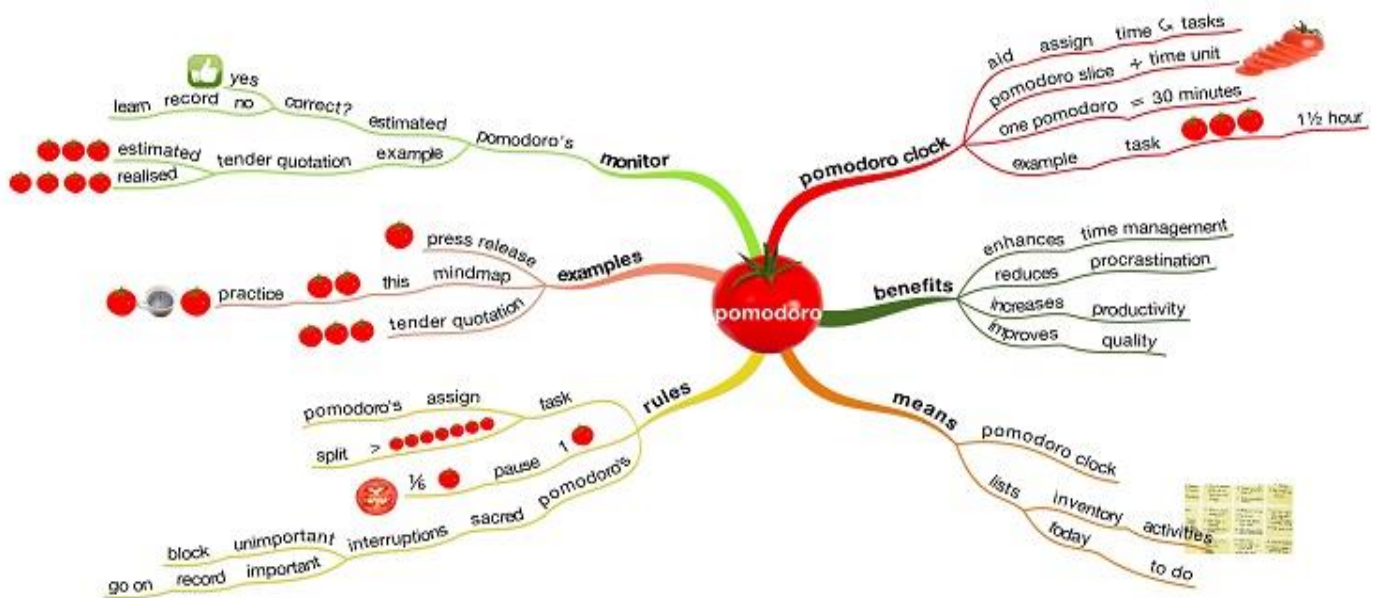
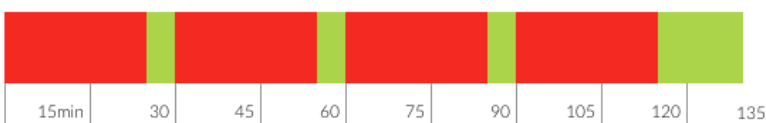




Study Tip # 22: Maximising Learning



- Read through the relevant materials before starting to commit information to memory. This will help produce a scaffold to which new learnings can attach to. If the volume of material is too large, read through all the headings and the first paragraph of each section instead. This will ensure that you have a global overview of the topic, as well as an understanding of how principles relate to one another.
- Learn in 20 – 50 minute blocks with breaks totalling 10 minutes each hour. Taking breaks on a regular basis results in better recall of information.
- For maximum productivity, use the Pomodoro Technique. Set an alarm for 25 minutes and work solidly – no distractions or breaks allowed. Take a 5-minute break and then study for another 25-minutes. After the fourth Pomodoro (25-minute session) take a break for 15 to 30 minutes. Continue this regime until it's time to stop your studies for the day.



■ WORK ■ BREAK

- During each break, relax or engage in something physical and/or fun. These crucial breaks will give your mind a chance to rest and doing something different will actually stimulate it. Do not use technological devices during your 5-minute breaks.
- Start learning sessions with the most difficult sections, or those areas that require the most learning.
- People often are able to recall words that were repeated or connected in some way, together with unusual words that stand out from the rest. Therefore, make learning interesting and different – and if possible – make learning fun.
- Short-term memory asks two simple questions to determine whether an item is saved or rejected:

"Does this make sense?" (Can I understand the item?)

"Does this have meaning?" (Is the item relevant?)

The greater the sense and meaning, the more effectively information is stored in long-term memory. Sense and meaning can be very easily established by rephrasing what has been learned in your own words, and out loud.

- After learning a topic or subtopic, test your knowledge and further engrain information into long-term memory using practice testing. Examples include:

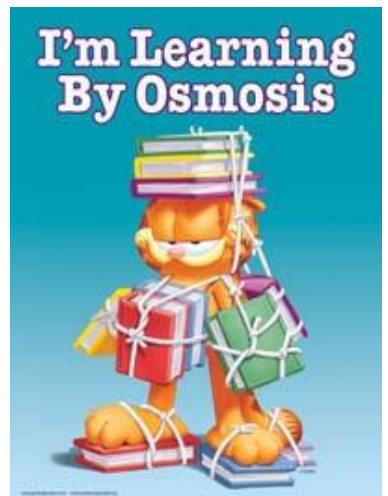
Asking yourself questions and answering them. Flash cards are great for this.

Doing practice questions without the aid of notes or textbook materials.

Sitting tests in a testing environment.

By actively retrieving the information, it is better stored in long-term memory. Testing also provides accurate feedback of what you really know.

- Set up study groups where you're given the opportunity to teach others what you've learned.
- Short-term memory has a limited capacity and can only hold a small amount of information (seven plus or minus two chunks or items of information) at one time. Therefore, keep the number of points you're trying to memorise to 5 or 6 at a time.
- Use "chunking" when learning larger numbers of items or points. "Chunking" is the process where we decrease the number of items we're holding in memory by increasing the size of each item, making it possible to remember long lists or items. For example, the TSFX office number, which is 9663 3311 can be chunked as follows: 9 double 6, triple 3, double 1.
- Learning occurs when information stored in your short-term memory connects with information that is currently stored in your long-term memory. This connection occurs naturally, and only when you stop inputting large amounts of information into the brain (usually overnight). Therefore, make sure that you get at least 9 hours of sleep when preparing for tests and exams.
- Seek advice and different perspectives from as many sources as possible, **especially from official VCE exam markers**. Assessors have access to important information that many classroom teachers aren't aware of, and which can make a big difference when aiming for the higher VCE marks.



- Attend quality exam revision lectures. Hearing information again further ingrains information into long-term memory, improving the quality of exam responses and how well information can be applied in unfamiliar applications.
- Research shows that the average student can't engage in intense study, and in particular, commit course materials to memory effectively on the same subject for more than 4 consecutive hours – even with 10-minute breaks every hour. After 4 hours, efficiency and memory begin to suffer.

To get the most from learning sessions (and cut down on study time), spread learning across a longer time frame rather than cramming before the examinations. You will learn more in ten 2-hour sessions than in two 10-hour sessions.

Change subjects or tasks every few hours and try not to study/commit course materials to memory for more than 4 hours at a time.

When studying similar subjects for more than 4 hours at a time, change learning styles every few hours.



- Revise the previous year's materials. Year 11 coursework can, and has been previously examined in the final VCE exams.
- Various studies show that recall is better when tested in the same context (physical or emotional) as in which learning took place. For example, some benefit has been found studying for tests and examinations in the same room as they will be taken!
- Worrying over things that you can't control wastes so much time and energy, and won't change what's on the exam, when it's being held, and how much time you have to prepare for it. Instead, focus on the things you do have control over, and divert your time and energy to study – which is the only thing that will improve your examination marks.

Regards,
TSFX