

FLASH CARDS

Flash cards are one of the best methods to use for studying and memorizing information. You can use flash cards to learn just about any information for any class, such as vocabulary, mathematical equations and formulas, terms and definitions or main ideas and topics.

However, there are right ways to prepare and use flash cards and there are wrong ways. If done the right way, you will find that creating flash cards is one of the most effective ways you can study for your exams.

CREATING YOUR FLASH CARDS

- Don't wait to create your flash cards the day before the exam. Begin creating them right away, after every class (using your class notes) after every chapter you finish in your textbook.
- Use both sides of the card. One side should ask just one question. On the other side of the card, write the answer to that question.
- Bring blank flash cards with you to class. If something comes up in class that will be important for you to know or study later, prepare a fast flash card right away, and then if need be, make a new, more thorough one at home.
- If you have a question about something you learn in class, write that question down on a flashcard. After class, ask your teacher the question, and write his/her response on the reverse side.
- Sometimes it's helpful to colour code your flash cards. For example, if you are studying a language, try using pink cards for feminine nouns and blue cards for masculine nouns. Or, you can use different colour cards for each of the chapters in your biology textbook.
- Try to use your own words when writing your flash cards, unless a specific definition is required.

DON'T put too much information on a single flashcard. Each flash card should be designed to teach you just one piece of information. Even if the information is related, it is better to have five flashcards than just one.

THE WRONG WAY:

What are some of the ways in which neurotransmitters affect our behaviour and what are some of the major neurotransmitters?

acetylcholine, dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin, glutamate, GABA and endorphins are neurotransmitters that affect our behaviour by regulating the actions of glands and muscles, affecting learning and memory, promoting sleep, stimulating mental...

DO break up the information so that there is only one question on one flash card. Try to keep the answers short and precise; it's more helpful if you can process the information with one glance at the card.

THE RIGHT WAY:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What are some of the major neurotransmitters? | Acetylcholine Dopamine Norepinephrine Serotonin Glutamate GABA endorphins |
| What are some of the ways in which neurotransmitters affect our behaviour? | Regulate the actions of glands and muscles Affect learning and memory Promote sleep Stimulate mental and physical alertness Influence moods and emotions |

You are effectively and critically studying just by writing down the question and finding the answer, then writing it down too!

STUDYING FLASH CARDS

Now that your flash cards are ready, it's time to start studying with them! The following tips will help you get the most out of your flash cards.

- Don't study your cards for long periods of time. Instead, study them for intervals of fifteen to twenty minutes throughout the day.
- Break your flash cards up into several, related groups. People tend to memorize the first and last things in a series first. If you have a lot of flash cards, the mid-section is very big and therefore takes a long time to learn. Study the flash cards in small groups so that you can remember more!
- Go through your flashcards and try to answer each one's question. If you know the answer, put the card in one pile. If you do not know the answer, put that card into a different pile.
- Keep going through the pile of cards that you didn't know the answer to, and as soon as you get the answer right, put that card in the other pile. You'll see the pile of cards you didn't know the answer to get smaller and smaller, until there are no cards left in it. Then start all over again. You'll discover that you'll remember a lot more each time you go through them.
- Review them often. Don't just look through them once and put them away for the rest of the week. Carry them everywhere with you and look through them every time you have a free moment: on the bus, waiting in line at the bank, or in between classes.
- Be sure to shuffle the cards often. This helps you learn the individual pieces of information and not just in relation to the card before it and after it.
- You know you've done a good job of studying when you can answer your entire stack of flash cards twice, preferably with a day in between.