



Home Learning

Smarter ways to learn



Ebbinghaus & My Homework

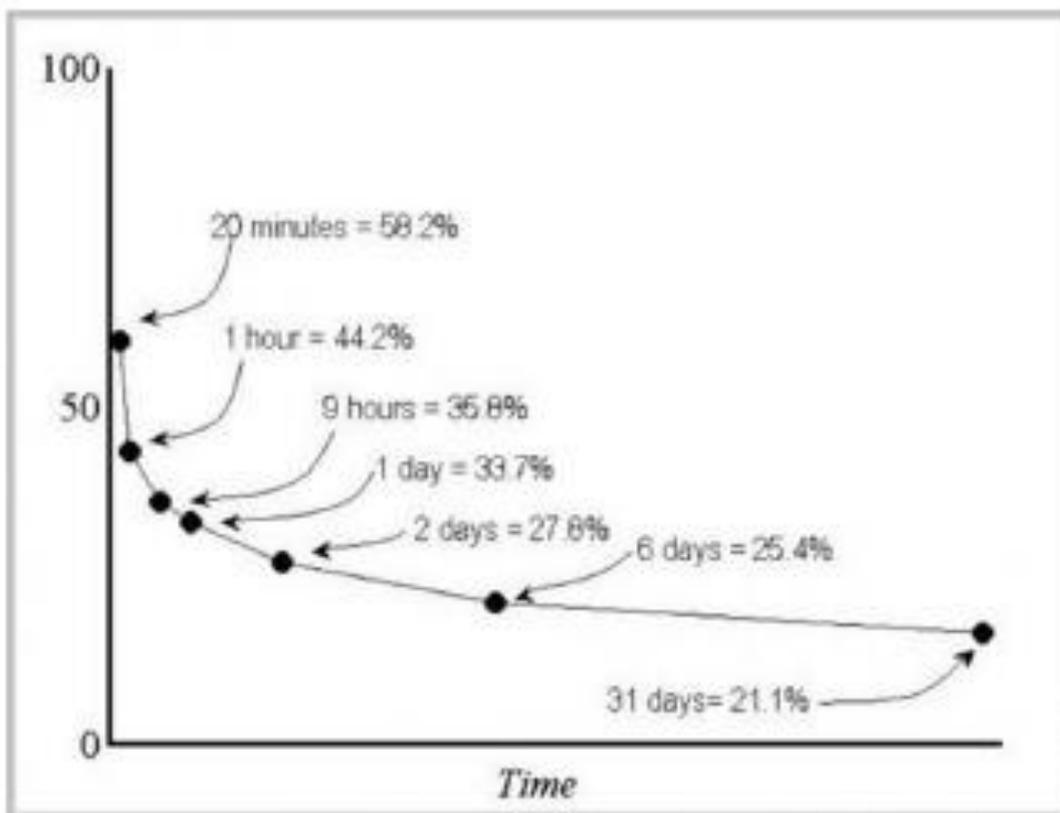
Why it's hard to remember

Hermann Ebbinghaus was a psychologist who did some amazing research into how our memories work.

He found out that an hour after we've learnt something for the first time we can only remember about 40% of it and that a month later we can only recall 20%.

No wonder revising for exams feels like an uphill struggle!

Have a look at this diagram of his famous "Forgetting Curve" and you'll see what he meant.



Try for yourself:

- How much of what you learnt in lessons yesterday can you recall right now?
- We bet it's not much more than about 30%

It's Not All Bad, Though!

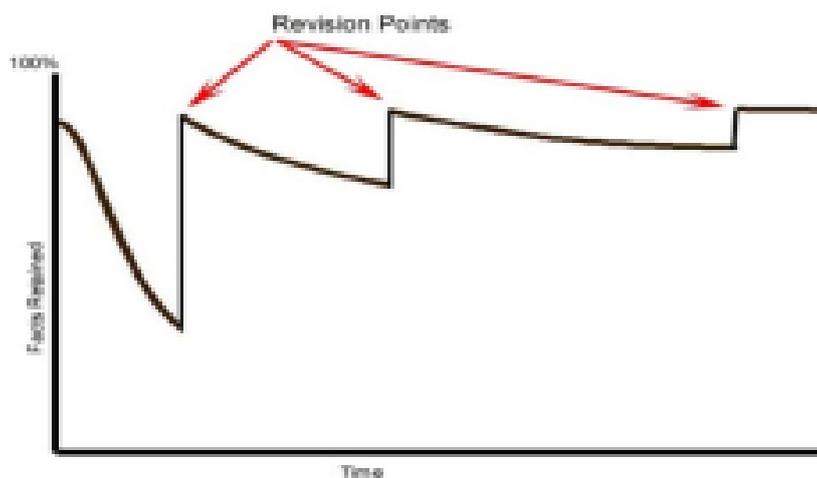
Why reviewing is so important

Ebbinghaus also found out that if we review our learning at regular intervals then our memories can recall much more of it and it starts to stick.

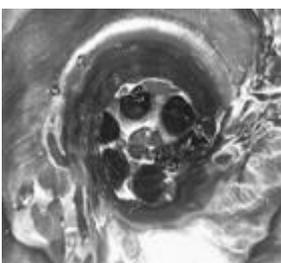
So if we keep going over what we have learnt then we won't find ourselves having to relearn 80% of it before an exam.

Try recalling a song or your address. Why is it that you can recall this information so easily?

Here we see a learning curve. It shows that every time you review something you have learned you retain more of it in your memory. That's because you are making changes in your brain – and that's what learning is all about: restructuring your brain.



The Curve of Learning



“Trying to learn something without reviewing it at regular intervals is like trying to fill a bath without putting the plug in!”

Mike Hughes

Remembering for Learning

Give your brain something to work on!

Preparing for exams or tests is one good reason for working smarter with our memories but there is a much better one. Ebbinghaus explains it well:

“The amount of detailed information which an individual has at his command and his theoretical elaborations of the same are mutually dependent; they grow in and through each other.”

Which basically means that the more information we retain about a subject, the more deeply we are able to THINK about it and understand it properly.

So you see, remembering isn't just about answering questions in exams, it's about giving our brains something to work on so that we can become fantastic thinkers and learners.

If we are going to take our memories seriously then we need to work smart at home.

There is absolutely no such thing as no homework.

There is always reviewing to do.

Let's call it home learning now and think of it as work we do for ourselves rather than just to stay in our teachers' good books!



Remembering for Learning

Active Recall

Remembering for learning means doing something active with the work you've done during the day in exercise books, work booklets and on worksheets.

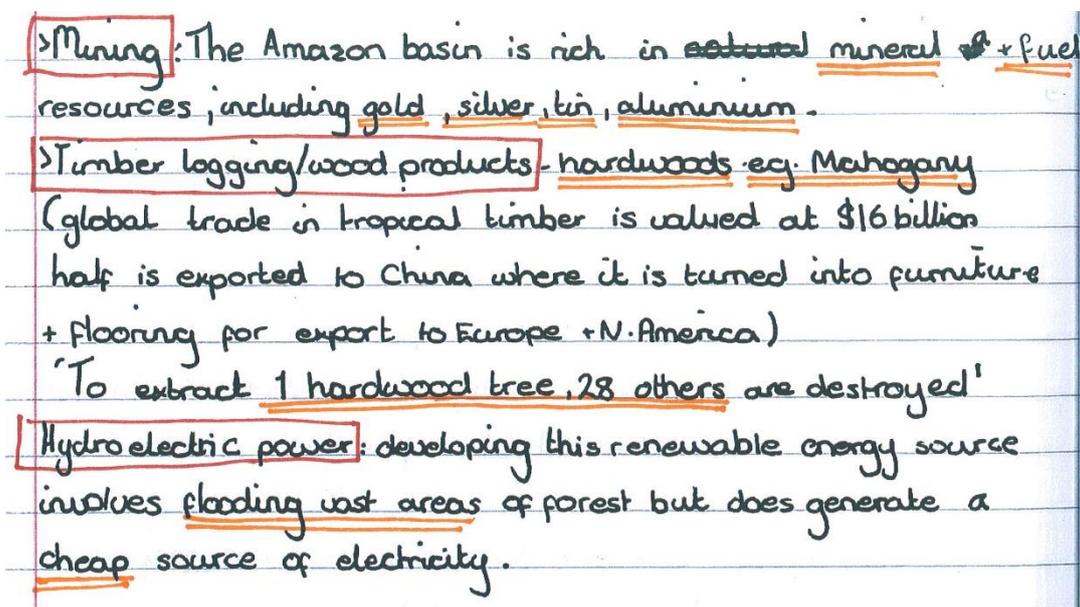
You should, at the very least:

- Go over work and underline key words and important information in colour
- Draw a box around important sections you will need to learn
- Stick sheets into your books or file them properly
- Get your books ready for the next day's lessons and as you do so review the learning you have been doing in those lessons so you are ready for new learning tomorrow. Now you don't have to make a huge effort to recall or relearn lots of information at the start of each lesson.

Copying a formula or a spelling or a poem is not as effective as "active recall".

This is when you attempt to retrieve the information without having it in front of you.

Simple examples of this include SACAWAC in English, or reciting a paragraph in a foreign language without your notes.



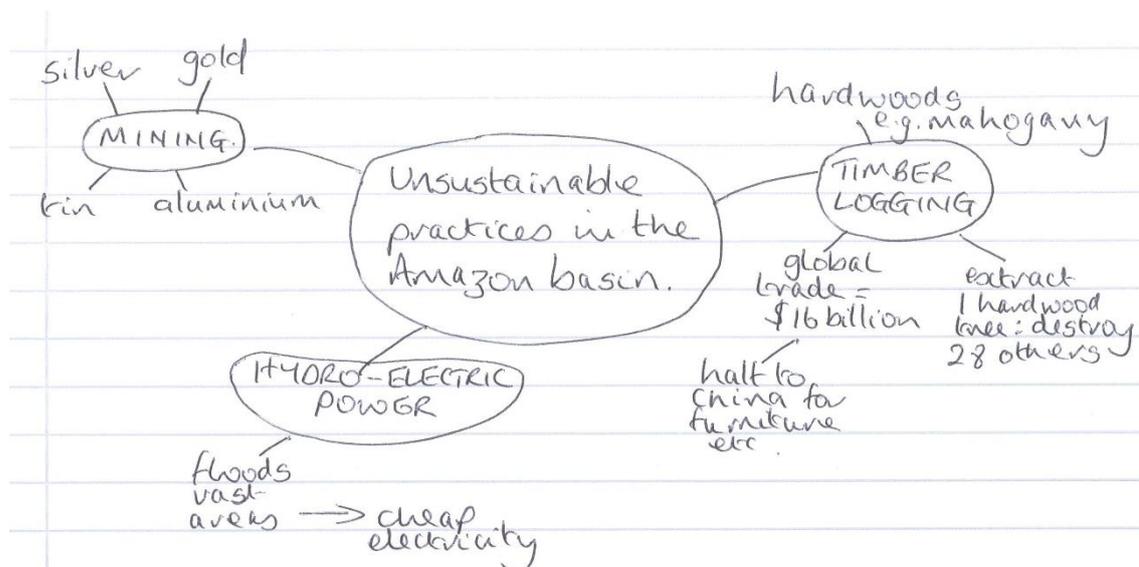
Remembering for Learning

Activities

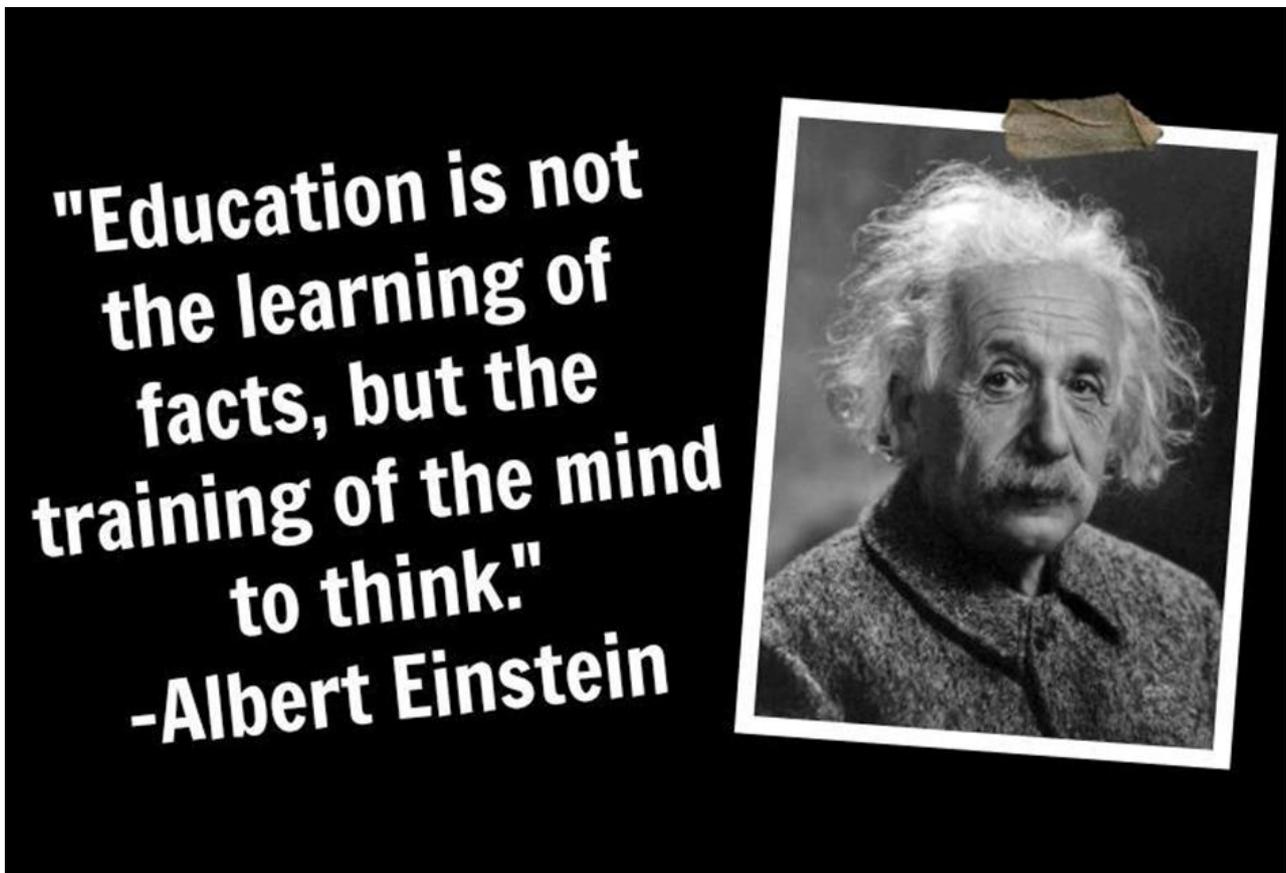
For some super—charged remembering for learning you could add in one or two of the activities below:

- Create a glossary of technical terms for each subject and update it each evening with new words and phrases you've written down in your exercise books etc
- Scan your exercise book pages into your i-pad/PC etc and highlight the key sections for revision before filing them properly under subject and topic headings
- Create mind maps for topics on paper or electronically. Try and redraw them from memory, too
- Come up with mnemonics for remembering things
- Get someone to test you on the spellings and meanings of new words in your glossary
- Tell someone the 3 main facts you have learnt in each subject today
- Write revision notes for future reference and keep them filed in a safe place, either electronically or on paper
- SACAWAC for spellings, vocab, formula and such like

It's all time well spent!



Education



Grow your brain and save yourself loads of hard work all at the same time

What's not to like?

