

The Roman Room Memory Technique

The Roman Room technique is an ancient and effective way of remembering unstructured information where the relationship of items of information to other items of information is not important. It functions by imagining a room (e.g. your sitting room or bedroom). Within that room are objects. The technique works by associating images with those objects. To recall information, simply take a tour around the room in your mind, visualising the known objects and their associated images.

How to use the Roman Room System

Imagine a room that you know well: perhaps this is your sitting room, a bedroom, an office, exam hall or a classroom. Within this room there are features and objects in known positions. The basis of the Roman Room system is that things to be remembered are associated with these objects, so that by recalling the objects within the room all the associated objects can also be remembered.

E.G: I can imagine my sitting room as a basis for the technique. In my sitting room I can visualise the following objects:

Table, lamp, sofa, large bookcase, small bookcase, CD rack, tape racks, stereo system, telephone, television, video, chair, mirror, black & white photographs, etc.

I may want to remember a list of World War I war poets:

Rupert Brooke, G.K. Chesterton, Walter de la Mare, Robert Graves, Rudyard Kipling, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, W.B. Yates

I could visualise walking through my front door, which has a picture on it of a scene from the Battle of the Somme, with an image of a man sitting in a trench writing in a dirty exercise book.

I walk into the sitting room, and look at the table. On the top is RUPERT the Bear sitting in a small BROOK (we do not need to worry about where the water goes in our imagination!) This codes for Rupert Brooke.

Someone seems to have done some moving: a CHEST has been left on the sofa. Some jeans (Alphabet System: G=Jeans) are hanging out of one draw, and some cake has been left on the top (K=Cake). This codes for G K Chesterton.

The lamp has a small statuette of a brick WALL over which a female horse (MARE) is about to jumping. This codes for Walter de la Mare. Etc.

Remembering a Shopping List:

At a BLUE front door with a shiny, GOLD letterbox. You feed slices of BREAD through the letter box then shove the rest through as it is taking too long...

In the hall there is a PURPLE BOOKCASE full of books. On the bookcase is a bottle of milk which you pick up and pour over the books making them sticky and mushy...

You go into the dining room where there are 3 triangular teabags dancing on the table...

In the kitchen is a newspaper – you scrunch it up and put it in the oven-you'll worry about that later...

You go to walk up the stairs and step back just in time a huge apple bounces down the stairs narrowly missing you...

You lie on your bed and feel the drip of something... you look up as honey falls from the ceiling and covers you in a sticky, sweet mess...

This goes on to cover all the things you want to remember: bread, milk, teabags, newspaper, apples, honey...By associating the things to places and our senses we find it easier to remember.