

## How Mnemonic Strategies Can Improve Your Child's Memory Skills In One Evening

By Jim Sarris What's one of the things all successful students have in common? They can memorize easily. They remember the facts and details of battles in history, the formulas in math and the unending list of elements in science.

So what can you do to help your child develop memory strategies that can instantly help them be more successful in school?

The answer...mnemonic memorizing techniques!

They're fun, simple and incredibly effective. And in one evening you can show your child how to apply them to any vocabulary list, series of facts and figures, or just plain remembering what to do after coming home from school.

Who uses mnemonics?

According to Dr. Joel Levin, Educational Psychologist at the University of Arizona, "Many folks - motivated students included - use memory enhancing techniques, especially when there's a 'memory payoff,' such as obtaining higher academic grades or admission to some elite professional school or graduate program."

To put it simply, mnemonics are memory aids that help make a connection between what you already know and what you need to remember. You probably use mnemonics in your daily life and don't even know it. (Does "I before E except after C" ring a bell?).

How about the order of the planets? (My very educated mother just served us nine pizzas - look at the first letter of each word in that sentence and you'll have the names of the planets, in their correct order).

All you need to do is follow one of the three memory strategies I'll list here and you can help your child create funny (goofy is ok, too) and effective mnemonics starting tonight.

First method: Acronyms.

Take the first letter of the series of words you need to memorize and make a word out of them. The more famous acronyms we have are SCUBA (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).

Ask your son or daughter if there's a list of vocabulary, facts or figures they need to learn for tomorrow or the next day and see if you can help them come up with an acronym.

Second method: Acrostics

Take the first letter of a series of words you need to learn and create a sentence. In my Spanish classes, we have many acrostics (it's easier to just call them mnemonics). One in particular is for "GO" verbs in the present tense (Harry Potter Teaches Cool Students - Hacer, Poner, Traer, Caer, Salir).

I also remember an acrostic from an 8th grade math class: Old Houses Are Houses Of Age - (Sine) - Opposite/Hypotenuse, (Cosine) - Adjacent/Hypotenuse, (Tangent) - Opposite/Adjacent). Other friends of mine from different schools learned the mnemonic SOACAHTOA.

Third method: Keyword

Take the word you want to learn, find a similar sounding word (or similar spelling) and come up with a sentence that includes the keyword and the meaning you're trying to remember.

This approach works beautifully in my Spanish classes. Let's say your child wants to learn the verb &quot;Dormir&quot; (to sleep). You decide on a keyword (we'll use dorm) and then you create a sentence. My class came up with &quot;Norm sleeps in the dorm.&quot;

When you add an illustration to this sentence, it helps your child remember even more quickly, and retain it longer.

Why aren't mnemonics used more often in schools? That's a good question. Levin, who's studied mnemonics for over 25 years and understands their effectiveness better than most, considers it &quot;a mystery.&quot;

Anyone of these mnemonic techniques will work depending on the material. It all comes down to finding the best one for your son or daughter.

And they can be learned (and applied) in one night. That means your child can improve their memory skills from one day to the next.

### About the Author

Jim Sarris is the author of *Comic Mnemonics*, a Spanish book that uses visuals and funny phrases to help kids learn Spanish faster. Visit <http://www.learnspanishfaster.com> to pick up some free samples and learn how to use mnemonics to memorize more easily.

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