

Getting Started



# The Lightning Round

Only a 100-point response earns a team point!

<b>Strategy Use</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and explains how using the strategy helped in better understanding the text.</b>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and describes a problem and a strategy that was used to solve the problem.</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>identifies a problem that a team member had understanding the text.</b>

<b>Team Talk (oral and written)</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and connects the answer to the supporting evidence and uses academic language.</b>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and includes supporting evidence and examples (from the text or from experience).</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>uses full sentences to clearly and correctly answer the question.</b>

<b>Word Power</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and expands on the meaning, for example, identifies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• related words</li> <li>• a second meaning</li> <li>• a word connotation</li> <li>• an antonym</li> </ul>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and explains the meaning in a definition and a meaningful sentence.</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>tells a word or phrase added to the word power journal and why it was added (what makes it important or interesting).</b>

<b>Fluency</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and reads smoothly and with expression (shows emotion and changes with punctuation and dialogue).</b>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and reads at just the right pace to understand the text—not too slow and not too fast.</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>reads a short passage and pronounces most of the words correctly.</b>

<b>Summary</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and uses key vocabulary correctly.</b>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and clearly connects relevant ideas in a logical order.</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>presents main ideas and important details in his or her own words and without personal opinion.</b>

<b>Graphic Organizer/Notes</b>	
The Random Reporter:	
<b>100</b>	gives a 90-pt. response <b>and explains how the graphic organizer helped in understanding the text.</b>
<b>90</b>	gives an 80-pt. response <b>and includes main points or events and important details.</b>
<b>80</b>	<b>selects a graphic organizer that is appropriate for the text.</b>

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*A Nonprofit Education Reform Organization*

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This project was developed at the Success for All Foundation under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden to utilize the power of cooperative learning, frequent assessment and feedback, and schoolwide collaboration proven in decades of research to increase student learning.





# Getting Started

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## Unit Objectives

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

For this unit, you will need:

- Student edition
- A few sticky notes for marking passages
- A notebook for taking notes on your reading and for writing answers to the Team Talk questions
- A word power journal (marble composition book)
- Read and Respond form

## Lesson 1

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

What is the difference between a group and a team?

### Team Talk Questions

1. What is your team name? Why did you choose that name?
2. What is the difference between a group and a team? Give an example of each.
3. What do you and your teammates have in common? How will that help you work together?
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## Lesson 2

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

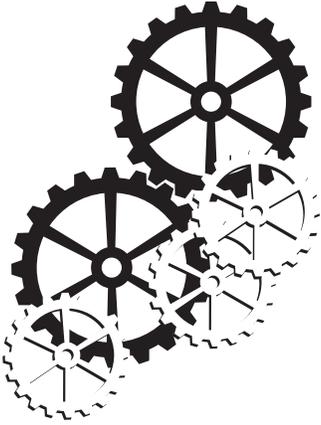
What are some ways that you can help your team?

### Team Talk Questions

1. According to the article, what is the best way to study for a test?
2. According to the article, what are three ways that you can improve how you learn?
3. What is active listening? Why is active listening such an important teamwork skill?
4. How well did you and your teammates listen to the teacher and to one another? What did you do well? What do you need to improve?

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## Research Shows that Most Students have a Lot to Learn about How to Learn



Picture this: Your teacher tells your class that there will be a big test at the end of the week. You will have to know a long list of new vocabulary words. You wonder, How will I get all this information in my head? Even more importantly, how will you get it all out when you need to remember it? Research shows that most of us really don't know the best way to study. It may be that no one ever taught us how.

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**S**o what is the best way to study for a test? The answer might surprise you; to get ready for a test, you should...take a test!

Scientists did a survey to find out how students study. They found that most students believed that rereading their textbooks was the best way to study. Rereading can make material seem familiar, but that doesn't mean that you will be able to pull it out of your head when you need it. It seems that we must keep our brains very active when we study by asking questions, making organized notes, taking quizzes with a partner, and using active listening.

Tests not only measure learning, but they actually help you learn. Scientists call this the testing effect. Researchers have found that trying over and over to remember information can help students remember up to twice as much as other learning methods. In a study of college students preparing for a science test, quizzing oneself or partners quizzing each other worked equally well.

What else did the scientists find out? Here is a list of studying tips that they say worked the best. (Here is where you will need to get ready to take notes—the following information is very important if you would like to study smarter!)

1. Work with a study partner, and ask each other questions.
2. Get immediate feedback on your answers so you can improve them.
3. Lots of smaller tests taken more often are more helpful than just one big test.
4. Connect new information to what you already know.
5. Take notes when you read. Pick out the most important information, and put it in your own words. Copying someone else's notes is not as useful as making your own.
6. Review your notes every night.

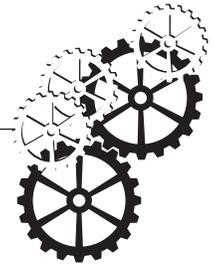
- 7.** Draw a picture, or use a graphic organizer, to show relationships between words and their meanings, parts of a process, or big ideas and details. Reorganize your notes as you learn more about the information and see new connections or as you better understand the structure of the topic.
- 8.** Make a mind movie. Try to picture what you are learning about.
- 9.** Studying frequently is better than cramming all the studying into one big session.
- 10.** Ask yourself questions as you read. If you are reading a textbook that has questions at the end of the chapter, use those to test yourself.
- 11.** Test yourself over and over again until you get every question right.
- 12.** Once you get everything right, keep practicing. This makes it easier for you to remember information when you get to the real test.
- 13.** Learn how to listen; practice focusing on your teacher or your study partner when he or she is explaining something to you.

Are there times when testing will not help you learn? Yes, there are several factors that can contribute to poor results.

First, if you do very poorly on your practice tests, you may not learn much. It is much better to chunk the information you need to learn into smaller parts. Then get feedback about what you did wrong, and fix those things right away.

Second, don't let too much time go by between your practice tests and the test that counts.

Finally, don't be afraid to admit what you don't know. In fact, the single most important thing you can do to succeed is to know when you fail. Find out and keep track of what you are having trouble with, and get help so you can fix it.




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Roediger, H. L., McDermott, K. B., & McDaniel, M. A. (2011). Using testing to improve learning and memory. In M. A. Gernsbacher, R. Pew, L. Hough, & J. R. Pomerantz (Eds.), *Psychology and the real world: Essays illustrating fundamental contributions to society* (pp. 65–74). New York: Worth Publishing Co.

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Roediger, H. L., Putnam, A. L., & Smith, M. A. (2011). Ten benefits of testing and their applications to educational practice. In J. Mestre & B. Ross (Eds.), *Psychology of learning and motivation: Cognition in education* (pp. 1–36). Oxford: Elsevier.

Sparks, S. D. (2012). Research finds students short on study savvy: Most-effective tactics are the least favored. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.journalhomepage.com/full/url/>

## Lesson 3

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

How is your brain like a muscle?

### Team Talk Questions

1. According to the article, can people change how smart they are?
2. Which do you think is more important, looking smart or working hard and asking questions?
3. Is your brain more like a computer or a muscle?
4. The author says that it takes “persistence and determination” to keep working at learning new things. What does *persistence* mean?

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## Do You Need a Personal Trainer for Your Brain?



Ask yourself this: Would you rather look smart to everyone around you or risk looking dumb and actually learn something?

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**T**his is a tough question, and you don't have to share your answer with anyone else right now. New research on how the brain grows sheds new light on how, when, and what we learn. And it might change your mind about what it really means to be smart.

So what do we know about how the brain works? To many people, the functioning of the brain is a mystery. Lots of people believe that we are born with a certain amount of smarts, or brain power. They believe we are either born smart, average, or dumb. They believe that our intelligence is fixed, like a computer with a limited amount of storage space for information, and that there is not much you can do to change it. But scientists who study the brain have doubted that idea for a long time. There is a growing body of evidence that how much people can learn is directly related to how much they exercise their brains rather than the particular kind of brain that they have.

We all know that if you want to run in a marathon, you have to begin small and run more each week until you reach your goal. If you want to run fast, you have to practice running fast. If you want to lift a lot of weight, you may start with five-pound weights and work your way up to twenty-five-pound weights over the course of many months. Using your muscles is the only way to grow them. It takes time and persistence—no pain, no gain, as the saying goes.

Brain scientists pretty much agree that the brain is more like a muscle than a computer. If you exercise your brain, it will change and get stronger. Our brains are made of millions of cells called neurons that are designed to send and receive messages. They connect to one another and form pathways to send information to just the right part of the body to keep us alive and help us think and learn. The truth is that most of us have very similar brains. And experiments show that our brains grow and change throughout our lifetimes.

With new technologies, scientists have been able to track changes that take place during normal brain development. They can see that the size of neurons and the connections between them grow as a person grows from a newborn to a teenager. No one thinks that babies are dumb because they cannot do algebra problems or write poetry. We all start out the same, and then we learn like crazy. In just a few short years, we learn to speak the language we hear around us. Within a few more years, we learn to read. We learn an amazing amount of information about the world around us and how to survive in it.

So why do we start to doubt that we can learn? It may be that as we get older and go to school, we start to notice that there are differences among individuals in what we know and what we can do. The student who everyone thinks is really good at math may have had more opportunities to practice working with numbers. The student who reads really well may have spent more time practicing and reading than everyone else. The problem is that some students may actually stop trying to read or practice math because they think they can't do it.

Research tells us that the more we use our brains, the more connections and well-traveled pathways we create in them. It does not matter where we start, but that we start to learn. The more we think, study, and try different ways to learn something, the smarter we will be. This is how we exercise our brains. Just like working our muscles, sometimes it is very hard to do. It can take persistence and determination to keep trying. Sometimes it wears us out, but when you feel yourself getting better and stronger, you feel excited and encouraged. You know that the work was worthwhile.



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Frenkel, K. A. (2007). How do neurons communicate? *Scientific American*, December/January.

## Lesson 6

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Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

What words do you use to describe your feelings?

### Team Talk Questions

1. Describe a situation when you used a cool-down strategy. Where were you on the Feelings Thermometer, and what word can you use to describe your feelings? Which strategy did you use, and how did it help?
2. Give an example of an "I" Message.
3. Read the following scenario: Every day at the bus stop, David puts his backpack on the curb. Whenever it rains, Dawn kicks his backpack into the puddles on the street. This makes David's entire backpack wet and ruins his schoolwork. How can David avoid a conflict with Dawn?

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### The Big Question

What do you picture when you think of a conflict? Make a web to show your thoughts.

### Team Talk Questions

Read the following scenario: Two groups of students play basketball every day during recess. There are five other students who want to play as well, but the two groups beat them to the basketball courts every day. The groups refuse to let the other five students play. Things are getting nasty, and some of the kids are worried that there might be a fight soon.

1. What is the problem in this scenario? Make a Feelings Thermometer for the kids who aren't allowed to play. At what number on the Feelings Thermometer are they?
2. Give an example of an "I" Message that one of the students could use.
3. Use a Think-It-Through sheet to brainstorm possible solutions.
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Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

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What strategies have you learned to be successful in a team?

## Team Talk Questions

1. How can you move forward in the Reading Edge?
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### The Big Question

What are some ways that you can help your team?

### Team Talk Questions

1. How could you use metacognition to help you in the Reading Edge?
2. How will using metacognition help you to strengthen your study skills?
3. What steps can you take to ensure that you are effectively prepared to learn? Explain.
4. Why is reflection such an important part of metacognition?

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## Let's Think About How We Think!



First of all, ask yourself: “Is it even possible to think about how we think?” The answer is a resounding and enthusiastic, “Yes!” In fact, researchers call this process metacognition, or thinking about one’s thinking. It is not only possible to think about how we think, but it can be an extremely useful tool in learning new concepts and ideas.

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**N**ow that we know we CAN think about how we think, let’s ask ourselves the next obvious question: “WHY should we think about how we think?” Well, learning experts and brain researchers have been analyzing metacognition and its benefits for decades, so the answer to that question is very clear. Studies have repeatedly shown that the more knowledgeable we are about HOW we acquire knowledge, the more knowledge we are actually ABLE to acquire. Let’s examine the evidence that supports the critical benefits of thinking about our thinking...

### **Metacognition: What ARE the benefits?**

Researchers have determined that metacognition is beneficial to acquiring new knowledge because metacognition allows us to step back and monitor our own thinking and learning. This allows us to determine what we know, what we need to know, and how to go about learning it. Learners who practice this type of thinking are able to effectively utilize specific and strategic learning strategies to assist them in the process of acquiring new information. Research has proven that learners who incorporate these strategies into their learning processes benefit because they:

- realize that there are many ways to do things,
- are more engaged in the learning process,
- exhibit more responsibility,
- increase their task accuracy and rate of completion,
- have greater levels of self-esteem, and
- improve their overall academic performance.

## Study Skills and Metacognition

Good study skills are vital because they help us to remember what we have learned, and they are most useful when we are aware and conscious of how we, individually, learn best. Being aware of how you think and learn is called, you guessed it...metacognition! So study skills and metacognition go hand in hand. Good study skills increase our metacognition, which in turn, helps us to be more successful learners! Now, that's what we call a win-win!

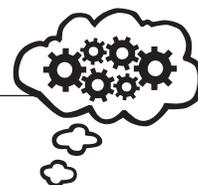
There are several different components to metacognition. The first component is effectively preparing to learn. Organizing our learning materials and managing our time through the use of schedules, task prioritization, and checklists will prepare us to learn effectively.

Next, we need to focus on getting, processing, and keeping information. During this metacognitive process, we are able to effectively use reading and listening skills in class, take good notes of the concepts covered in class, and utilize graphic organizers, outlining and summarizing strategies to help us to see relationships between concepts.

The application of new knowledge is the next step in developing effective metacognitive study skills. Applying what has been learned is critical to metacognition as it is here that we are able to demonstrate and use the new knowledge we have gained. In this stage, we may show our learning through completing tasks such as taking a test, producing a product, or developing and presenting an oral report.

Lastly, we use self-monitoring and evaluation to reflect on our use of the specific strategies and study skills with the goal of identifying areas of possible improvement. In this metacognitive process, we ask ourselves questions to determine how effective we were in learning the new material. Goals can be set and modifications made with the goal of improving the metacognitive process.

So, in conclusion, just remember to THINK about HOW you think because it will help you to be ABLE to think better which will make you a better thinker...and learner!




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Fisher, R. (1998). Thinking about thinking: developing metacognition in children. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 141, 1–15.

Garofalo, J. & Lester, F. (1985). Metacognition, cognitive monitoring, and mathematical performance. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 16 (3), 163–176.

Kerka, S. (2007). Study skills. *What Works: Evidence-based Strategies for Youth Practitioners*, LearningWork Connection, The Ohio State University.

Ormand, C. & Lovett, M. (2008). The role of metacognition in teaching geoscience topical resources. Summary notes, Educause Learning Initiative Conference.

## Lesson 3

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### The Big Question

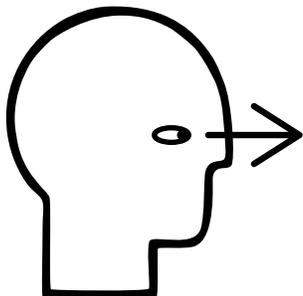
Why is visualizing an important skill in learning?

### Team Talk Questions

1. How could you use visualization to help you in the Reading Edge?
2. How will visualizing a goal or your performance in a certain area or task help to make you more successful?
3. Is visualization useful in learning mathematics? Explain.
4. The author says to “envision the caption embedded with the image in your mind.” What does this sentence mean?

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## Seeing It = Learning It?



Did you know that seeing something in your mind's eye can actually improve your learning and memory? This notion of using mental imagery, called visualization, is gaining momentum in the educational community as a valuable learning tool. But what exactly is visualization, and how can it help us to increase our knowledge, content mastery, and memory?

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**F**irst, let's address the actual definition of visualization. Visualization refers to the act of creating a mental image or picture. Athletes have long used visual imagery to boost their motivation and performance in their chosen sports. Even chess players use visualization to help them strategize and problem solve more effectively during chess matches. Numerous brain studies reinforce and support the mind-body connection and the link between thought and behavior. Mental practice increases concept attainment and information recall.

But what are the implications for learners? Brain researchers have discovered that pairing a mental image or picture with a learned concept or idea increases the probability that a learner will be able to recall, retain, and successfully access the information later. Researchers have long known that the human brain is wired to receive innumerable amounts of visual information. Our brains are trained to take in visual information constantly. We now know that by linking information with visual input, our brains are better able to imprint and recall not only the image, but the content to which it is connected. Hence, learning!

Research study after research study has concluded that visualization is a powerful tool for retaining information in the brain. Interestingly enough, several brain studies have also demonstrated that thoughts can produce the same mental directives as actions do. This means that using mental imagery affects many cognitive brain functions, including attention, perception, motor control, memory, and planning. Not only has visualization been found to increase learning and memory, but it has also been found to boost confidence, independence, and motor performance—which all contribute to...you guessed it, learning!

Recent studies have also proven the positive effects of visualization in mathematics. Students consistently perform better with math tasks and on assessments when visualization of concepts is utilized and encouraged as a learning tool. Connecting mathematical operations and concepts with visual images in the brain allows students to make deeper, more meaningful connections to the mathematical content. The use of computer technology also supports and reinforces visualization in mathematics. Recent studies have shown that visualization is useful

to the learner not only in the areas of spatial reasoning, such as geometry, but also when dealing with more abstract concepts, such as those presented in algebra.

So, now that we know what important tool visualization can be, let's find out how we can use visualization in our daily learning environment to help us improve our learning and memory.

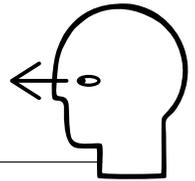
Now picture this...

- First, focus on pairing visual information with the concepts and ideas that you are learning about in class. For example, if you are learning about cell development in science, picture the process of cell growth with captions that describe each stage in short, two- or three-word summaries. Envision the caption embedded with the image in your mind. Repeat this mental movie to reinforce the concepts and ideas that you are learning in class. Strive to find opportunities throughout the academic day to link mental imagery to content.
- Next, set a highly specific goal for your learning. Imagine yourself performing well on a particular task or assignment, and create a mental plan of how you will achieve that goal. Picture the process of attaining the goal and the steps that you will take to reach your goal. Repeat this process often, and use positive affirmations to reinforce your completion of each specific task that you undertake toward meeting your goal. Envisioning success and picturing yourself meeting your goals will help you accomplish what is necessary to achieve that success...your roadmap to learning and academic accomplishment!

LeVan, A. (2009). Seeing is believing: the power of visualization. *Psychology Today*.

Blakemore, S.J., & Frith, U. (2005). The learning brain: lessons for education. *Developmental Science*, 8:6, 459–471.

Presmeg, N. (2005). Research on visualization in learning and teaching mathematics. *Emergence From Psychology*.



## Lesson 6

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Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

What words do you use to describe your feelings?

### Team Talk Questions

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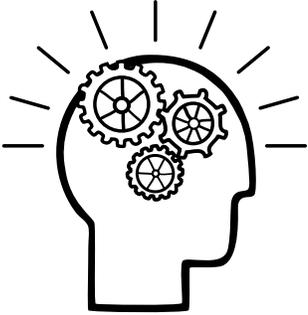
### The Big Question

What are some ways that you can help your team?

### Team Talk Questions

1. How could using effective study skills help you in the Reading Edge?
2. What general study tips can make you more successful?
3. What is the PIRATES test-taking strategy, and what do the letters in the acronym stand for?
4. Which test-taking strategy is useful for tests that are in essay form, and what are the steps in this strategy?

## Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3. . .



*Test.* It is one of the most dreaded and fear-inspiring words in the English language for students, yet it doesn't have to be! The word *test* often instills a sense of anxiety in learners of all ages. But why is this so? Researchers have determined that test anxiety affects anywhere from 20–50 percent of students. They have also realized that two main underlying reasons for this test anxiety are ineffective studying techniques and a lack of proper preparation. But just what are effective studying techniques, and how can we become comfortable and confident in our test-taking abilities? Let's examine some of the research to find out!

**A**cademic researchers have determined that students perform consistently better and achieve overall higher scores on tests when they are taught specific study skills and test-taking strategies. The following tips will help you to study better, which will help you perform better on tests!

Remember to:

- study at the same time each day in a quiet place with few distractions;
- set deadlines for studying particular materials;
- set goals and keep track of your progress toward achieving those goals;
- divide big assignments into smaller, more manageable tasks;
- keep a schedule of upcoming assignments and due dates in a planner;
- utilize practice tests whenever possible to get feedback on your progress;
- make sure that you are using active listening in class and taking good notes when material is presented; and
- review your notes from class each night to keep the concepts fresh in your mind.

Besides using these specific study-skill strategies, there are strategic test-taking procedures that can also help to reduce test anxiety and bolster test scores. Researchers have found the **PIRATES** test-taking strategy to be particularly effective. In fact, if you successfully use this strategy while preparing for a test, you could improve your scores as much as 20–40 percent! But what is the **PIRATES** strategy, what do the letters stand for, and how can we use it to help us prepare for tests? Say, “Ahoy!” to **PIRATES**, matey!

To be a **PIRATE**, you should:

- 1. Prepare** to succeed by putting your name and the word *PIRATES* on the test. This will remind you to use the PIRATES strategic formula to do your best on the assessment. Order the sections of the test, and use positive self-talk to build your confidence.
- 2. Inspect** the instructions by reading carefully and underlining key words and phrases.
- 3. Read, Remember, and Reduce:** Reinforce reading the whole question, remembering what you studied, and reducing your answer choices.
- 4. Answer or Abandon:** Answer the question, or abandon it for the moment.
- 5. Turn** back to remind yourself to return to the questions that you initially abandoned.
- 6. Estimate** your answer. Avoid absolutes, always choose the longest or most detailed answer choice, and eliminate similar choices.
- 7. Survey** the test to be sure that all questions have been answered. Switch an answer only if you are absolutely sure of the correct response!

**PIRATES** is a very effective test-taking strategy, but what if the test is in essay form? For those types of tests, don't fear...**ANSWER** is here!

When taking an essay test:

- 1. Analyze** the problem. Read through the test carefully, underline key words and phrases, and allow yourself a set time for each part of the test.
- 2. Notice** what the test is asking you to do. Look over the question, ask yourself what is required, and tell yourself that you can do what you need to do.
- 3. Set** up an outline. Jot down main ideas, go back and make sure that they match up with the question, and make changes if necessary.
- 4. Work** in details. Think about what you know about the main ideas, put them in a logical order, and use short phrases to add in details.
- 5. Engineer** your answer. Start with an opening paragraph, use supporting details and examples, and go back to your outline to check that you included all of your ideas.
- 6. Review** your answer. Double check that you answered all parts of the question.

Strive to use these guidelines to improve upon your study skills and test-taking abilities. Before you know it, the word *test* will be cause for celebration!




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## Lesson 3

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

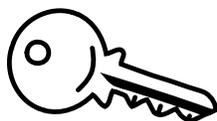
### The Big Question

How is memory important for learning?

### Team Talk Questions

1. How can training your brain to remember new ideas help you in the Reading Edge?
2. What is the sensory register, and what role does it play in the memory process?
3. How does information make the transition from the sensory register to working, or short-term, memory? Explain.
4. Which specific behaviors can help you to train your brain to improve its ability to process, retain, store, and effectively recall information?

## Unlocking the Power of Memory: Strategies to Train Your Brain



Memory has long been known to play a critical role in teaching and learning. After all, if you can't remember what you've learned, have you really learned it?

**E**xperts in brain research say no. You have to train your brain to increase your memory. To fully understand how to train your brain to remember more efficiently and retain and recall specific information, we must first discuss exactly how the process of memory works. Let's take a walk down memory lane!

Sensory input starts the processing and retention of information (memory). Human beings are wired to constantly receive and process information from the senses. This sensory information is channeled to the brain from our five senses. Each sensory system has its own sensory storage area, and these five areas make up the sensory registry. You might think of the sensory register as five large storage baskets for each of the five senses. The brain continuously dumps and sorts through the information collected in the baskets to determine the importance of the information. If the brain determines that the sensory data is of little importance, that information is considered disposable, so it goes out in the trash (disappears from the brain). Important sensory input is then channeled to the working memory depot. To move the information collected from the senses to working (or short-term) memory, a person must pay specific attention to the information. In other words, your brain must concentrate on remembering that particular information from the senses. But here comes the bad news—our brains are only capable of concentrating on a small amount of information at any given time. Therefore, only a very small amount of information from the sensory register even makes it into working memory, so a huge amount of sensory data is lost forever. Fortunately, some sensory information DOES make it to working memory—a welcoming area for new and fresh information!

Working memory (or short-term memory) serves as a holding area for new information that is being held for mental processing. This is the part of the memory system that does the most work. The information that comes into working memory is screened and held for a short period of time. To keep the information located in working memory, the information must be activated and reviewed. Basically, it means that the sensory data that comes into working memory must be attended to, repeated, and connected with something you already know, preexisting information from long-term memory. Rehearsing the information in the working memory helps to ensure that it moves to long-term memory.

Long-term memory is the grandfather, so to speak, of the memory system. Here, memories are retained for the long term, where they hold deep interconnections amongst one another. Long-term memory appears to be capable of holding as much information as an individual needs to store there.

So, now that we know HOW our brains store information in the form of memories, what does all this mean for YOU? How can you effectively retain and recall information that you take in? It all comes down to...you guessed it, remembering HOW to remember! For example, brain researchers now know that storing long-term information requires you to focus your attention on that information when it's received. By repeating, reviewing, and connecting the new information with existing ideas, we nearly guarantee that our memory system will remember that concept.

There are several other important strategies to help our brains to process, retain, store, and effectively recall information. The following represent techniques that researchers have found effective:

- Focus on focusing! Monitor your attention, and learn strategies to help yourself stay on task and attentive to the information that is being presented. This is crucial if we are to effectively take in and process data from our senses.
- Try to form emotional ties with the information. Research has proven that if we tie information to a specific emotion, we are much more likely to retain and recall that idea at a later time.
- Be positive! Brain research has now embraced the notion that learning increases in positive climates. This makes sense because if you are in a positive frame of mind, you are much more likely to attend to and successfully process the information being presented.
- Ask yourself questions that are related to the new information. Set a purpose for learning the new material. Determine why it is relevant to you personally and therefore, worth knowing. Assigning purpose, personal meaning, and usefulness to new information has been shown to increase the likelihood of it being retained and remembered.
- Write it! Research has shown that writing enables a learner to organize the new learning and causes the brain to process that information in much greater depth.
- Use mental imagery to connect with new learning. Utilizing imagery, including drawings and illustrations, has proven to be a very effective tool in helping students retain new information.
- Rehearse the information. Repeat it. Repeat it. Repeat it. This trains your brain to recall that specific input. Other strategies for rehearsing information include summarizing, creating analogies related to the new learning, copying, and using mnemonic devices (such as forming acronyms, etc.).

The more you know about how your brain remembers, the better you will understand how you can improve your memory. Just remember that, and you'll be on your way!



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## Lesson 6

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

What words do you use to describe your feelings?

### Team Talk Questions

1. Describe a situation when you used a cool-down strategy. Where were you on the Feelings Thermometer, and what word can you use to describe your feelings? Which strategy did you use, and how did it help?
2. Give an example of an "I" Message.
3. Read the following scenario: Every day at the bus stop, David puts his backpack on the curb. Whenever it rains, Dawn kicks his backpack into the puddles on the street. This makes David's entire backpack wet and ruins his schoolwork. How can David avoid a conflict with Dawn?

## Lesson 7

### Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

### The Big Question

What do you picture when you think of a conflict? Make a web to show your thoughts.

### Team Talk Questions

Read the following scenario: Two groups of students play basketball every day during recess. There are five other students who want to play as well, but the two groups beat them to the basketball courts every day. The groups refuse to let the other five students play. Things are getting nasty, and some of the kids are worried that there might be a fight soon.

1. What is the problem in this scenario? Make a Feelings Thermometer for the kids who aren't allowed to play. At what number on the Feelings Thermometer are they?
2. Give an example of an "I" Message that one of the students could use.
3. Use a Think-It-Through sheet to brainstorm possible solutions.
4. What is a win-win solution, and why would it work for this scenario?

# Lesson 8

## Objective

Learn how to work successfully in a team so we can help one another improve our reading and learning skills.

## The Big Question

What strategies have you learned to be successful in a team?

## Team Talk Questions

1. How can you move forward in the Reading Edge?
2. What is your goal for the end of the year?
3. How can working with a team help you reach your goal?