

How to create a cue sheet

Cue sheets / memory aids are difficult because they have to target specific areas of weakness that affect targeted retrieval, not just memory. That means they generally do not include references to processes, or relationships / associations themselves, but act as a trigger for whatever strategy you have developed to retrieve the information you need. This also satisfies the requirement of being a unique clue that no-one else understands. This is different from simply using pictures, arrows, acronyms, etc to rewrite information you may have difficulty remembering – that's the role of study sheets, *not* cue sheets.

NB. Memory cues trigger the strategy, not direct access to the information itself.

Example 1:

How to remember key elements of Amino Acids - Carbon (C), Hydrogen (H), (Oxygen (O), Nitrogen (N)

1. Is there any pattern that stands out – lettering? Affix? Rhythm / syllables? Etc.
 - a. Letters: AA-CHON → Achoo, not!
 - b. Affixes: suffix → 1 'bon' and 3 'gen'
 - c. Syllable / beat → 2-3-3-3 (1, 2-cha cha cha)

2. Can you create a picture or jingle that reinforces the relationship between amino acids (AA) and the elements?
 - a. Picture – sneeze!  Cha-cha-cha 
 - b. Carry and Hy saw Ox last Nite at AA.
 - c. Amino connects to the Carbo to the Hydro to the Oxo to the Nitro

3. Following steps 1 and 2 should result in a single memory clue (picture of a sneeze, musical note, etc) that serves as a trigger for you to recreate the letters in order, and the associated jingle that explains what each letter represents.

Example 2:

How to remember names of the 7 continents from largest to smallest (geographically) - Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, Antarctica, Australia.

1. Letter patterns? Groupings? Acronyms?
 - a. A-A-A (both Americas in alphabetic order) – E-A-A
 - i. A-A-SEA-A
 - ii. 3A-E-2A

2. Pictures? Visuals?
 - a. Associate a colour with each continent (A A nA sA E A A)
 - b. Letter size - AS-af-ams-e-Arc-au
 - i. Asia is larger than Africa (large letters vs small)
 - ii. Americas (both north and south)
 - iii. Europe (the only E)
 - iv. Antarctica is larger than Australia (large letters vs small)
 - c. Associate an animal with each continent
 - i. Asia (tiger), Africa (elephant), North America (bear/eagle), South America (llama), Europe (wolf), Antarctica (penguin), Australia (kangaroo)

3. Jingle or story?
 - a. Asia walked over to Africa then skipped over the Americas to visit Europe before heading back to Antarctica by way of Australia.
 - b. A tiger went hunting for an elephant but only found a bear / eagle. Frustrated, it tried stalking a llama that was running from a wolf, only to be startled by a penguin screeching at a kangaroo.

