

LAUGH IN THE FACE OF EXAMS



THE DREADED EXAM

A SOURCE OF EXTREME STRESS, WORRY AND FEAR FOR TEENAGERS ACROSS THE GLOBE.
BUT DOES IT HAVE TO BE THAT WAY?

AT TOK WE WANT TO HELP STUDENTS HARNESS THEIR FULL POTENTIAL AND NOT ONLY ACHIEVE THE GRADES THEY WANT, BUT ALSO HAVE FUN WHILE THEY'RE DOING IT.

THE BRAIN WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS

OUR BRAINS ARE THE MOST INCREDIBLE INSTRUMENTS WE WILL EVER OWN, AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF OUR LEARNING.
THERE ARE DIFFERENT PARTS OF OUR BRAINS THAT FOCUS ON DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNING:

LOGICAL

SOME PARTS OF OUR BRAINS FOCUS MORE ON THINGS LIKE NUMBER, SHAPE AND DETAIL. THESE PARTS SEEM TO DEVELOP MORE AS WE GET OLDER, WHICH IS GREAT FOR ALLOWING US TO ANALYSE SITUATIONS.

ARTISTIC

OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRAINS FOCUS ON CONCEPTS LIKE FUN, COLOUR AND IMAGINATION. THESE PARTS TEND TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN OUR YOUNGER YEARS AND ARE GREAT AT FORMING IMAGES AND STORIES.

PUBLIC HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT BEWARE

CONDITION: USING TOO MUCH LOGIC
SYMPTOMS: BEING OLD & BORING, NOT SMILING OR HAVING FUN,
HAVING A BAD MEMORY
TREATMENT: USE MORE IMAGINATION

STUDY HACK

WE CAN MASSIVELY INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION OUR BRAINS HOLD BY USING STORIES, IMAGES, SONGS, RHYMING AND COLOUR. THERE IS NO EXACT ROUTINE YOU SHOULD FOLLOW TO DO THIS (THAT WOULD BE TOO LOGICAL). THE MORE CREATIVE, WACKY AND WEIRD YOU MAKE IT, THE BETTER IT WILL WORK!

IMAGINATION CHALLENGE

PAIR UP AND TAKE TURNS TO MEMORISE AS MANY THINGS AS YOU CAN IN ONLY 15 SECONDS FROM ONE OF THE LISTS BELOW:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. MOISTURISER | 1. BED |
| 2. PIANO | 2. PURSE |
| 3. SPONGE | 3. THREAD |
| 4. TELEVISION | 4. TOOTHBRUSH |
| 5. SUNGLASSES | 5. CLOCK |
| 6. PENCIL | 6. MAGNET |
| 7. HEADPHONES | 7. MOP |
| 8. BOWL | 8. CAMERA |
| 9. CANDLE | 9. BRUSH |
| 10. CARD | 10. BOOKMARK |

HOW DID YOU DO?

STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT WHEN PEOPLE ARE FACED WITH HAVING TO MEMORISE THINGS, THEY TEND TO USE ONLY THE LOGICAL PARTS OF THEIR BRAINS, AND WILL MAX OUT AT AROUND 6 ITEMS (WELL DONE IF YOU GOT MORE THAN 6!).

FOR OUR EXAMS IN SCHOOL WE WILL NEED TO REMEMBER A LOT MORE THAN 6 THINGS, AND THIS IS WHERE WE MIGHT NEED TO CHANGE THE WAY WE MEMORISE THINGS BY USING MORE OF OUR IMAGINATION.

BY USING STORIES, IMAGES, RHYMING AND OTHER CREATIVE METHODS, WE WILL ENGAGE OUR FULL BRAINS AND BE ABLE TO RETAIN A LOT MORE INFORMATION.

THIS IS WHAT *GRAND MASTERS* OF MEMORY DO TO PULL OFF INCREDIBLE MEMORY FEATS (LOOK UP WORLD MEMORY CHAMPIONSHIP TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW GOOD YOUR MEMORY COULD BE).

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU COULD DO:

JOURNEY (LOCI SYSTEM)

- PICTURE A FAMILIAR JOURNEY AND PLACE ITEMS ALONG THAT JOURNEY.
IMAGINE WALKING INTO YOUR KITCHEN BUT THE DOORWAY IS BLOCKED BY A GIANT BALL OF GREEN THREAD, IMAGINE YOU CLIMB OVER IT AND HEAD OVER TO THE SINK WHERE YOU SEE A PURPLE TOOTHBRUSH, IMAGINE YOU THEN DECIDE TO LOOK IN THE FRIDGE BUT ALL THAT'S THERE IS A GIANT GRANDFATHER CLOCK.

RHYMING (PEG SYSTEM)

- ASSOCIATE THE NUMBER OF THE ITEM WITH THE ITEM ITSELF
1 - SUN
IMAGINE OPENING UP YOUR ORANGE TUB OF MOISTURISER AND BEING BLINDED BECAUSE THE SUN IS INSIDE IT.
2 - SHOE
IMAGINE PUTTING A PAIR OF SHOES ON YOUR HANDS AND TRYING TO PLAY THE PIANO.

CHALLENGE:

PICK TWO OF YOUR SUBJECTS AND THINK OF SOMETHING THAT YOU COULD MEMORISE USING THESE TECHNIQUES. MAKE THE IMAGES WEIRD, WACKY AND WONDERFUL - AND THEN PAIR UP WITH SOMEONE ELSE AND SHARE ONE OF THEM.

CHUNKING

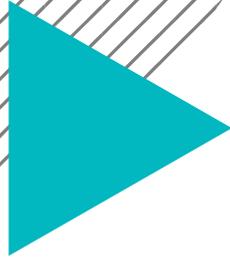
- CHUNK ITEMS TOGETHER INTO SMALL GROUPS AND PICTURE THEM TOGETHER.
IMAGINE A YELLOW BOWL THAT HAS A LARGE CANDLE BURNING IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, LYING NEXT TO THE CANDLE IS A HALF-BURNT ACE OF SPADES (PLAYING CARD).

THERE IS NO NEED TO STICK WITH ONE OF THESE TECHNIQUES, YOU CAN COMBINE THEM IN ANY WAY YOU LIKE.

TOP TIPS:

- DON'T OVERTHINK IT. GO WITH THE FIRST IMAGE THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND. IF IT COMES TO YOUR MIND EASILY JUST NOW, IT WILL COME TO YOUR MIND EASILY LATER.
- USE VIVID, COLOURFUL IMAGES. ADD IN CREATIVE DETAILS FOR YOUR IMAGES TO HELP THEM STICK IN YOUR HEAD.

How to avoid: THE MIND BLANK



WE AT TOK HQ THINK THIS IS UNFAIR.

IT'S UNFAIR THAT A STUDENT (YOU) CAN PUT IN A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF WORK TO LEARN EVERYTHING THEY HAVE TO LEARN FOR AN EXAM - THEY STUDY WHEN THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO, ASK QUESTIONS WHEN THEY'RE UNSURE, AND EVEN GO AS FAR AS TO USE CREATIVE STUDY HACKS - YET ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM THEIR OWN MINDS WON'T GIVE THEM THE ANSWERS THAT ARE IN DEFINITELY IN THERE!

SO WE DECIDED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SCIENCE AND ASK THEM IF THEY KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON HERE, AND SCIENCE GOT BACK TO US WITH NOT ONLY AN EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS GOING ON, BUT ALSO A SOLUTION.

WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE BEFORE.
YOU'RE TRYING TO ANSWER A QUESTION.
YOU EVEN RECOGNISE THE THEME OF THE QUESTION.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT'S ASKING.
YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'VE DONE ONE SIMILAR BEFORE.
YOU FEEL LIKE THE ANSWER IS RIGHT THERE.
YOU TRY TO CHASE AFTER IT.
BUT YOUR MIND GOES BLANK.



THE REASON THIS HAPPENS IS QUITE SIMPLY STRESS.
WHEN WE ARE IN A STRESSFUL SITUATION PARTS OF OUR MIND SHUT DOWN. AS ANNOYING AS THIS MIGHT BE IN AN EXAM SITUATION, THIS IS ACTUALLY A SURVIVAL TECHNIQUE THAT DOES A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING US ALIVE WHEN IT HAS TO.



CHALLENGE:

PAIR UP AND TAKE TURNS TO ASK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LISTS OF QUESTIONS TO YOUR PARTNER, THE CHALLENGE IS TO HAVE THEM GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF EACH THING AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THEY ONLY HAVE 20 SECONDS TO TRY TO FINISH THE WHOLE LIST!



HOW DID YOU DO?

DUE TO THE 20 SECOND TIME LIMIT, THIS GAME CAN BECOME QUITE STRESSFUL WHICH CAN QUICKLY LEAD TO YOUR MIND GOING TOTALLY BLANK!

SO HOW DO WE STOP OUR MINDS FROM GOING BLANK, ESPECIALLY IN AN EXAM??

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE: BE LESS STRESSED.

WELL, MAYBE NOT THAT SIMPLE. BUT SCIENCE HAS GIVEN US SOME TIPS TO HELP US WITH THIS ONE:

1. YOU CAN PRACTICE BEING LESS STRESSED

IF YOU SPEND TIME PRACTISING RELAXATION (ESPECIALLY IN THE RUN UP TO AN EXAM) YOU WILL BE LESS STRESSED. TRY SEARCHING ONLINE FOR A *GUIDED RELAXATION* TO GET YOU STARTED.

WE HAVE ONE AVAILABLE ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL HERE www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBHKULMZPLI

2. REHEARSE THE EXAM IN YOUR HEAD

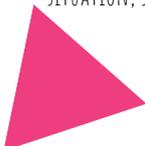
THIS ONE COMES FROM THE WORLD OF HIGH-LEVEL PERFORMANCE. MUSICIANS, ATHLETES AND ACROBATS ACROSS THE WORLD WILL VISUALISE THEIR PERFORMANCE IN THEIR HEADS OVER AND OVER BEFORE THE ACTUAL EVENT. THEY DO THIS BECAUSE OUR BRAINS ARE MORE LIKELY TO GET STRESSED IF WE ARE IN AN UNFAMILIAR SITUATION, SO BY VISUALISING IT CLEARLY IN THEIR IMAGINATIONS THEY ARE ABLE TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH HOW IT FEELS.

1. A BOY'S NAME
2. A RIVER
3. AN ANIMAL
4. SOMETHING THAT IS COLD
5. AN INSECT
6. A TV SHOW
7. SOMETHING THAT IS ROUND
8. A FRUIT
9. A SPORT
10. A SCHOOL SUBJECT
11. A MOVIE
12. A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

1. AN AUTHOR
2. A BODY OF WATER
3. A BIRD
4. A COUNTRY
5. A CARTOON CHARACTER
6. AN ITEM OF CLOTHING
7. A TYPE OF RELATIVE
8. A CELEBRITY
9. A BOARD GAME
10. A UTENSIL
11. A GIRL'S NAME
12. SOMETHING THAT IS HOT

CHALLENGE:

TAKE 1 MINUTE TO PICTURE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SIT AN EXAM. PICTURE THE WHOLE SCENARIO OF MAKING YOUR WAY TO THE HALL, FINDING YOUR DESK, GOING THROUGH THE QUESTIONS, THEN LEAVING. THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS ASK YOURSELF WHAT IT WOULD LOOK, SOUND, AND FEEL LIKE. THINK OF AS MUCH DETAIL AS YOU CAN.



START WITH SELF-BELIEF

OUR TEAM AT TOK HAVE HAD THE PLEASURE OF SPEAKING TO OVER 1 MILLION SCHOOL PUPILS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

WHEN IT COMES TO EXAM SUCCESS, WE THINK WE'VE MANAGED TO SUSS OUT THE NUMBER ONE REASON WHY A PUPIL EITHER DOES WELL OR DOES NOT.

THE TOP FACTOR, IN SHORT, IS **MINDSET**.

IT ALL BOILS DOWN TO WHAT GOES ON INSIDE YOUR HEAD, AND WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF OR NOT.

PUT IT THIS WAY:

WE KNOW FOR SURE THAT USING YOUR IMAGINATION TO CREATE IMAGES AND STORIES WHEN STUDYING WILL MAKE A HUGE IMPACT ON HOW MUCH INFORMATION YOU RETAIN.

BUT

WILL YOU EVEN BOTHER PROPERLY USING THAT IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING TO FAIL ANYWAY?

WE ALSO KNOW THAT PRACTISING RELAXATION TECHNIQUES AND VISUALISING YOUR EXAM AHEAD OF TIME WILL HELP YOU TO BE LESS STRESSED, ALLOWING YOU TO ACCESS MORE OF YOUR BRAIN.

BUT

ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO DO THAT IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE GOING TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS BY DOING SO?

SELF-BELIEF DISCUSSION:

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BELIEFS THAT SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THEMSELVES THAT COULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT:

A - AN EXAM B - A SOCIAL SITUATION C - HOW THEY FEEL

NOW, WHAT ARE SOME BELIEFS THAT SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE ABOUT THEMSELVES THAT COULD POSITIVELY IMPACT:

A - AN EXAM B - A SOCIAL SITUATION C - HOW THEY FEEL

AS I'M SURE YOU WILL HAVE REALISED, A PERSON'S BELIEFS CAN HAVE A MASSIVE INFLUENCE OVER THEIR REALITY.

IN PSYCHOLOGY THIS IS CALLED THE SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY.

THIS IS WHERE IF YOU BELIEVE SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN (YOU'RE GOING TO FAIL THE EXAM OR YOU'RE GOING TO BE REALLY SHY) THEN THAT THING IS ACTUALLY MORE LIKELY TO HAPPEN.

WE CAN CHANGE ANY NEGATIVE SELF-BELIEFS BY CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT OURSELVES ON A DAILY BASIS.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING IS THAT SIMPLY BY SHIFTING OUR PERSPECTIVE WE CAN CHANGE OUR STATE.

SO HOW DO WE CHANGE OUR MINDSET?

HOW DO WE SHIFT OUR BELIEFS?

HOW DO WE BECOME SOMEONE THAT ISN'T HOLDING THEMSELVES BACK?

CHALLENGE:

PRETEND LIKE TODAY IS A GREAT DAY. AN AMAZING DAY.

LOOK FOR THE THINGS THAT MAKE IT GOOD.

FIND AT LEAST 5 POSITIVE THINGS AS YOU GO ABOUT YOUR DAY. NOTICE HOW JUST BY FOCUSING ON THEM THAT IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER.

IF YOU WANT TO TAKE THIS TO LEVEL 2, TRY SPRINKLING POSITIVITY INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S DAY TOO!