

# Revision Strategies

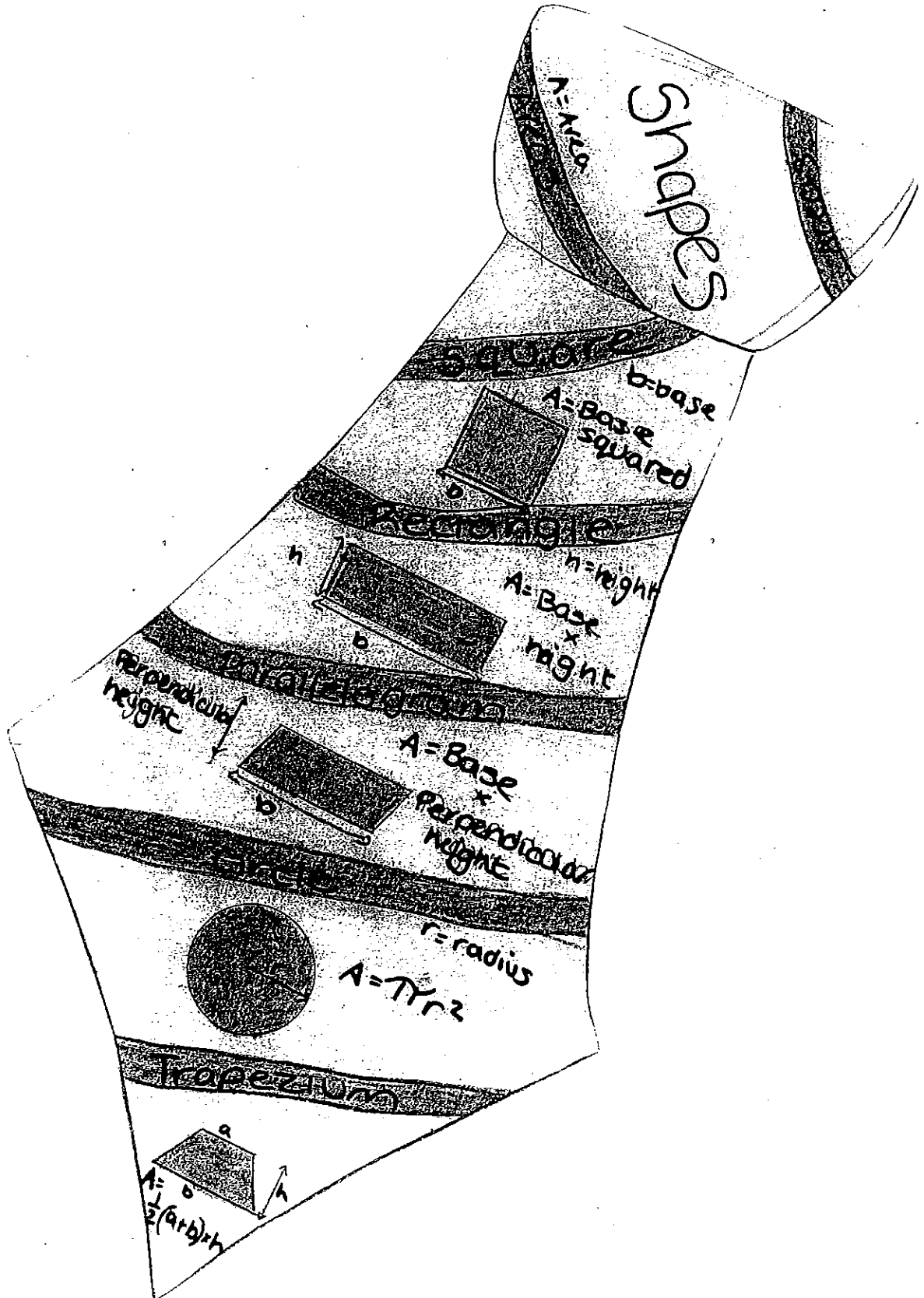


# 1. Bookmark

Make a bookmark with important information written on it.

Keep it in a magazine or book you are reading for pleasure.

Glance at the bookmark each time you start and finish reading.



## 2. Annotation

As an "active reader," you already know that when you read textbook assignments, you should have questions in your mind. As you read, you should be looking for the answers to these questions. You should also have a pencil in hand so that you can "annotate" your text. As the word suggests, you "make notes on your notes."

Unlike "highlighting," which is a passive activity, the process of annotating text helps you to stay focused and involved with your textbook. You'll find that the process of taking notes as you read will help you to concentrate better. It will also help you to monitor and improve your comprehension. If you come across something that you don't understand or that you need to ask your instructor about, you'll be able to quickly make note of it, and then go on with your reading.

The following is a list of some techniques that you can use to annotate text:

- Underline important terms.
- Circle definitions and meanings.
- Write key words and definitions in the margin.
- Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin.
- Write short summaries in the margin at the end of sub-units.
- Write the questions in the margin next to the section where the answer is found.
- Indicate steps in a process by using numbers in the margin.
- Draw pictures to represent key ideas

You will probably be used to this technique from your work in English lessons.

*Memory works on 2 levels*

### HOW DOES MEMORY WORK?

Human memory works on two different levels: short term memory and long term memory.

*focus/attention (what you need to know now) 7-9 items*

#### ① Short term memory

This includes what you focus on in the moment, what holds your attention. Most people can only hold about 7 items of information in short term memory at any given moment, although some can hold up to nine.

Look at example A below. Then look away from your computer screen and try to hold it in your short term memory.

A = 6593028

Most likely, you can hold it as long as you choose. Now follow the same procedure with example B.

B = 573927450621

It's much more difficult, if not impossible, for most people.

Short term memory is exactly what the name says: short term. To learn information so you can retain and recall it, you must transfer it from short term to long term memory.

②

## Long term memory

What you know  
can recall  
(part of you)

This includes all the information that you know and can recall. In many ways, it becomes a part of you. Once information becomes a part of your long term memory, you'll have access to it for a long time.

## FROM SHORT TERM TO LONG TERM

How do you move information into long term memory? Two of the ways are: *rote learning* and *learning through understanding*.

mechanical  
memorizing  
ex: alphabet

Rote learning means learning through repetition, mechanically, with little understanding. For example, as a child you probably memorized the alphabet and the multiplication tables by rote.

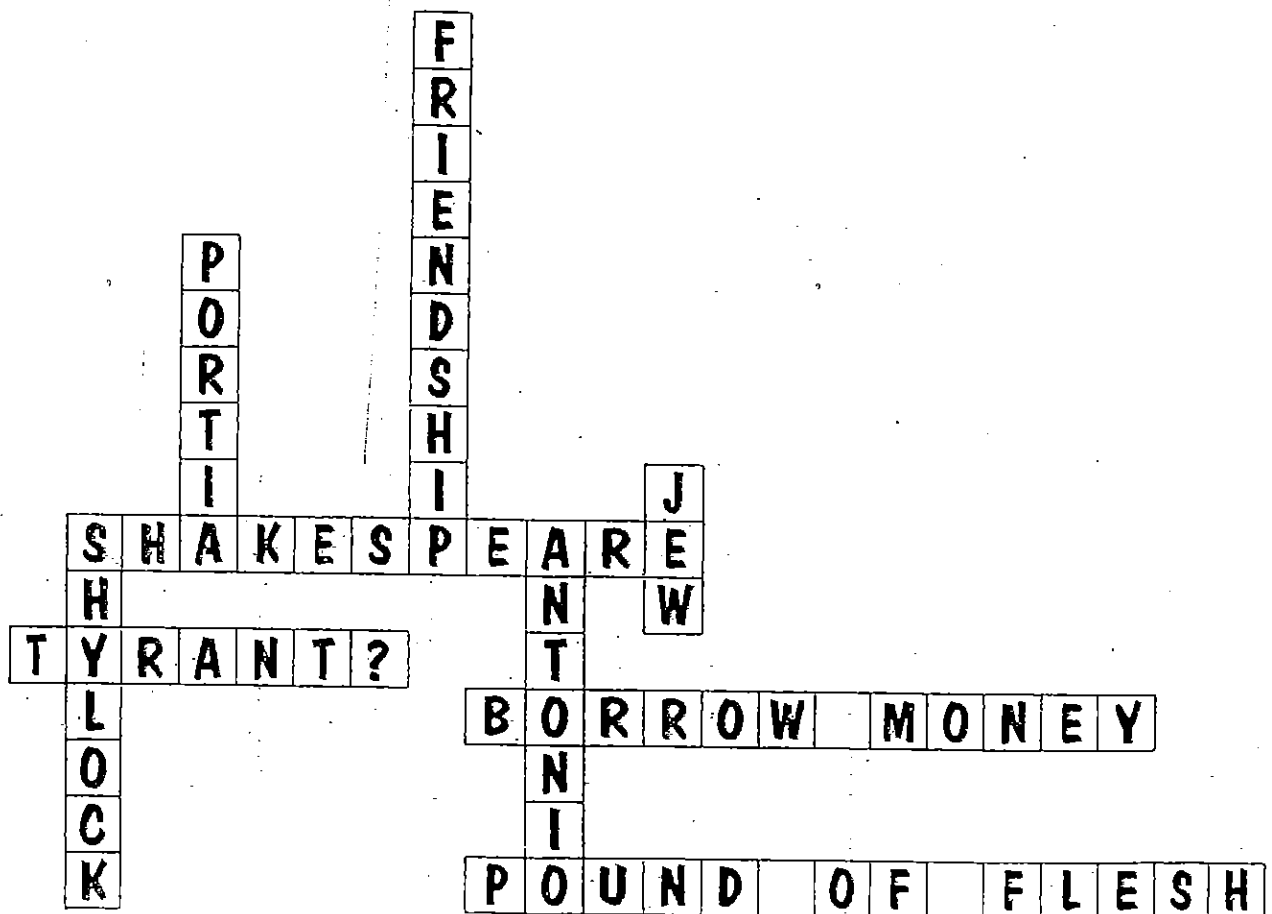
understanding  
ex: main  
ideas & details  
of a lecture  
often  
combined  
ex: dates &  
concepts

Learning through understanding involves learning and remembering by understanding the relationships among ideas and information. Rather than using *rote memory*, you use logical memory when you learn through understanding. For example, you use logical memory when you remember main ideas and supporting details from a lecture not because you repeat the ideas in your mind, but rather, because you understand them.

Both types of learning and memory are useful and often are used together. For example, in history, you need to relate facts (like dates) which you memorized by rote to your understanding of historical concepts (like the Civil War).

### 3. Word Games

Create a crossword puzzle of interlocking words which you need to remember and which need to be in a particular order.

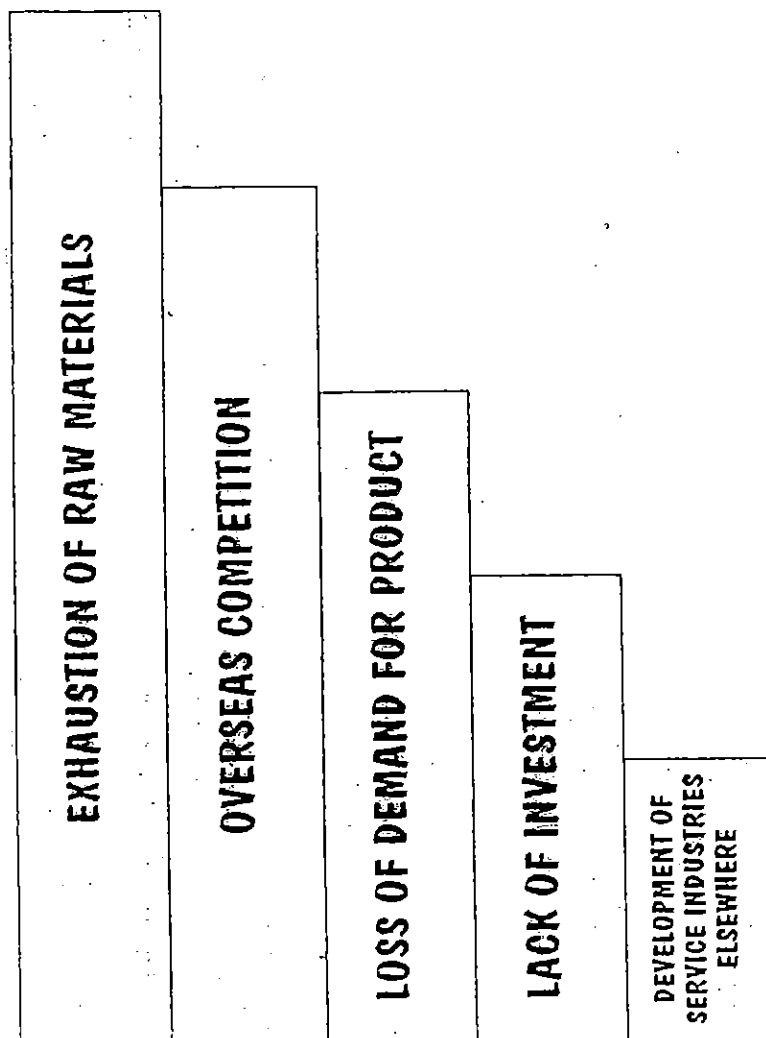


## 4. Charting Progress

Use bar charts and pie charts to show different pieces of information.

This helps you to see and remember the relative importance of each item.

### Causes of Industrial Decline in South Wales



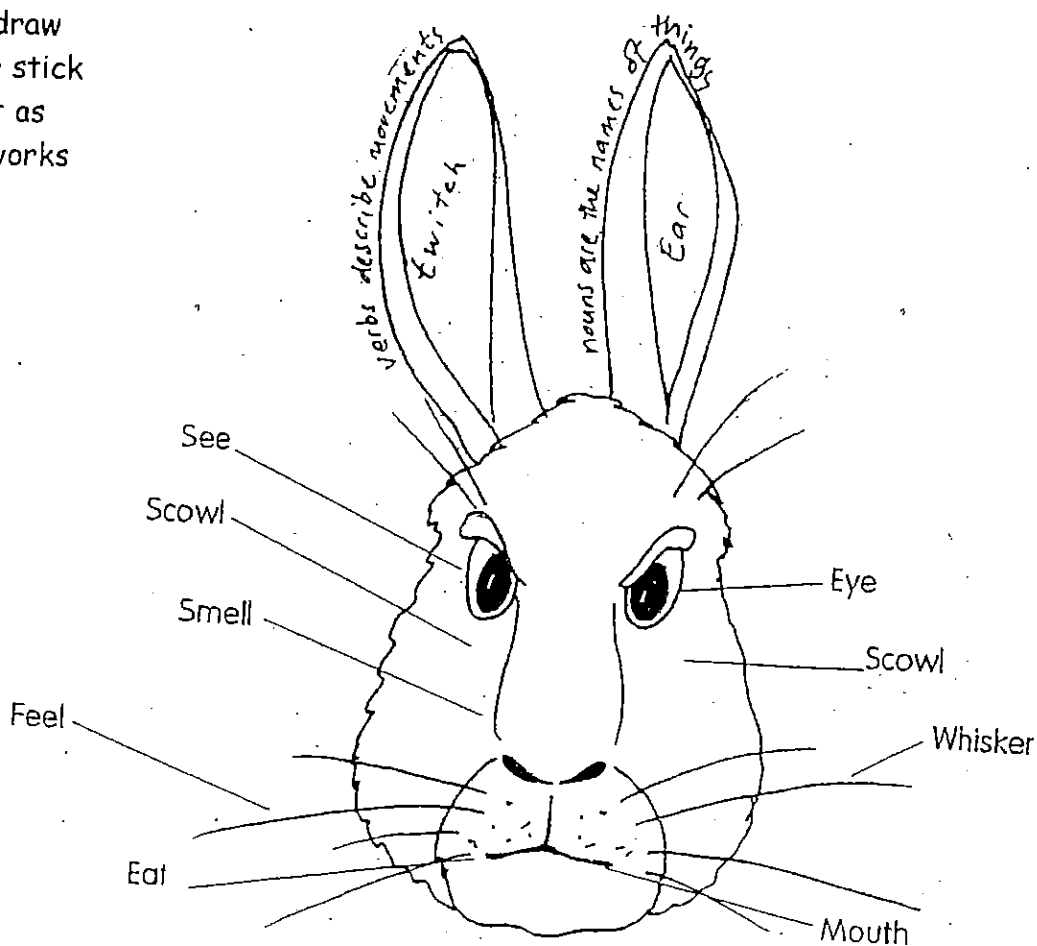
## 7. Doodles

Create a drawing to help fix key points in your mind.

Use your imagination - most information can be presented visually.

Be surreal.  
Be funny.

You don't have to draw well - scribbling or stick figures will be just as effective as fine works of art.

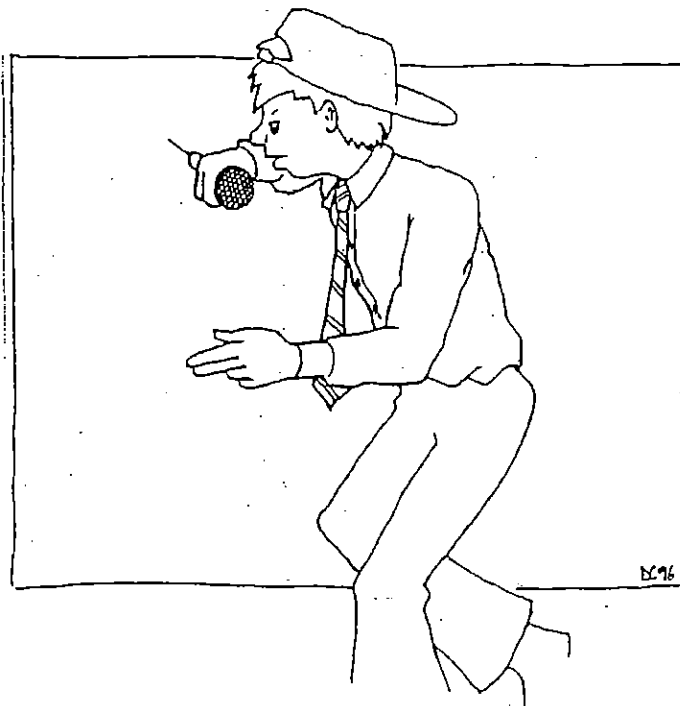


## 8. Musical Minds

Turn the information into the lyrics of a song.

Create a rhythm to help you remember important points - a sequence of words that can be tapped out.

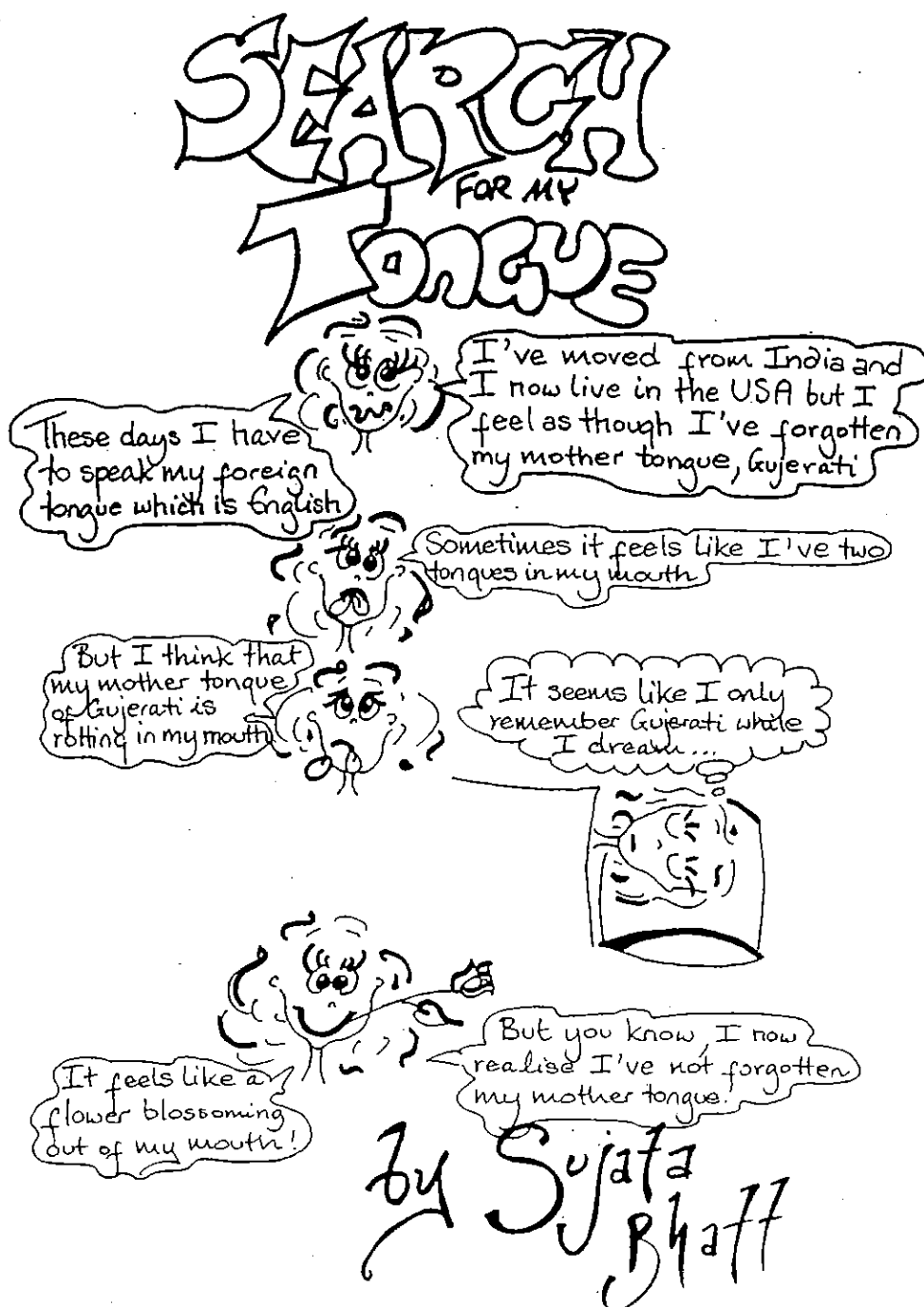
Play the same piece of background music every time you study a particular topic.



## 9. Storyboard

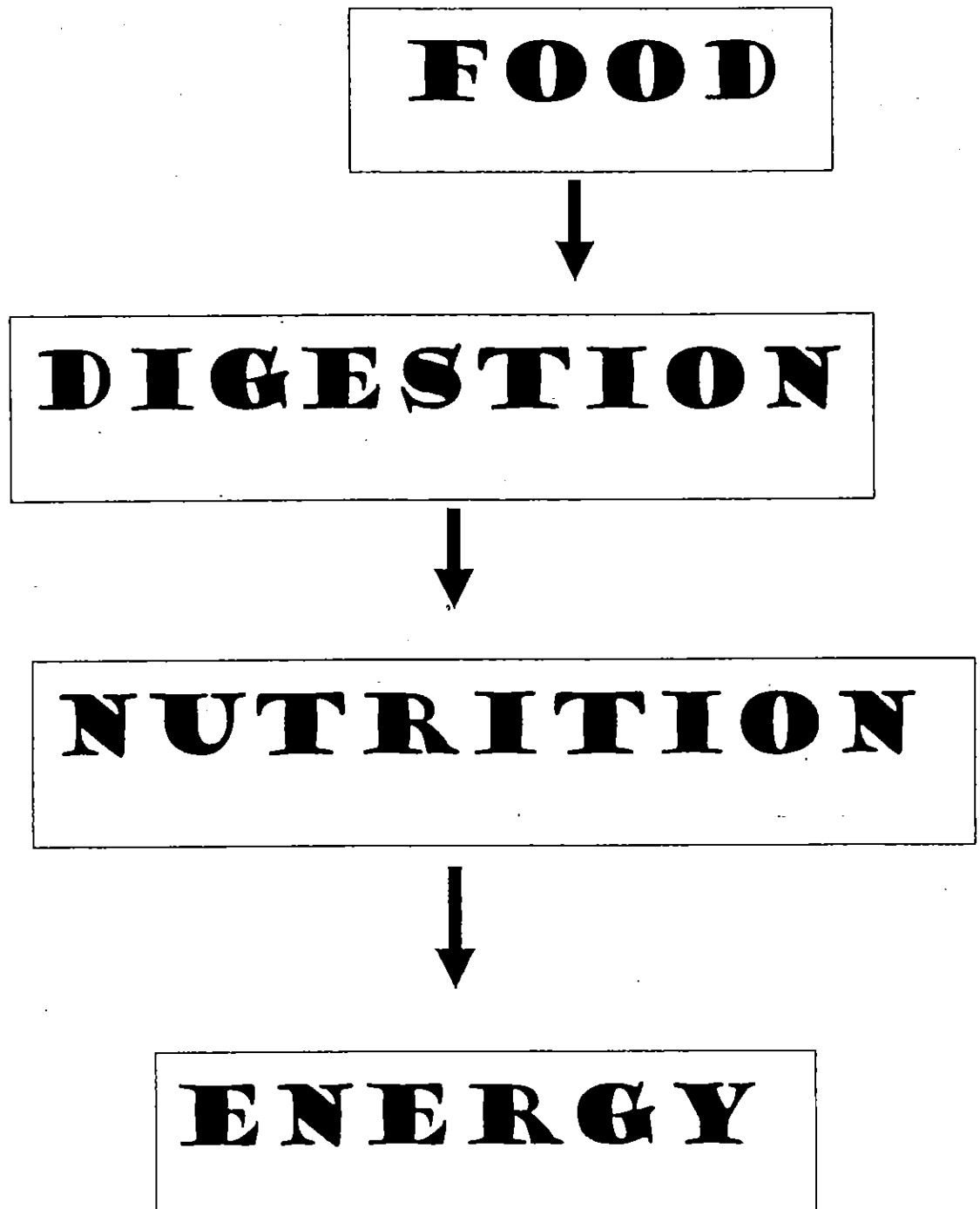
Try sequencing your ideas through drawings on a storyboard. Each board shows a key idea or significant moment.

You don't have to be an artist. Quick sketches and stick figures are ideal.



## 10. Simple Flow Charts

If your mind works in a straight line try creating a list of connecting ideas.

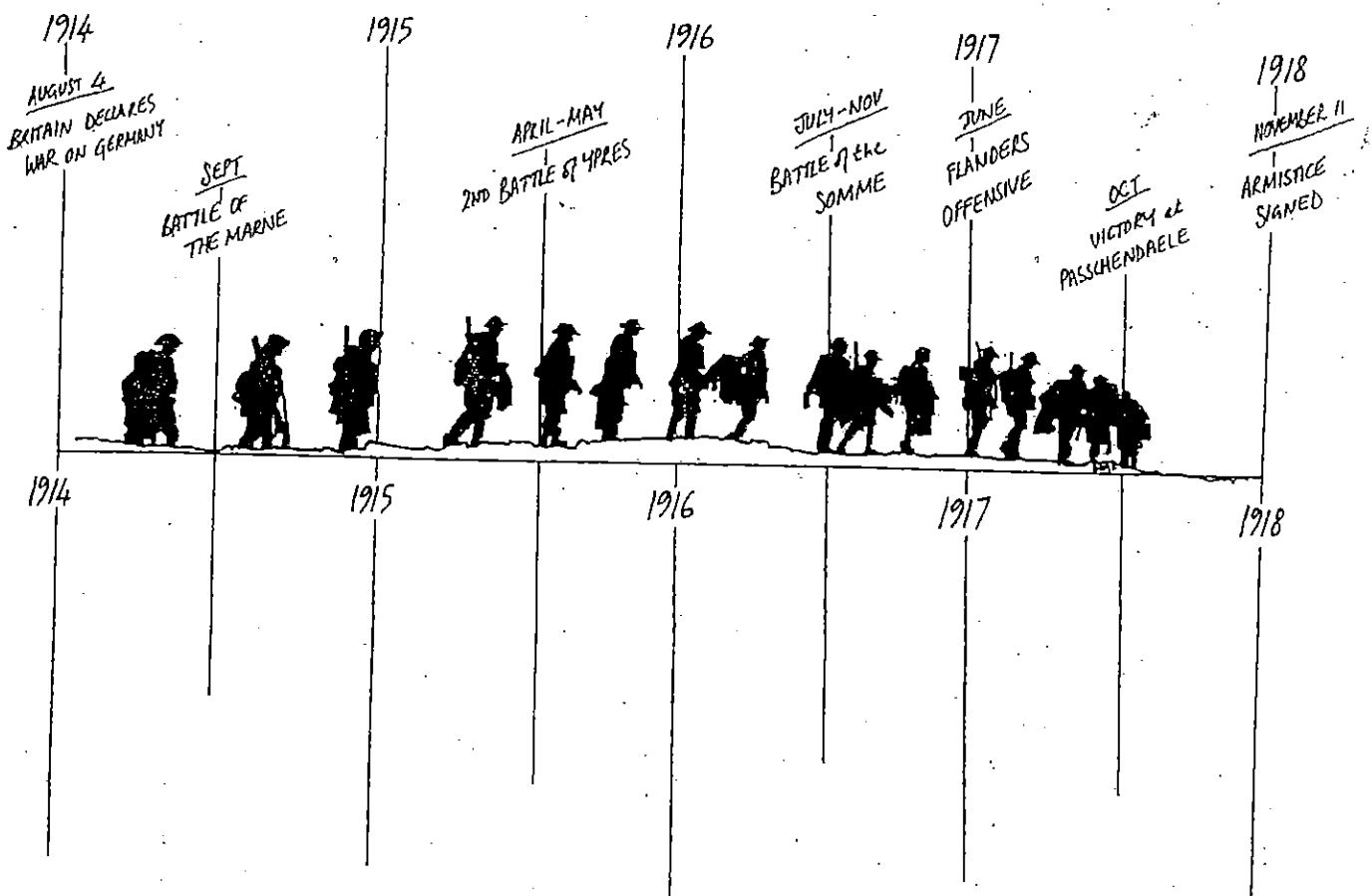




## 12. Time Line

A Time Line is a good example of a visual organiser.  
It works in most subjects.

For example, you could use it to remember steps in a scientific experiment; significant moments in a novel, the life of Jesus; stages of a process in technology or dates and events in a historical period.



## 13. Walk 'n' Talk

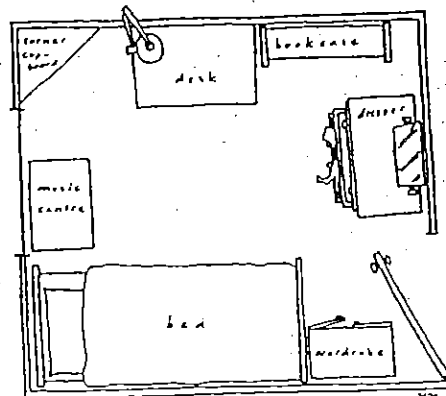
Take over a room in your house.  
Use different bits of furniture for  
different bits of a topic.

For example, the bed represents the  
main character in a novel. Write bits  
of information about the character -  
descriptions, key quotes and ideas -  
on a piece of paper (preferably  
coloured) and lay them on the bed.

The floor is the plot. Write bits of  
information about the plot and stick  
them to the floor.

Other pieces of furniture or areas of  
the room can represent other  
characters.

To learn ideas, walk around the room,  
looking at the points you have  
written. Say them out loud and point  
to each piece as you speak. Use lots  
of arm movements.

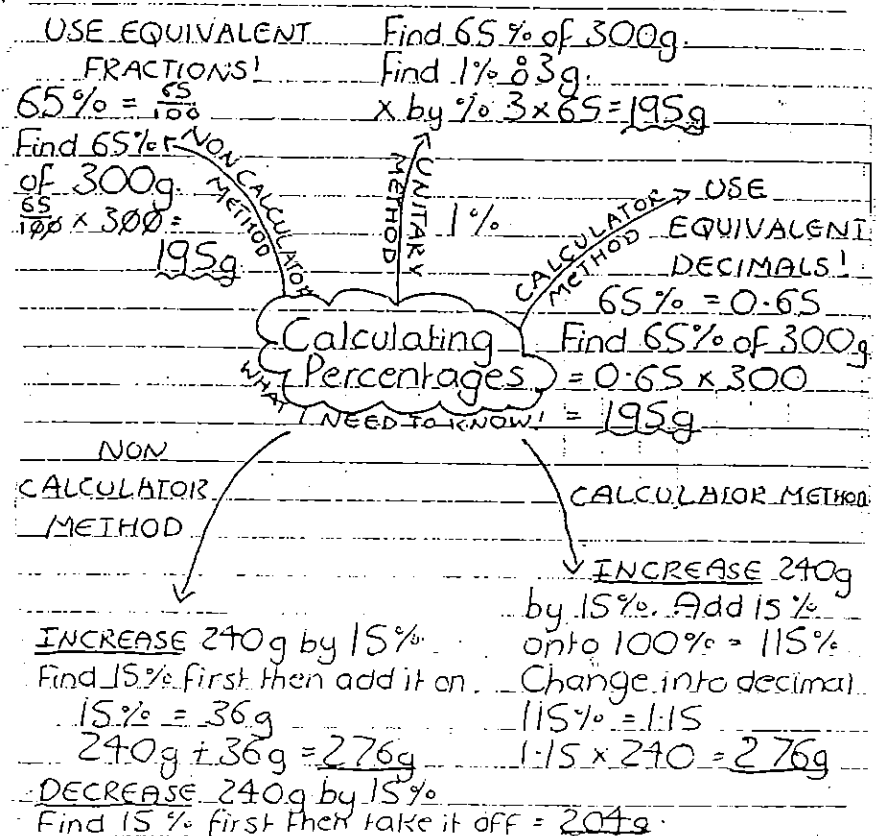


# 14. Brainstorm

Carefully read the text you are revising. Now cover it up and brainstorm - write down all the bits of information you remember as fast as you can in any order.

Look at the text again. Add any bits you have missed and alter any bits you got wrong.

The brainstorm is good for remembering information, but not for putting it in a correct order. So now use the words to create a bookmark, a keyword plan or any other method to help you organise your ideas.



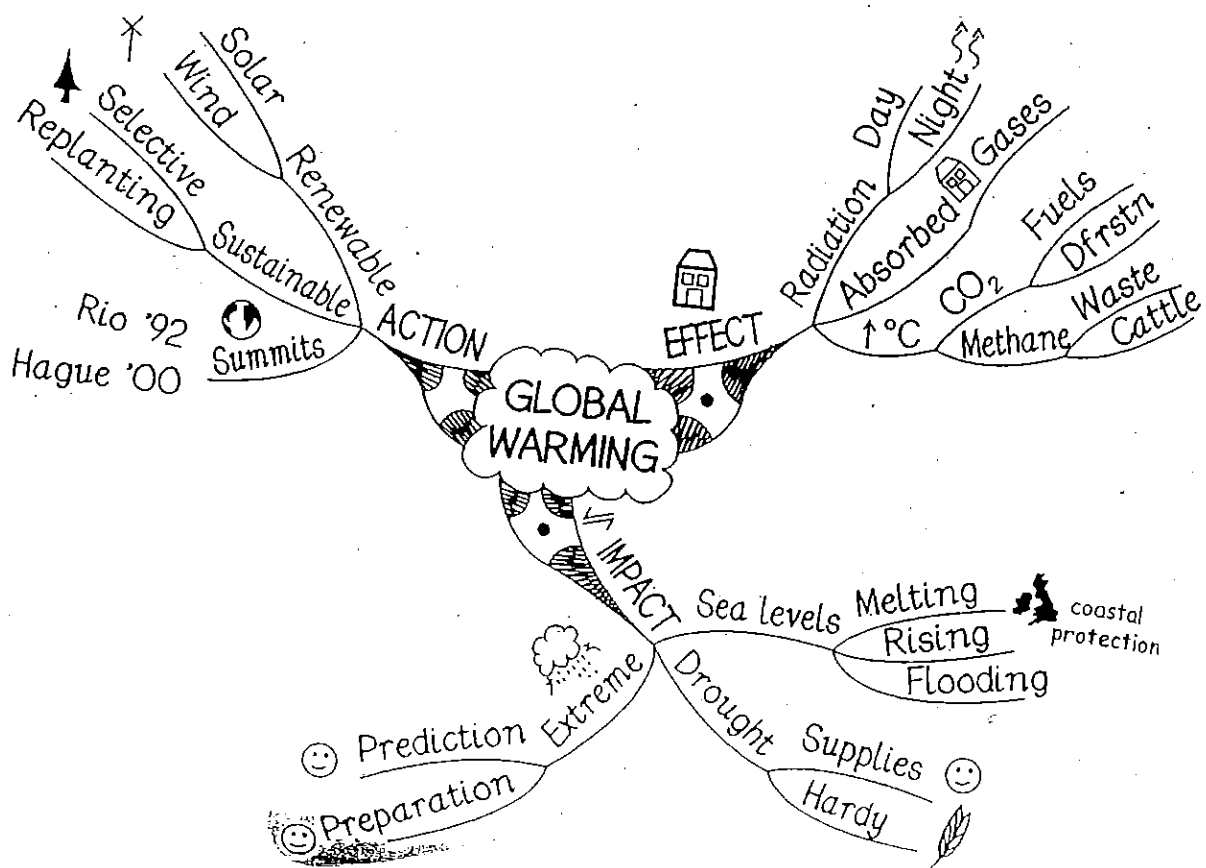
## 15. Mind Maps/ Concept Diagrams

This one of the most powerful ways of note taking and promoting thinking.

Create a detailed diagram summarising all the information you need.

- Start with a large piece of paper
- Use a selection of words and diagrams
- Use lines and arrows to connect ideas
- Identify the central theme
- Connect main ideas to secondary ideas
- Use just key words or images, where possible
- Start at the centre of the page and work out.
- Use arrows to connect ideas
- Use colour to depict themes, links and to make things stand out.
- Put ideas down as they occur. Don't hold back!
- Place your diagram, on your wall/door anywhere it can be seen easily and often.

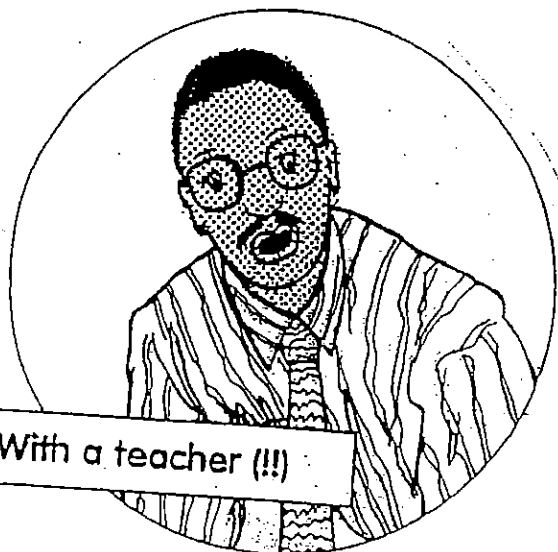
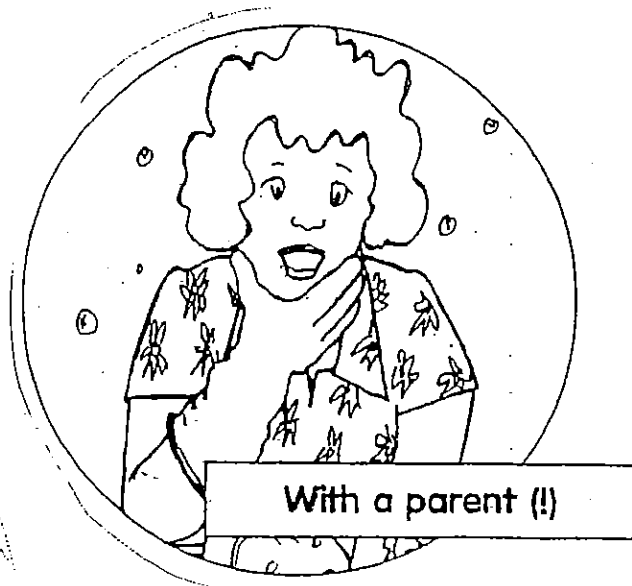
This can also be an excellent strategy for planning extended answers in exams



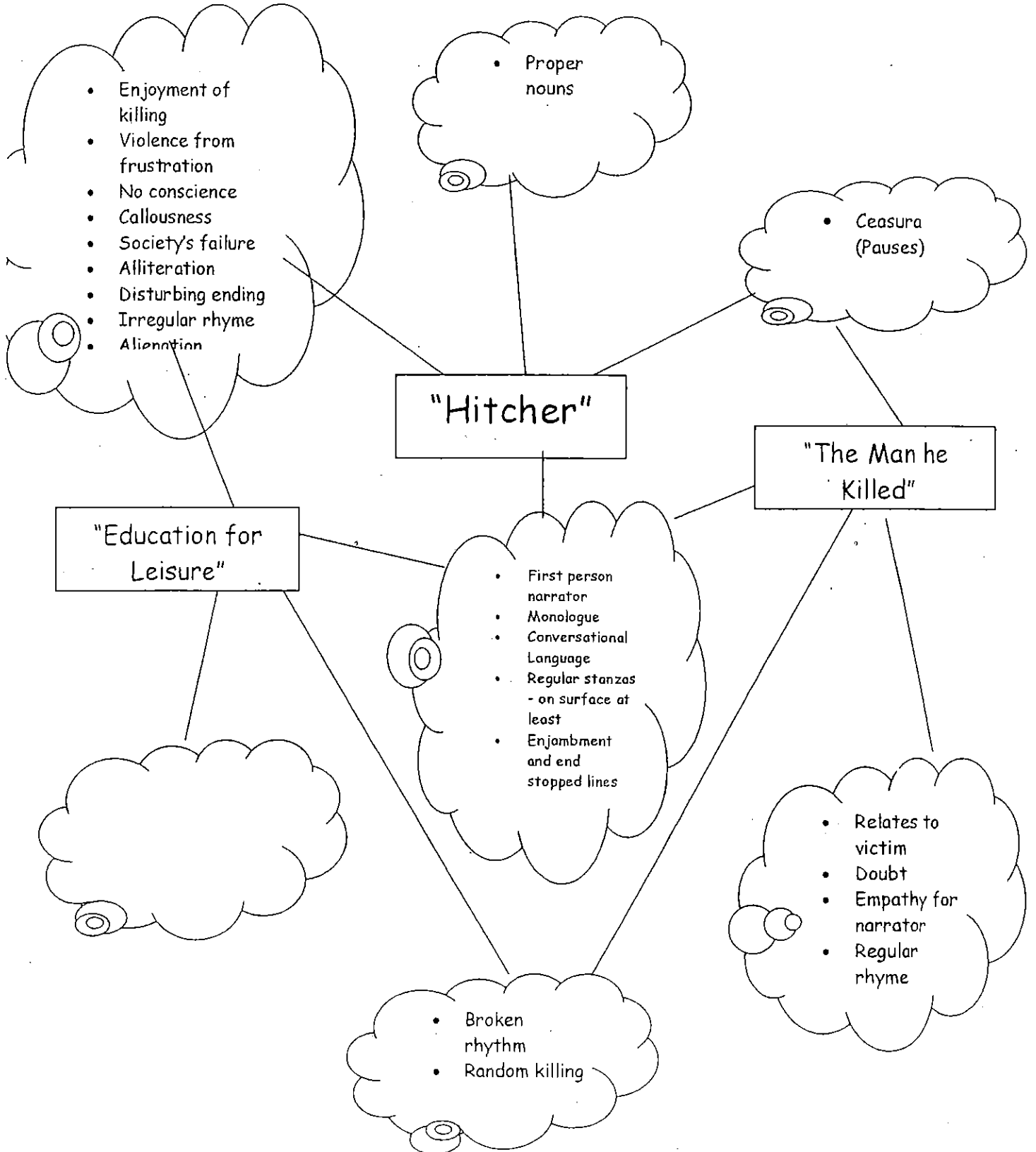
## 16. Talking it Through

Some people just love to talk. In fact they need to talk to get information and ideas clear in their mind.

- You can discuss the topic together.
- You can ask the person to explain it to you while you listen, then tell them a summary.
- You can explain it to them while they listen. They don't need to understand a word you are saying!
- You can even talk to yourself. Stand in front of the mirror and explain it to yourself; or say into a tape recorder. Listen and see if it makes sense.



# Odd One Out



## 20. The 5Ws

The 5Ws is a technique aimed at extracting key information from a variety of texts. It is a particularly useful exercise in revision since it allows you to prioritise important information from a mountain of written information gained over the past two years.

This technique is particularly useful for revision in English, History and Geography but can also be applied to scientific subject areas.

Using the 5Ws, identify three key areas in any text. The areas are:

### **THEME**

The main point of a book or chapter, or unit of work.

### **MAIN IDEA**

The key point or points made in anything from a paragraph to a sub-unit of work. It is like a smaller scale theme.

### **DETAIL**

Something that supports or backs up a main idea.

## The 5Ws

### What? Where? When? Why? & Who?

Think about a book you have read recently or a film that you like. If you were to tell someone what it was about, going into as much detail as possible, what would you tell them?

The above questions allow you describe and explain events:

WHAT was it about?

WHO were the main characters?

WHERE was it set?

WHEN was it set?

WHY did things happen the way they did?

HOW did events happen?

You can apply the same questioning technique to revision to identify the key information you will require in an examination.

## 21. Mnemonics

A mnemonic is a simple system for recalling key information.

*E G B D F*

.....*Every good boy deserves fruit* is a mnemonic

This mnemonic prompts you to actively notice, transposes the letters into something meaningful, and possibly conjures up certain images as well.

You probably can't recall the shape of Brazil or Spain, but the shape of Italy is an easy one. Why? You associate it with your image of a boot. This is an mnemonic.

Bless My Dear Aunt Sally, is an example of first letter triggers. (Brackets, Multiply, Divide, Add, Subtract)

Thirty days has September..... is a rhyme mnemonic.

## 22. Word Substitution

If you have a word that is difficult to remember in a list of items to be remembered, think of a known word *that sounds like* the difficult word and put that into your chain instead. When you recall the known word it will tend to trigger the difficult word. The word that sounds like is called a substitute word, and whereas the process may sound a little clumsy, in fact it is very powerful.

Examples of Substitute Words	Have a try yourself
Marginal <i>margarine</i>	Liability
Budget <i>bud</i>	Corporation
Demand <i>demon</i>	Monopoly
Equilibrium <i>equator</i>	Stabilisation
Compliment <i>compost</i>	Market

Usually the first substitute word that comes to mind is the best one.

## 23. Image Chains

The most difficult memory exercise is learning a list of things. This is because there is no natural association between the items, and consequently no triggers to help you remember them.

Take a list of words, and apply your *learning strategy*.

e.g. tree, house, guitar, pencil, telephone

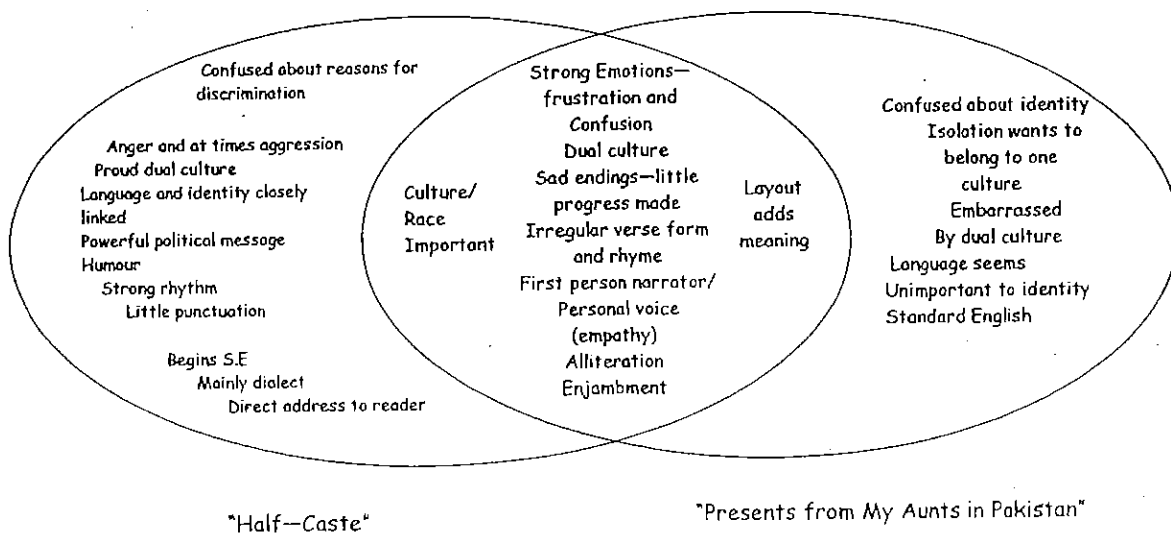
If you weave these words into a story, using images as your medium, then when you recall the first word it will tend to trigger the next word and so on down the chain. This happens because your story has a progression, made more memorable by the use of images rather than words. Each is associated with the one after it by its context within the story.

## 24. Venn Diagrams

Like 'Odd One Out', Venn diagrams are a good way of helping you compare and contrast - and ultimately make you question and challenge your knowledge and understanding of a particular concept or topic.

Use the diagram by putting similarities in the overlapping diagram, and differences on either side.

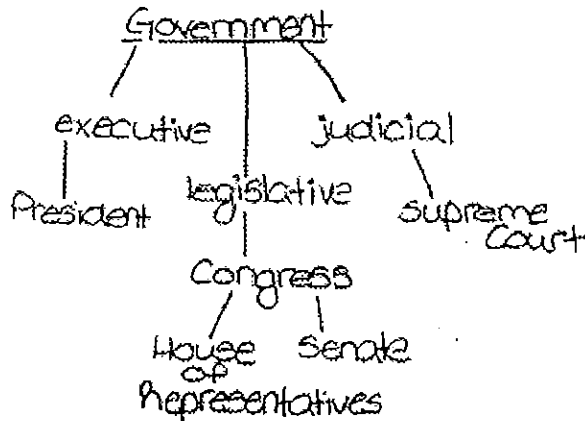
Comparing "Half Caste" and "Presents from My Aunts in Pakistan"



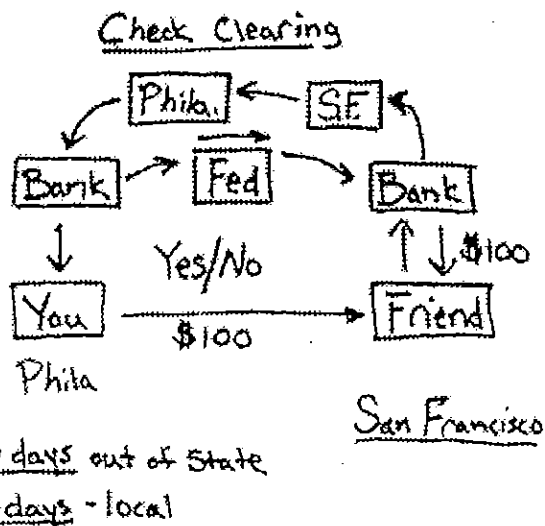
## 25. Visual Organisers

There are a number of ways of organizing ideas, concepts and information in a visual way, some of which have been covered already. Here are a few more which may prove useful.

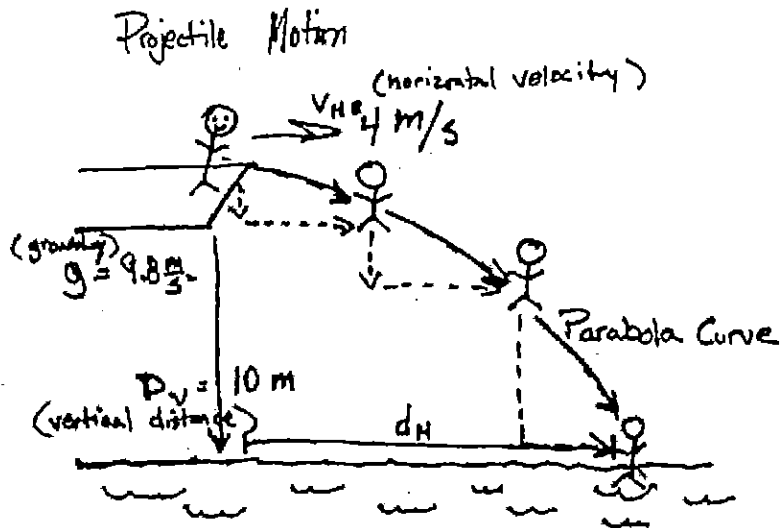
### Tree



### Chain



## Sketch



## 26. Stepping Chart

Use a Stepping chart to recap the way the story of a novel, a war or a geographical area develops. Plot the Key moments when things change for the better (up a step) or for the worse (down a step)

