

# Drawing for improved memory

Drawing for note taking improves memory retention.

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## Drawing

Chances are you know someone, or perhaps are that person who absently draws on their notes or meeting agendas when listening to something.

Good news, when a person draws imagery to represent the content they want to remember, they are more likely to remember it.

Developing the practice, you don't need to be an artist, of drawing imagery to represent content can be a great way to study. Your mind has to translate the content from verbal or visual cues into imagery. This translation requires synthesis of the content into a refined personal image. Drawing involves your kinesthetic awareness as well, imbedding the memory with more senses.



## Note taking:

Drawing the content, we need to remember improves our ability to recall that information.

When you are taking notes from a text try to read a section and then summarize that in an image. Don't worry about your "drawing ability". The goal isn't to sell your images, it is to deepen your learning and remember the content better. Try drawing cells in biology class, or what happened in today's history lesson. Draw a picture of what is happening in the physics concept you just read about.

You can develop your own shorthand imagery to use while you are taking notes as well.

## Resources for Collage:

- Paper, pencils, and pens
- Microsoft Paint
- Microsoft Whiteboard
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- Good notes app
- [www.Smoothdraw.com](http://www.Smoothdraw.com)
- [www.Mural.co](http://www.Mural.co)
- [Sketchboard.io](http://Sketchboard.io)

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# Enhanced Recall

In comparison to doodling or taking text notes, Meade, Wammes, and Fernandes (2019) found that drawing images of content improved the recall of that content. Taking notes with text was the second most effective, while doodling was not very effective.

While your absent-minded doodles may allow some people with very active brains to settle and listen better, disassociated shapes and lines don't help with specific content recall.

Draw out the information you want to remember. If you want to take it a step further, then show your image to someone. Use the image to explain to them how the concept works or tell the story of what is happening in your image. Translating the content back into your own words, from your image, will help you learn it more deeply.



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Meade, M. E., Wammes, J. D., & Fernandes, M. A. (2019). Comparing the influence of doodling, drawing, and writing at encoding on memory. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology/Revue canadienne de psychologie expérimentale*, 73(1), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cep0000170>