TEST YOURSELF

RETRIEVAL PRACTICE

THE HOPEFULL INSTITUTE



Testing yourself helps you remember far more than reading your notes again.

WHY IT WORKS

Every time you recall something, your brain strengthens the path back to it. Re-reading feels productive because the page looks familiar, but familiar is not the same as remembered.

In a well-known study, students who tested themselves remembered about half as much again a week later as students who simply re-read the same text. Testing yourself feels harder, and that is exactly why it works.

HOW TO DO IT TONIGHT

1. Read a section of your notes once, then close the book.
2. On a blank page, write down everything you can remember before you look back.
3. Check your page against your notes and mark what you missed in a different colour.
4. Tomorrow, test yourself on the gaps first, and keep going until they are gone.

WAYS TO TEST YOURSELF

Flashcards
Question on the front, answer on the back. Keep the hard ones in a separate pile.

Past papers
Sit them under exam conditions, then mark them honestly.

Headings into questions
Turn each heading in your notes into a question and answer it from memory.

Blank-page brain dump
Five minutes, one topic, everything you know.

Teach it back
Explain the topic out loud to someone without your notes.

Quiz a friend
Take turns asking each other questions on the same topic.

TRY THIS

Tonight, pick one topic and give yourself **five minutes with a blank page.** Write everything you know. The gaps you find are tomorrow's study plan.

The research: Roediger, H. L. and Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. *Psychological Science*, volume 17, pages 249 to 255.