

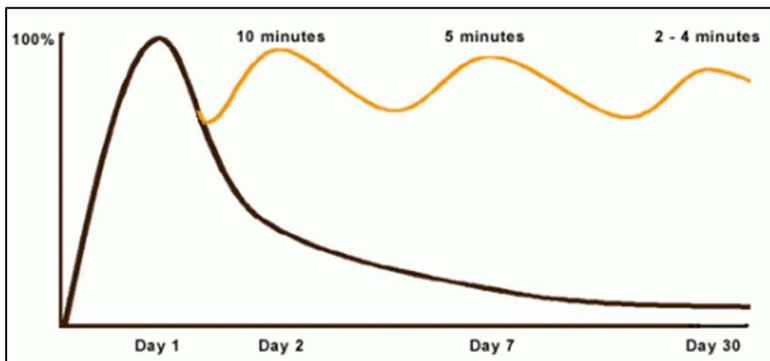


Reinforcement

When you are learning new information and skills, it is important to remember that 'practise makes perfect'. Often your teachers will set you homework which is needed to help you remember key information and skills.

Why is Reinforcement Important?

Your brain works by making neural connections between different brain cells holding information. This 'bridge' starts off with a very delicate connection that is easily broken which can be seen when you forget something. To ensure that you don't forget that vital information, you need to keep thinking about it. Each time to practise a skill or recall information, the stronger the neural connection becomes. If you recall information or repeat a skill six times, you are likely to remember it for life. It is important to use **reinforcement** over set time periods or increasing duration: go back to something a few hours later, then a few days, weeks, months etc to ensure it stays 'stuck in your brain'.



Another way of looking at this is with the 'Curve of Forgetting'. As you can see, coming back to information periodically, keeps it fresh in your mind and enables you to remember it better. The good news is that each time you repeat this, less time is needed. This is important to remember when you are preparing for assessments as well as examinations so it is good to get into the right habits from Year 7.

Your teachers will offer a range of different ways in which you can reinforce knowledge and skills. Some will work for you and others may not. Some may work for a given task or subject and some may not. The trick is to work out which reinforcement skills suit you for a given subject.

Reinforcement Techniques

- **Exam questions:** often teachers will give you examination practise questions to help with this. This is useful for two reasons: to help you recall information and to improve your examination skills.
- **Vocab practise:** this helps you to remember what key words look like and what they mean so you can apply them later. Your brain remembers words as pictures so physically looking at them helps. Saying them aloud also triggers other parts of your brain, improving recall. This is used for English and Languages.
- **Problem solving:** in subjects such as Maths and Science, your teachers may give you problem solving. This enables learners to apply a particular skill to different scenarios for example expanding brackets or determining chemical equations and reactions.

