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BILL HANDLEY

Best-selling author of *SPEED MATHS FOR KIDS*

Speed Learning *for* Kids

**The Must-Have Brain-Training Tools
to Succeed at School**

Help your child to:

- blitz tests
- ace spelling
- crack problem-solving
- enhance their memory
- boost their confidence
- learn like a genius.



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Introduction

When I was about six or seven years old, my father took a special training course related to his work. His method of consolidating what he had learned was to come home and teach me his summary of the training program for that day. Although I was very young, I still understood most of what he told me. (Or I thought I did.) One evening he came home and told me that, instead of the regular training program, they had a special lecture on how to learn effectively. He explained how you have to link the new information to information you already know. If the connection is strange, crazy or even a bit risqué, all the better. I never forgot this, and used the basic strategy all through school and college—especially for cramming before exams. When my father asked me where I got the idea for my study methods, I told him he had taught me when I was about six years old. He said he remembered the course and teaching me at night, but he couldn't remember anything about the lecture on study methods (or even doing it), and he told me he had never used any of the methods himself.

In 1979 I developed my methods further and couldn't believe the results. I was so excited I had to tell someone. I told a friend who was also studying, and he became excited and asked if I would teach a group of his friends. They were able to start using the methods immediately. I was encouraged by my lecturers at teachers college to

further improve my methods and to see how they worked in the classroom.

I conducted special classes for gifted students as well as students who were considered unteachable at the secondary school where I was teaching. After two months it was impossible to tell which class was which. This was reported in a local newspaper and resulted in a mother writing to me from New Zealand, asking if I could help her nine-year-old daughter who was terrified of maths. I recorded a cassette lesson and typed some notes and mailed them to her. She wrote back that her daughter had immediately played the tape and there was an immediate improvement in her maths. I made recordings of my other methods for study and literacy and had them professionally printed and packaged.

I received invitations to teach my methods to teachers and students around Australia, and then around the world, and I have continued to write about and teach them to this day.

How to learn effectively

During the first years of our life we learn at an incredible rate. We make our entry into the world knowing nothing—absolutely nothing. We don't know what or who we are or what anything else is. We find we can see and we can hear, but we have no idea what anything means—we can't make sense of anything. We soon learn to recognise people, sounds and our surroundings. We begin to make sense of it all.

Consider how quickly we learn our first language. We are able to get by and make our wishes known in a very short time. Then we learn how to express ourselves properly and speak about a variety of subjects.

Toddlers are desperate to learn and they are full of questions. They are always asking why, why, why? Their minds are like sponges, soaking up information.

School changes that. When we begin school we learn a whole lot of rules and our learning and our thinking become regimented. Teachers decide what we will learn, and when, and how we will learn it. Our questions can go unanswered if it doesn't suit the teacher's lesson plan. We are told to wait, and often we will never follow up our questions.

We are told what we have to learn but no one teaches us how to learn. We are left to work that out for ourselves. We are told to pay attention, try harder, concentrate. But nobody tells us how to do any of those things. How are we supposed to try harder? How do we concentrate on something we don't understand?

Children will punch the side of their heads to show they are trying, but it only succeeds in giving them a headache. They need someone to teach them *how* to learn. They would like to try harder, but nobody explains *how* to go about it. Too often they get discouraged and simply give up; they feel they lack the intelligence to learn in the way they are expected to.

Some students develop effective learning methods for themselves and seem to learn easily and well. They soon develop a reputation for being intelligent and fast learners. Others adopt very complicated and inefficient methods. Generally speaking, it is the methods we use that determine our learning ability rather than the quality of the brain we were born with. We can all greatly improve our ability to learn and to process information. This book will guide you through an effective learning process that will deliver unbelievable results.

Good students use better methods

One method of learning uses shortcuts and rhymes, and most of us have learned shortcuts or easy ways to remember information at school or at home. What are the seven colours of the rainbow? Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. How can we remember the colours and remember them in order? If you can remember the name, Roy G. Biv, then you know the initial letters of the colours. R is red, O is orange and Y is yellow, and then we have Green, Blue, Indigo and Violet.

How many of us learned the rhyme, 'Thirty days hath September, April, June and November...'? That was an easy way to remember how many days there are in a month.

If you have studied music you will have learned easy ways to remember the notes of written music. 'Every good boy deserves fruit' or 'every good boy does fine' (EGBDF) will enable you to remember the lines of music, and FACE reminds you of the notes in the spaces between the lines.

Good students use better methods to learn, and good teachers use better methods to teach so students will learn. High-achieving students will look for easy ways to learn and remember what they are studying: they learn, for instance, to apply these kinds of shortcuts to other subjects they are learning. This means they are in control of the learning process. I call this active learning.

Ineffective and inefficient learning methods

The most effective method of learning is to make sense of the material you are studying. A lot of the information we have to learn simply makes sense. But, you still have

to remember the points or arguments for the material that makes sense. Other information has to be learned by rote. This is stuff like dates, populations, distances and events that can't be reasoned.

The most common method of learning used by students the world over is to simply keep repeating the information they want to learn over and over until it sticks inside their brain. I call this passive learning, because the student is hoping that the information will stick by itself. This is rote learning. It is boring and you will tire of it quickly.

In this book, I am going to teach you an easy method of active learning, which puts you in control of the learning process. You will discover you can enjoy learning the most boring material, even subjects that you hate.

And, instead of repeating the material over and over, you will generally learn it the first time you take it in. Any repetition after this is just revision to ensure the information is in your permanent, or long-term, memory—available when you need it.



Tips

- Better students use better learning methods.
- Nothing motivates like success.
- Children who learn these methods at an early age will use them for the rest of their lives.
- Students who see results for their efforts will put in even greater effort.

Who is this book for?

Children of any age (and their parents) can benefit from this book.

Example: Learning and wanting to learn

A family in Western Australia obtained an audio recording of my lessons to help their 11-year-old daughter. They played it while they were driving their campervan across the West Australian desert. The recordings began by giving 15 unrelated words and then told the listener to call back the 15 words in the correct order from memory. The girl did so. Then she was asked to call the words in reverse order and she did so without a mistake.

Then another voice was heard from the back seat. The three-year-old daughter asked if she could call out the words. She called them back without a mistake, both forwards and then backwards, much to her family's amazement.

You are never too young and never too old to learn the simple methods I teach in this book. And I promise I will make learning an enjoyable experience for you, whatever your age or past experience.

By the end of this book I guarantee you will perform like a genius.

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Chapter 1

Making mental pictures

In 1982 a newspaper published an article about special classes I was conducting at the secondary school where I was teaching. They reported that students claimed that, using my methods, they could do the equivalent of more than two hours study in less than 10 minutes.

I was teaching two classes, one for gifted students and another for kids that other teachers considered unteachable. After a couple of months, both groups performed as if they were gifted. A group of students actually approached the school administration and complained that you had to be extra smart or extra dumb to get into my classes. This certainly took away any stigma of being part of the unteachables class.

I taught my system of mathematics, logical thinking, and learning and study techniques. I told the students that it is not the quality of your brain that determines your abilities, but how you use it. High achievers use better methods than the low achievers. I told them I would teach them better methods than the high achievers use so they will get better results.

Using your imagination to improve your learning is a good first step. Your imagination is a powerful tool for creating ideas, understanding ideas and learning ideas.

In this chapter we will see how you can harness your imagination to learn more effectively and efficiently. I'll use the example of showing you how you can use your imagination to learn the names of capital cities around the world.

Imagination and learning

Children are often told, 'Don't daydream!', 'Pay attention!', 'Concentrate!' This is *not* good advice, as the children who have a vivid imagination do best in school.

I daydreamed all my way through school and it helped immensely at examination time. As my geography or history teachers described what was happening in some far-off place or time, I would see it all in my mind. I ran it in my mind like a movie. Rather than hindering concentration, it enabled me to concentrate better and to understand better what I was hearing in class. And then, at examination time, I just re-ran the movie in my mind and got the answers I needed.

When I read a novel or a history book I always picture what I am reading. Most people do this. If I can't see what's happening, I have difficulty understanding it. That is why many people are disappointed when they see a movie version of a book: it's not how they pictured it in their minds.

If you can daydream, you can concentrate at a high level. This is great news for most kids.

Active learning is the secret

Most people never get beyond passive learning. They learn by rote: they learn by reading or listening to information over and over again, hoping the information will stick in their mind by itself and they will be able to recall at least some of it when they need it.

Better students look for ways to take control of the learning process. They continually ask themselves, how can I best remember this? What is the easiest way for me to learn it? They might think: that number is the same as the final digits of my friend's telephone number. Or that number is the same as our old street address, or the same as my sister's age.

Better students will look for the sense of what they are learning. They will ask themselves, why is it like that? Is there a reason, or what is the reason? If the thing can be reasoned, then they can use the same reasoning later in an exam to recall the information. The benefits go further if you actually use the information you have learned. Each time you use the information you are revising it.

Active learning takes place when you decide how you will remember what you are learning—you take charge of how you learn.

Have you ever had somebody explain something to you, and you told the person you understood what you had been told but, when you tried to explain it back to them, you couldn't do it? You thought you understood it but found out you didn't when you were tested. That is why many people say the best way to learn is to explain it or teach it to someone else. That is another example of active learning.

My speed learning method harnesses daydreaming and mental pictures and a system of reminders, which is a ready-made system of active learning. You decide how you will learn the information by making the mental pictures to connect what you want to learn with the reminders. By making sense of the information and by using the reminders (both are active learning strategies) you understand what you are learning and you can recall it under pressure.

Active learning is much more efficient and much more effective. You control the learning process, and you will see immediate results.

Joining new information to a reminder forces you to concentrate on what you are reading or hearing. It means you make the picture in your mind and that makes you concentrate at an even higher level.

Linking new information to old information

When my father recounted his training session on how to learn effectively he said you had to join the new information to information you already know. His advice has stayed with me all of my life. If you can make the connection using your imagination, then the learning process is even easier and better. This process is called linking information.

Let's see how this works by learning the names of some capital cities.

Learning the names of capital cities

Let's begin with the capitals of some South American countries.

Capital of Ecuador

If you know something about the city you could use a monument or landmark to represent the city, such as the Eiffel Tower for Paris, or Big Ben or the Tower Bridge for London.

Otherwise, I use a word that sounds like the country or city. For instance, Quito (pronounced KEEtoe) is the capital of Ecuador. We learn that the capital of Ecuador is Quito by finding a way of joining (or linking) the two

names together. Here is where you use your imagination. Quito and Ecuador can be hard to join, so the next step is to look for words that sound like the names to make them easy to learn.

We ask ourselves, what do the names sound like? This forces us to concentrate on the names we are learning. You are not just passively reading or listening to the information; you are actively using it. I think that Quito sounds like mosquito so I use mosquito as my substitute word for Quito, and I see a mosquito. Ecuador sounds like equator (it actually means equator in Spanish) or 'aqua door'. When you use your imagination to join the two, you will remember them—even under pressure.

If I use equator as my substitute for Ecuador, I picture in my mind millions and millions of mosquitos swarming around the equator so no one wants to cross for fear of getting hundreds of mosquito bites. If I use aqua door as my substitute, I picture painting my door with aqua coloured paint, and mosquitoes land on the newly painted door and get stuck in the wet paint so I have to clean up the door and paint it again. Adding some action to the image can help make it stick in your mind.

Whichever picture you decide on, see it clearly in your mind and in as much detail as you can. This forces a high level of concentration because your mind can't drift elsewhere or you lose the picture. So, don't just agree with the pictures I suggest—actually see the pictures in your mind as clearly as you can. That is what forces high concentration and enables you to recall the information when you need it.

It's that simple—if you have seen the picture in your mind then you have memorised the name of the capital of Ecuador. It was easy and it was fun. And it required no more concentration than it takes to daydream.

Capital of Venezuela

Let's try another. Caracas is the capital of Venezuela. Caracas sounds like crackers and Venezuela sounds like...

What does Venezuela sound like? What do you do if you can't think of a word that sounds like the word you want to link? It doesn't have to be a perfect match. Whale sounds like the third syllable of Venezuela and it is the stressed or dominant syllable. That will work fine for me.

So, we need to link cracker to whale to remind us that Caracas is the capital of Venezuela. I picture a whale that has been beached and can't get back in the water. It is hungry so I give it some crackers to eat. Or, some naughty children have put firecrackers under the whale to try to shift it. Either picture makes the connection between crackers and the whale. Picture them both if you like and you have learnt the capital of Venezuela and have it memorised, ready for when you need it.

Capital of Peru

Lima is the capital of Peru. I think of lima beans for Lima and, if you imagine they have a bad smell and picture lima beans stink, pee-ew. That links Lima with Peru. Imagine holding your nose as you eat lima beans. See it happening in your mind. You won't forget it.

Capital of Romania

Let's take a European capital now: Bucharest is the capital of Romania. Bucharest sounds like book rest, and Romania sounds like remain here. We put bookends (rests) on our shelves so the books won't fall off—they 'remain here'.

Let's check what we have learned

Now, what is the capital of Ecuador?

What is the capital of Venezuela?

What is the capital of Peru?

What is the capital of Romania?

That was easy, wasn't it? Can you see that you can make learning subjects you find boring, or even hate, interesting and entertaining. If your mental pictures don't entertain you, whose fault is that? You can make learning any subject as entertaining as you want just by using your imagination and doing a little daydreaming.

Let's try this the other way around.

Of which country is Caracas the capital?

Which country has Lima as the capital?

Bucharest is the capital of which country?

Where is Quito?

You have learnt the information both ways. The city reminds you of the country and the country reminds you of the city. And we took the hard work out of learning it.

Here are some more to try

How would you remember that Budapest is the capital of Hungary?

Or that Santiago is the capital of Chile?

Or Helsinki is the capital of Finland?

Try to make your own connections before you read my suggestions.

It is easy to think of a word that sounds like Hungary (hungry) but what sounds like Budapest. The pest part of the word is easy, but what can we do with buda?

I imagine I am hungry and sit down to a meal, but a pest keeps interrupting my meal and I can't enjoy it. If I picture

booing the pest each time he appears then I have my connection. I booed a pest because I am hungry and want to eat. So I'll remember, Budapest is the capital of Hungary.

Chile sounds like chilly. I picture Santa is trying to go down the chimney, but he gets stuck and gets cold because the weather is chilly. I join Santa with chilly for my connection.

I can find the words hell and sink from Helsinki and fin land from Finland. I picture being in the ocean and I see a shark fin circling me. That is enough to remind me of Finland. The shark from hell wants to sink me so it can eat me. That reminds me of Helsinki.

You will get better at making these connections with practice.

Making better mental pictures

If you make your mental pictures stronger and more memorable, you can force greater concentration on the information you want to remember and make it easier to recall when you need it. Here are some suggestions:

- Make the item bigger—make it *huge*.
- See millions of the object you are thinking of. Don't see just one mosquito—see millions stuck on your door.
- Make the items do something so you can see plenty of action: the mosquitoes are marching, hitting, biting, running and flying.
- Think of something being done to the objects you are seeing: they are being hit, squashed or eaten.
- Make the picture ridiculous—we forget the ordinary things in life but we remember the unusual. Making weird pictures in your mind forces you to think harder about what you are learning as you try to

make them ridiculous. You are then less likely to forget the information. This will also help develop your ability to think creatively.

- See the picture as clearly and with as much detail as you can. And don't just see your picture—hear and feel it, if you can, rather than just see it.
- Try to involve your other senses in your mental picture to make it more real. Hear and feel your association, if you can, rather than just see it.

All of these rules will force you to concentrate, not only on the pictures but also on the information you are learning. You can use this method to learn anything: you are now in control of how you learn and the learning process is fun.

Practise making mental pictures to learn and remember information and you will not only learn more effectively and efficiently, but be able to recall information under pressure. You will also improve your concentration and develop other mental skills, and you will have fun while you do it.

Now let's see how well this has worked

Can you still remember, what is the capital of Finland?

The capital of Ecuador?

What is the capital of Hungary?

Venezuela?

Chile?

Peru?

Romania?

Do you see how well the method is working? You have just learnt and mastered a very useful learning tool.



Tips for remembering

- Revise what you learn within five minutes of learning it.
- You only need to keep your first connections for five minutes.
- Do your second revision within an hour.
- Revise when you go to bed.
- Revise when you wake up.

After your first revision, just recite them once or twice a day for a week and afterwards, whenever you think of it. It is a painless and pleasant way to learn.

How long will I remember what I have learned?

People often ask me this question, but there is no easy answer.

If I am learning a list of things to buy from the supermarket this afternoon, then the information will stay until I have bought them. I don't need the information any longer so I only keep it in my memory for a couple of hours.

But what about studying for an exam? Tests and exams can be weeks or even months after we have learned the new information. The simple answer is that you need to put the information into your permanent memory so you can recall the information when you need it.

How to remember new information for a long time

After you have heard or read the new information you want to remember and joined each key point to one of your reminders, quickly review what you have learnt using the reminders. That is your first revision. You should do your first revision as soon as possible after you have memorised the list.

You should do your second revision no more than an hour later. Revise what you have learned while you walk to the bus stop, wait at the bus stop, travel home, wait in line at the supermarket checkout or while you walk your dog. If you have jobs to do after school, revise your schoolwork then.

When you put on your pyjamas to go to bed, run through the list again. They say you remember what you have learned better if you sleep immediately afterwards, so revise just before you go to sleep. And when you wake up in the morning, go through them again while you are thinking about getting up. Then go over the list once a week for a month and then from time to time when you think of it, and you will find the information will go into your permanent memory.

Revising what you have learnt while you are cleaning your room, mowing the lawn, or doing some other job that doesn't need your full attention means you aren't taking time from other activities to study. I call this using lost time to study. That means you aren't taking time from other activities to do your schoolwork. You would be doing those things anyway. In fact, it would appear to anyone else that you aren't doing any study but you are getting more accomplished than your friends who might be sitting up half the night.

Key points

- You can control how you learn.
- If you can daydream you can concentrate.
- Use your imagination to force high concentration.
- We remember the unusual more easily than the ordinary.
- We join new information to information we already know.



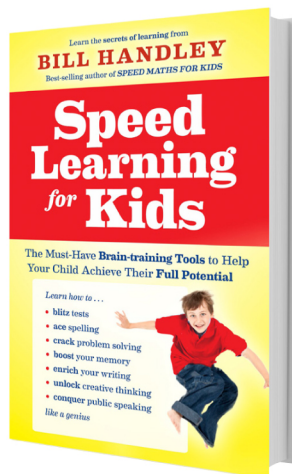
Activities to try

- ☞ Try memorising the capital cities of other countries around the world, or the state or provincial capitals in the United States or Canada.
- ☞ Try memorising the captains and coaches of football or cricket teams. Have fun with the method.

We hope you have enjoyed this sample from

SPEED LEARNING FOR KIDS

by Bill Handley



Click on the book for
more information

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Available in print and
e-book formats

Buy it now!

The Book

Kids who succeed at school aren't necessarily smarter than other kids. Often, they're simply better at learning. *Speed Learning for Kids* helps you teach your child how to thrive at school by learning more in less time with less effort. The brain-training techniques in this book will enable kids to not just learn faster, but enjoy their learning, memorise as they go, and absorb as much in ten minutes as they normally would in two hours of study.

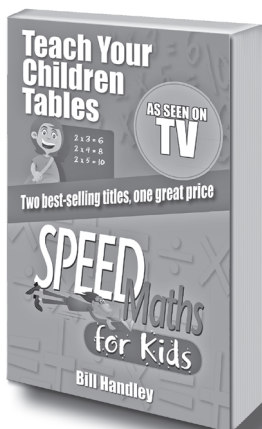
How is it possible? These nontraditional techniques aren't mysterious, they're just not often taught. Any child can learn to learn, and the results really matter — with improved concentration, better short- and long-term memory, more creative thinking, and better memory and reading comprehension skills.

The Author

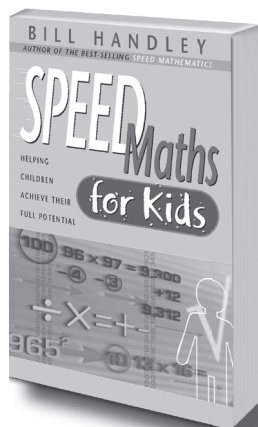
Bill Handley is an internationally recognized authority on study methods and mathematics, based in Melbourne. He is the author of many best-selling titles, including *Teach Your Children Tables* and *Speed Maths For Kids*

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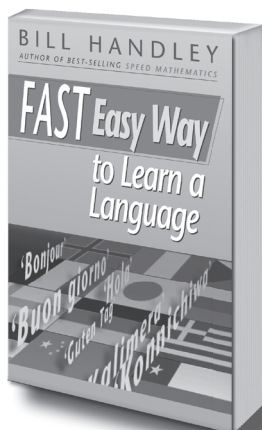
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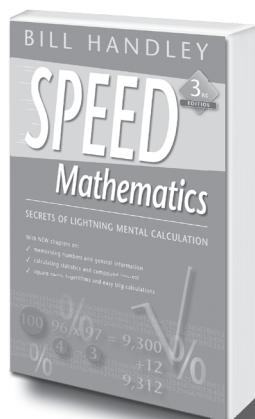
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Speed Maths For Kids



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a Language**



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**What if you could help your kids
breeze through tests with minimal stress?**

**What if you could show them how to memorise what they
read as they read it and what they hear as they hear it?**

**What if you could teach your kids to learn more
in less time and with less effort?**

Speed Learning for Kids shows you how, with fun, easy brain-training tools and learning strategies that are guaranteed to help your kids succeed.

Discover how to:

- ✓ ace tests, including national tests and entrance exams
- ✓ increase focus and concentration
- ✓ enhance short- and long-term memory
- ✓ unlock creativity and excel at writing
- ✓ improve reading comprehension and problem-solving
- ✓ master languages quickly and easily
- ✓ conquer public speaking without notes.

Children who excel at school aren't necessarily smarter than the rest — they just use better learning strategies. Let *Speed Learning for Kids* show you how they do it and how your kids can too!

BILL HANDLEY is an internationally recognised authority on study methods and mathematics, based in Melbourne. He is the author of many best-selling titles, including *Teach Your Children Tables* and *Speed Maths for Kids*.