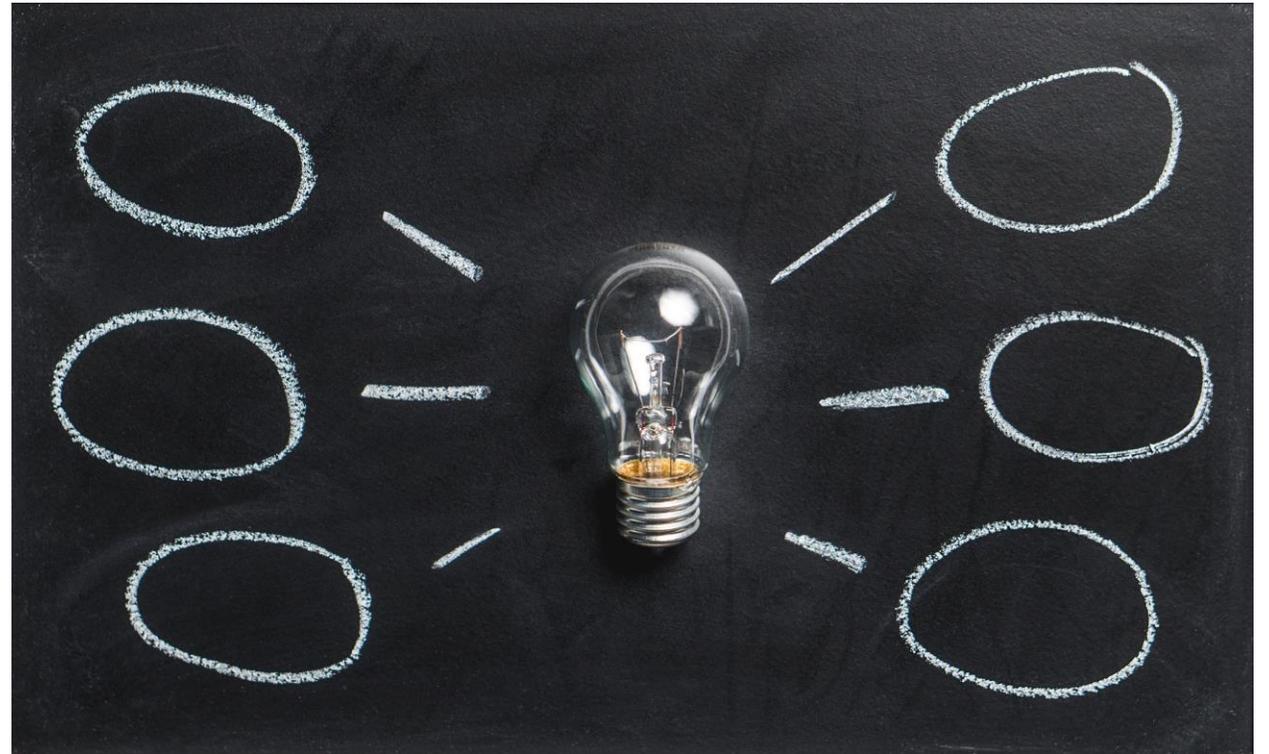


Preparing for exams

4. Using Flash Cards effectively

Using flashcards

- Using flashcards is a repetition.
- They are a simple ‘cue’ on the front and an ‘answer’ on the back.
- Flashcards engage “active recall”.



Why flashcards help you learn

- **They engage in 'Active recall'** – this creates stronger connections for your memory to recall information.
- **They promote self-reflection** – also known as **metacognition** which ingrains knowledge into your memory.



How to make flashcards

Ensure that the flashcards have a **question or key term** on one side and the **answer or definition** on the other.

- The flashcard must work the memory. If flashcards only contain notes then no **retrieval practice** will be happening.

Make sure you try to write notes in your own words



Being smart when using flashcards

Studies have found that it's more effective to **review a whole stack of cards in one sitting**

Review your cards at specific, increasing intervals: for example on Day 1, Day 2, Day 4, Day 8 and so on.

Make sure you have a **'thinking pause'** after picking one up and reading the question, then turn the card over to read the information.

Try 'interleaving'. Once you have several decks of flashcards for different subjects and topics try mixing them up.

Flashcards are not an effective method for last-minute cramming!

Use a **system** to revise with flashcards

The **Leitner system** is a well-known and very effective method of using flashcards. It's a form of **spaced repetition** that helps you study the cards you don't know more often than the cards you know well.

In the 1970s, a German populariser of science, Sebastian Leitner, developed the method.

Leitner System – The Method

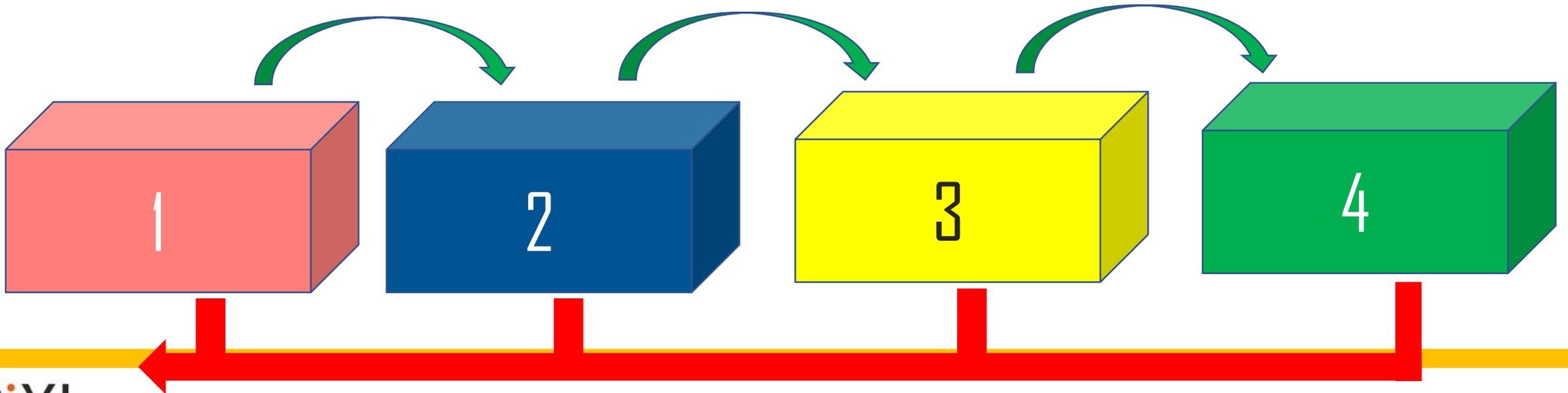
All flash cards start off in Box / Stack 1.

As you review the cards, each card you answer correctly goes into Box 2.

If you give the wrong answer the card stays in box 1.

When you review cards in Box 2, if you still get it right you move the card to box 3 and so on until all cards are in Box 4.

If you get a card wrong in any box, it goes back to Box 1.



Leitner System – The Key

The key is that the cards you know less well are reviewed more frequently than the cards in the higher boxes.

You now must choose the frequency at which you review each box.

Box 1: Every day

Box 2: Every 2 days

Box 3: Every 3 days

Box 4: Every 4 days

Reflect

If you have been using Flash Cards – how effective are they?
Could you implement any of the advice today to increase impact

If you have not been using Flash cards – why not? Do you have a more efficient way to reduce and recall information? How could you try and introduce this technique?

Remember...

A glowing blue brain graphic is positioned above a hand holding a white card. The background is dark with a blurred image of a person's face.

Flashcards should be used to **test your knowledge**, not just as a way to **condense your notes further**.

Rereading notes is a passive learning activity so is not an economical use of your revision time.