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## How to Memorize Anything You Want: A Quick Primer on Mental Mapping



*Editor's note: This is a guest post from two-time USA Memory Champion, [Ron White](#).*

What if you could play a game of cards with your buddies and recall every card that had been played? You can.

What if you could meet a client today and six months later see him at a football game and recall his name along with his wife's and kids' names? You can.

What if you could look at a 50 digit number for 90 seconds and then repeat the number forwards and backwards from memory? You can.

So how do you master your memory to this level? By utilizing a simple system of mental maps, you will be amazed at the amount of knowledge you will be able to store.

Here's how to begin:

1. Select 5 rooms in your home or office.

2. In each room, number 5 large items. Number these items 1-25. The first item in the first room is #1, the first item in the second room is #6, the first item in the third room is #11, and so on. For example: Bedroom–1. desk, 2. bed, 3. tv, 4. dresser, 5. computer...Bathroom–6. toilet 7. window, 8. shower, 9. sink, 10. towel rack...etc. Remember, this is just an example. You want to select the pieces of furniture in the way they flow around your particular room.
3. Practice saying these pieces of furniture and their corresponding numbers over and over until it becomes second nature to say them forwards or backwards. We will refer to these pieces of furniture as “files.”
4. Now whenever you wish you to recall something, turn it into a picture and imagine it interacting with this piece of furniture.

Let’s say that you want to memorize all the Super Bowl winners. Once you have your files (the pieces of furniture) memorized, the next item of business is to turn whatever you wish to recall into a picture.

So you would be looking at a list that looks like this:

1. Green Bay Packers
2. Green Bay Packers
3. New York Jets
4. Kansas City Chiefs
5. Baltimore Colts
6. Dallas Cowboys
7. Miami Dolphins
8. Miami Dolphins
9. Pittsburgh Steelers
10. Pittsburgh Steelers

In order to remember anything, it must be an image that you can imagine. For example, if you wanted to recall the number 593787, it might be tough to recall. But a photo album with a coffee cup in it would be easy to remember. That is my picture for 593787. For now, let’s address turning the football teams into pictures, a much simpler task than turning 593787 into an image.

What could you picture for the Green Bay Packers? Perhaps packaging. Coming up with an image for the Jets is easy—just picture an airplane jet. For the Chiefs, you would picture an Indian chief. The Colts would be a horse and the Cowboys a cowboy. This is pretty simple actually when you’re dealing with teams.

Now this is where it gets fun. Take each of these images and place them mentally around your 25 files in chronological order. For example, since the Packers won the first Super Bowl, imagine someone packaging a box on your number one file. To use the example above, you would picture someone packaging a box on top of your desk. The more action/emotion you can put into this image, the better chances you will recall it later. On your number two file, or your bed, you would also see packaging. On your number three file, you would imagine a jet landing or crashing into your tv. For your fourth file, you could imagine an Indian chief sitting on your dresser.

To memorize all the Super Bowl winners, you will need at least 45 files, but that is easy enough to mentally construct by simply selecting more rooms in your home (or other buildings and selecting 5 items in each). Because you are placing 5 files in each room, you should be able to memorize the numbers of your files rapidly.

The rationalization of 5 in a room, is that if you want to know what the 15<sup>th</sup> Superbowl winner was, it might take a minute to figure it out if you had 4 files in one room, 6 in another, and 9 in another. However, if there are 5 in a room, it is very easy. All you need to do is mentally jump to the 15<sup>th</sup> file in your home, or the last item in your third room, and you will see it getting raided by bandits, and this tells you the Oakland Raiders won Super Bowl 15.

Now whenever you wish to remember the whole list of teams, you simply mentally walk through your house, and imagine yourself looking at each piece of furniture—and its corresponding team—as you go from room to room.

This system can be used to memorize anything from 50 digit numbers, business presentations, chapters of books, college homework, product knowledge, or even sports team champions.

Happy memorizing!

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*Ron White (not the cigar smoking, scotch drinking comedian, although he does write his own jokes) is a two time [USA Memory Champion](#) who held the record for the fastest to memorize a deck of cards in the USA (1 minute 27 seconds) for 2 years. Perhaps you saw him on the History Channel show, Stan Lee's "Superhumans." For more information on Ron White's memory training system, visit [MEMORY TRAINING COURSE](#).*

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