

USING FLASHCARDS



AESC
Academic Enrichment
& Support Center

Studying involves remembering different kinds of information. In courses where there are large amounts of FACTUAL information, flashcards may be helpful. Flashcards are especially useful in learning vocabulary words, formulas, equations, definitions, dates, names, etc.

The primary advantage of flashcards over other review techniques is that since the cards are easy to carry around, you can review them often and quickly. FREQUENT REVIEW of cards is what makes them effective. Short reviews FREQUENTLY REPEATED will generally be more effective than long sessions of cramming.

Objections about flashcards usually state that "they take too long to make." Keep in mind, however, that blank cards can be inexpensively purchased now and WRITING DOWN of the material on the cards themselves is itself an aid to memory. Furthermore, there are NOW many ONLINE WEBSITES for making free flashcards (e.g., <http://www.flashcardmachine.com/>). It is also important to make the cards throughout the course, not just before the exam.

Suggestions for Flashcard Use:

- Review cards OFTEN. Carrying them with you will help you to review them often.
- Prepare the cards WELL IN ADVANCE of the test. Make them during your daily studying of the material.
- Focus on the cards you don't know or are not sure of. Reviewing cards you know well is a temptation, but an inefficient use of time.
- When learning cards for the first time, BREAK THEM UP INTO SMALL GROUPS. Learn one group of cards, then move to another group reviewing all the cards from time to time.
- Shuffle the cards frequently and flip through them rapidly. This avoids learning the cards in a certain order. Remember, it is NOT the cards that improve memory; rather it is HOW OFTEN THEY ARE REVIEWED!