

# Study Skills

# Elaboration

## Elaboration or Elaborative Interrogation:

This is a study strategy that involves using details, commonalities, differences, and connections to study topics from class.<sup>1</sup>

Using this approach, you are able to organize and connect information. It makes the information easier to retrieve later.<sup>2 3</sup>

### How to use it when you study:

1. Go over the items/topics you need to learn for class and make them into a list.
2. Go down the list and ask yourself questions about each item.
  - a. The types of questions depend on the course.
  - b. Examples: How does \_ work? Why does \_ happen? When did \_ happen? What caused/causes \_? What is the result of \_? How is \_ different than \_? How is \_ similar to \_?
3. Use your questions to direct you through materials – textbook, notes, PowerPoints, handouts, etc. – to find the answers.
4. As you elaborate (or answer the questions with as much detail as possible), try to make connections between items on your list: how they work together, how they work against each other, how they are similar, and/or how they are different.
5. During your day, try to connect your items to things you see, aspects of your life, or experiences from your past. It will help you solidify the knowledge making it easier to retrieve. Of course this will not work for every topic.
6. Eventually, as you work with the same topics, your goal is to answer the questions without the need to find the answers in your materials.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Admin, Web. n.d. "Learning Scientists Study Strategy: Using Elaboration." LARC. Accessed May 26, 2023. <https://larc.uci.edu/2020/03/19/phasellus-a-ullamcorper-sapien-in-tempus-leo-etiam-interdum-commodo-varius/#:~:text=However%2C%20when%20we%20are%20talking>.

<sup>2</sup> Willoughby, Teena, and Eileen Wood. 1994. "Elaborative Interrogation Examined at Encoding and Retrieval." *Learning and Instruction* 4 (2): 139–49. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0959-4752\(94\)90008-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0959-4752(94)90008-6).

<sup>3</sup> Hunt, R. R. (2006). The concept of distinctiveness in memory research. In R. R. Hung & J. B. Worthen (Eds.), *Distinctiveness and memory* (pp. 3-25). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Admin, Web. n.d. "Learning Scientists Study Strategy: Using Elaboration." LARC. <https://larc.uci.edu/2020/03/19/phasellus-a-ullamcorper-sapien-in-tempus-leo-etiam-interdum-commodo-varius/#:~:text=However%2C%20when%20we%20are%20talking>.