Using Mnemonics

A mnemonic is a device that you can use to help you remember information. They are especially useful for remembering lists or stages. This activity will explain some common types of mnemonics and show how they can be useful.

Types of Mnemonics:

- **Acrostics**: An acrostic matches a group of letters with a word or phrase that begins with each letter. Using an acrostic can help you remember a group of letters. For example, to remember the position of directions on a compass (Clockwise: North, East, South, West) N, E, S, and W become Never Eat Soggy Wheat.

- **Acronyms**: An acronym makes a word out of the first letter of each word you have to remember. For example, the 7 coordinating conjunctions in English are For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So = FANBOYS.

- **Names**: Like an acronym, a name mnemonic uses the first letter of each word. Instead of turning the letters into a word, we turn them into a name. For example, the essential amino acids Phenylalanine, Valine, Threonine, Tryptophan, Isoleucine, Methionine, Histidine, Arginine, Leucine, Lysine become Pvt. Tim Hall.

- **Rhymes**: A rhyme mnemonic uses a short poem or rhyme to make information easier to remember. For example “i before e except after c” can help you remember what order to write the letters ‘i’ and ‘e’ when you are spelling words where they are found together (e.g. ‘believe’).

Try to remember the following information:

- The notes on the treble clef, starting from the bottom, are E, G, B, D and F.
- The five Great Lakes are Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior.
- The colours of the visible spectrum are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.
- January, March, May, July, August, October and December all have 31 days. April, June, September and November all have 30 days. February has 28 days, unless it is a leap year, when it has 29.

Quiz:

What are the notes on the treble clef, starting from the bottom?

1. G, E, F, D, A
2. G, E, B, D, F
3. E, G, B, D, F
4. A, G, B, D, F

Take a moment to try and answer the question.

The correct answer is option 3: E, G, B, D, F
Huron, Michigan, Ontario, Erie. Which Great Lake is missing from the list?
1. Nipigon
2. Great Bear
3. Louise
4. Superior

Take a moment to try and answer the question.
The correct answer is option 4: Superior

What are the colours on the visible spectrum?
1. Red, Magenta, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple
2. Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet
3. Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple
4. Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet

Take a moment to try and answer the question.
The correct answer is option 4: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet

Which of the following months has only 30 days?
1. April
2. July
3. October
4. May

Take a moment to try and answer the question.
The correct answer is option 1: April

How did you do? Did you have trouble remembering it all? Try again with the following mnemonics!

- The notes on the treble clef, starting from the bottom, are E, G, B, D, and F. [The Acrostic is] E, G, B, D, and F = Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge.
- The five Great Lakes are Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie and Superior. [The Acronym is] Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior = HOMES
- The colours of the visible spectrum are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. [The name is] Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, and Violet = ROY G BIV
- January, March, May, July, August, October and December all have 31 days. April, June, September and November all have 30 days. February has 28 days, unless is a leap year, when it has 29. [the rhyme is]

30 days hath September, April, June, and November.
All the rest have 31
Except February my dear son.

It has 28 and that is fine

But in Leap Year it has 29.

Quiz Part 2:

What are the notes on the treble clef, starting from the bottom?

1. G, E, F, D, A
2. G, E, B, D, F
3. E, G, B, D, F
4. A, G, B, D, F

Take a moment to try and answer the question.

The correct answer is option 3: E, G, B, D, F

Huron, Michigan, Ontario, Erie. Which Great Lake is missing from the list?

1. Nipigon
2. Great Bear
3. Louise
4. Superior

Take a moment to try and answer the question.

The correct answer is option 4: Superior

What are the colours on the visible spectrum?

1. Red, Magenta, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple
2. Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet
3. Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple
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Take a moment to try and answer the question.

The correct answer is option 1: April
Did the mnemonics help? Try using mnemonics the next time you study.

Congratulations! You now know some common types of mnemonics.