

A LODGE EDUCATION OFFICER'S GUIDE TO MEMORIZATION



The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio Committee on Education and Information 2014 Mandatory Education Program

Materials:

This presentation is complements of freemasonuniversity.com. It should be given as an education program for the entire lodge. It can also be used to conduct a class for Brethren learning ritual for the first time.

Presentation

LEO – YOU READ THIS MATERIAL ALOUD. PAUSE SO BRETHERN CAN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS MENTALLY

So you say you can't memorize.

Let's try something.

What is your phone number?

What is your address?

I'll bet you knew the answer to both without looking at your phone or your driver's license.

Why: Because you have memorized them. And what is the connection in your memory? Home. And that is the key to memorization: Having a connection.

Where do you work?

How do you get to work?

What do you do at work?

You know all of those things "by heart" as they say. The connection is Work

If married, what is your spouse's name?

If a parent, what are the names of your children?

Connection: Family

Where are we going with this? You undoubtedly answered all the questions without looking at any notes.

In other words, you answered from memory. See, you can and do memorize.

How did you do it? You absorbed one small bit of information at a time that relates to something.

Think back, what was your phone number when you lived at home?

What was your first phone number after you left home?

All of these questions direct you to remember something that relates to something – a time, a place, a person. Information connected to something or someone.

So why not use that same skill in memorizing ritual?

First, make a connection – lodge. Where is it? How do you get there? What night and time is the meeting?

Now, make a connection to a meeting. Where do you usually sit? Where do your closest acquaintances or friends sit? Who are the officers? Where do they sit? What goes on at a stated meeting?

Next, connect to a degree. Let's start with the EA^o and your very first night. Allow your recollection of the lodge room, the furniture, the lighting, the officers' stations; the brethren you encountered come flooding back in your memory.

STOP right there. **RELAX** and let those memories take over. **ENJOY** reliving the experience as you connect with the night you became a Mason.

LEO: PAUSE FOR A FULL MINUTE

Now, put yourself in the preparation room. Replay everything that went on from the instructions the candidate preparation brother gave you to going to the door and knocking. What have you just accomplished? You have connected to something. You have engaged your memory.

STOP. Relive the night. Recall the SD leading you around: The three challenges; Kneeling at the altar; the obligation; the signs, step, grip, word, first light.

LEO: PAUSE FOR A FULL MINUTE

OK. You have made a connection. Now, let's memorize this question: **Who comes there?** That's it. The first three words you heard: **Who comes there?**

Keep the lodge connection. Where did you first hear these three words? Stay focused. You heard these words four times. Can you remember where in the room and who asked?

Focus and stay connected.

Who comes there? The brother opening the door following your three distinct knocks wants to know who you are.

Next comes the answer: “A poor, blind candidate...etc.”

Why poor: Because everything was taken away from you. Why blind: Because you were blindfolded.

See how much easier it is to retain information and words if we understand the connection.

So start with something you want to memorize. **Focus. Connect. Begin.** Three trigger words.

If you find your mind wandering and lose the focus and connection – **STOP. Rest. Focus. Connect. Begin.**

Get comfortable with the process. Make the process a habit. Memorize the process. **Focus. Connect. Begin.** Three Words.

One small step at a time: No great leaps forward. Set a reasonable goal.

So what is your phone number? There, you’ve started to memorize the phone book. Now focus on the ritual.

Focus. Connect. Begin.

Let’s move on. Some lodges and individuals press brethren wanting to learn ritual to start with a charge or a lecture. Some disagree with that approach. That’s a big chunk of words and until you have a deep and personal understanding of a given degree, it is very difficult to **CONNECT**. Start with the Senior Deacon’s part in the EA degree. Why his part: the connection. The Senior Deacon talks to everyone in the ritual. He asks questions and he answers questions. He runs the floor work. He guides and takes care of the candidate. He is the CENTER of the ritual universe. Learn this part and you will learn other parts because of the CONNECTION and the exchange that takes place with the wardens and master. Now you know the why and you have the connection.

Look at the words. Can you pronounce them? Do you know what they mean?

Go to lodge and with a knowledgeable brother watching and prompting sit in the SD's chair with the ritual in your hand and start. **FOCUS.** There are three distinct knocks. **CONNECT.** Go to the preparation room door and **BEGIN.** With the ritual in your hand, go through the entire first section. Make the connection not only of words but of movement. Have the knowledgeable brother give the responding parts to you. Hearing and then learning the responses are queues to your next lines or movement. Do the SD's part in its entirety. (**AN INSIDER'S TIP:** Don't walk and talk at the same time. Move to each location and then speak. Do one thing at a time. Talk. Walk. Talk. Walk. There is only one place in the ritual where the SD walks and talks and that's in the second section of the MM degree.)

Conduct the candidate back to the preparation room and go sit down. **FOCUS:** Talk about the part. **CONNECT:** Ask questions. Explain any issues you have or feel. **BEGIN** again.

Go through the ritual and floor work five consecutive times. Take breaks between each walk through. Give your brain a rest. Talk about the ball scores or the kids. **Relax.** By the fifth walk through you will start responding without reading every word. Memorization has begun. Now you can go home and work on the words in quiet time and you will mentally connect with the room, the floor work and the candidate. **FOCUS. CONNECT. BEGIN.**

Work with your mentor once a week at lodge. When you have things down pat put the book in your pocket and ask the master to arrange a full practice with the officers and a pro tem candidate. It may take a couple walk-throughs, but you will succeed. A 10-second pause to collect your thoughts is not fatal. There is something very fulfilling about being an active participant in our ancient rites even if you don't want to be an officer.

(If you prefer working in a group go to freemasonuniversity.com. Select the Ritual link at the top of the Home page and go down to the " *Memorize Like a Hollywood Star*" selection in the menu on the right side of the page. That presentation talks about group memorization.)