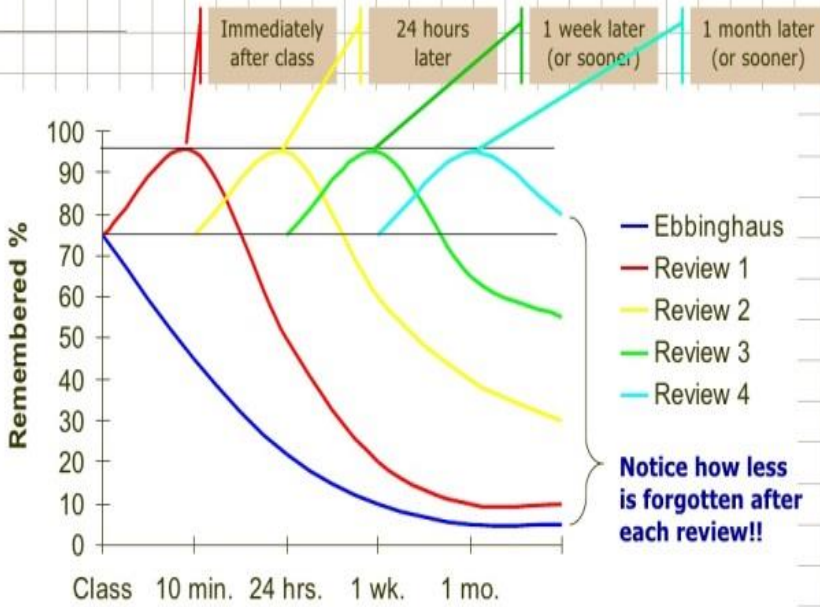




# Overcoming the Curve



Initial review of

material will help you

remember in the short term,

reviewing material multiple

times and at different

intervals will help you retain it

for much longer.

The chart on the left shows

how review affects memory.

You can see that every time

you review material you both

retain much more

information, and your

forgetting curve steadies out

at a much higher level. Each

time you review material you

take much more away.

Advice on Review

Much of college life is about being accountable for the ideas you learn as a student. In order to be accountable, you have to be able to retain and recall information when you need it. Sometimes that recall will be for tests, sometimes for conducting research, and other times for writing. Whether you need to recall information from a lecture, from a textbook you read for class, or from research you have done on your own, most students find it much easier to recall information when they have reviewed material systematically. Below is advice about how to review.

• The first thing you have to do is to take well-crafted notes on material—this includes anything you want to remember well such as a lecture, a chapter from a textbook, an article from the library, etc. Without something to review from, reviewing would be impossible.

- Right after class has ended or you have finished reading something, make a plan to review the material. Remember, don't wait too long before your first review. Try to review within at least an hour. It's good to take the opportunity on your first review to organize notes. You can synthesize or expand ideas as you see fit or type your notes in something like Google Docs so you have easy access to them—whatever you think will make it easier for you to keep at it.
- One week later, review again and test yourself on your recall. This will tell you how effective your review is.
- A few weeks to a month later, review and test yourself again.

Reviewing information three times should give you a good start at overcoming the Forgetting Curve. As you mature as a college student, you may find that other methods work a little better for you, so you are encouraged to experiment. And, finally, always keep in mind that recall isn't just about doing well on tests. Much of the information you learn in college will be useful to you for years to come.