

# Active Recall Practice Planner

Stop re-reading, start retrieving — the single most effective study technique

Active recall means pulling information out of your brain rather than putting it back in. Re-reading notes feels productive but produces weak memory traces. Testing yourself — even before you feel ready — produces strong, durable memories. Research consistently shows active recall is 2-3x more effective than re-reading for long-term retention.

## Core Active Recall Techniques

Ranked by effectiveness:

- 1 Blank Page Test: Close all materials. Write everything you remember about a topic on a blank page. Then check what you missed. The gaps ARE the study plan.
- 2 Flashcard Self-Testing: Create cards with questions on front, answers on back. Sort into 'got it' and 'missed it' piles. Re-test the 'missed it' pile.
- 3 Teach-Back Method: Explain the concept to a parent, sibling, or stuffed animal without looking at notes. If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it yet.
- 4 Cornell Note Review: Cover the right side of Cornell notes. Use the cue column on the left to test yourself. Check answers against the note column.
- 5 Practice Testing: Complete practice problems or past test questions without looking at solutions first. Check answers afterward.
- 6 Question Generation: After reading a section, close the book and write 3-5 questions from memory. Answer them without looking. Harder questions = deeper processing.
- 7 Verbal Self-Quiz: Ask yourself 'What are the three main causes of X?' out loud. Answer out loud. Silence means a gap to fill.

## Weekly Active Recall Planner

DAY	SUBJECT / TOPIC	RECALL TECHNIQUE USED	TIME SPENT	GAPS FOUND
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

DAY	SUBJECT / TOPIC	RECALL TECHNIQUE USED	TIME SPENT	GAPS FOUND
Sunday				

## Age-Appropriate Recall Strategies

### Ages 4-7

- ✓ Show-and-tell from memory
- ✓ Draw what you learned today
- ✓ Parent asks 3 simple questions at dinner
- ✓ Retell a story in your own words
- ✓ Sing facts to familiar tunes

### Ages 8-12

- ✗ Blank page test before homework
- ✗ Flashcard self-testing (physical cards)
- ✗ Explain today's lesson to a parent
- ✗ Write 3 questions from memory after reading
- ✗ Practice problems without looking at examples first

## Active Recall Daily Habits

- Before starting homework, spend 3 minutes recalling yesterday's lesson — This primes the brain and identifies gaps before new material is added
- After reading a chapter, close the book and write a summary from memory — Even a messy, incomplete summary is more effective than re-reading
- At dinner, ask 'What did you learn today?' and follow up with 'How does that connect to what you learned last week?' — Connecting old and new material strengthens both
- Replace 'let me re-read that' with 'let me try to remember that first' — The struggle to remember IS the learning
- After each study session, rate confidence 1-5 on each topic — Low-confidence topics get extra recall practice tomorrow

Active recall should feel hard. If it feels easy, the material is already learned (move to longer review intervals) or the questions are too simple (make them harder). The struggle is the signal that real encoding is happening.