**Using Folded Lists and Minute Sketches (short instructions)**

To learn anything important to you:

1. List the events or terms that are part of an idea, concept, or set of events you want to remember.

2. Sketch the idea you want to remember. You must be able to recopy the final version of your sketch in less than a minute, even if your first try takes longer. Your 'minute sketch' should have only the simplest reminders of whatever you need to remember, so simplify your sketch. Words are not allowed on the sketch. Symbols are allowed--you may put 'H₂O' on your sketch, but not 'water'. How do you know a good sketch? If you know that you can give a good definition or explanation from the sketch as you recopy it, then you have a good sketch. A good image in a book can help. Often you can simplify the book image so that you can redraw it quickly, easily, and in less than 30 seconds. (For my <u>water</u> <u>cycle</u> example, you can probably redraw the sketch in 25 seconds even while thinking through exactly how the cycle happens.)

3. Fold a piece of paper into about four or five or six columns. The first column is a terms column. List your terms or events there. You are not allowed to put sentences or phrases in the terms column, just the important words (or dates). The explanation is supposed to be ***in your sketch***, NOT in the words. The words are just the terms you use to describe or explain the sketch. Next, draw your sketch in the second column.

4. Review your sketch and your terms, with a book or your notes in front of you. Do you have all of the important words and dates? Do you have all the important parts in your sketch? Take out what you don't need. Add anything you do need. The sketch doesn't need to look pretty. All that matters is that you understand it.

5. Hide the word column by folding it under. While looking at the sketch and thinking through the sketch, rewrite all of the terms, in the 3rd column. If you can't remember some terms, that's normal. <u>Never</u> guess, though. Just quickly turn the words back up to check, and then write the missing words. Say the words aloud as you write them. In a place where you may not talk, just say the words silently in your mind as you write them. You may abbreviate terms, as long as you know the whole term.

6. Hide the sketch column. As you look at <u>only</u> the terms (in column 3), redraw your sketch. Make sure you can draw it in less than 60 seconds. If you don't remember part of the sketch (which is normal), <u>don't</u> <u>guess</u>. Just quickly turn the first sketch back up to check, and then finish your new sketch. If you have to check twice, that's OK. Just don't guess. Describe or explain the sketch while you draw, either aloud or silently to yourself. When you run out of columns, get a new sheet of paper and keep going.

Sample Folded List for the water cycle concept
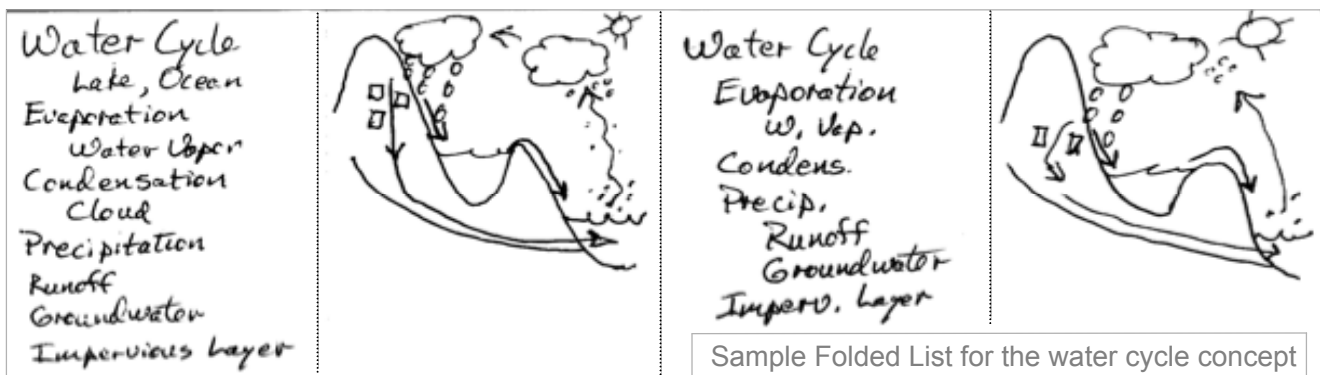
7. On your first day, go through the whole folded list two times (back and forth from terms to sketch to terms to sketch, four columns in all). On the next day, draw and write your folded list twice again, and then again on another day. Even in a car or on a bus, you can practice by drawing on paper, in your mind, or on imaginary paper. Whenever it all comes easily, you're done (for now). Practice when you need it.

8. Test your understanding by changing one part of the sketch, and predicting what would happen.

<u>Why does this work?</u> Because in less than two minutes you can review an entire concept using vision, hearing, and movements of your hands and fingers (for sketching) and mouth (for speech). Using vision, hearing, and movement together keeps you from being distracted. Using all three makes you practice three different forms of memory. Repetition of all three fixes the memory in place, and any one brings back the others. Hearing or seeing a word will recall the terms and sketch. Drawing the sketch will recall the explanation.