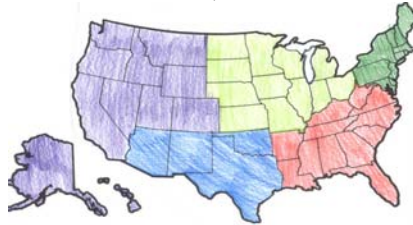


## Make It Meaningful

An average person can only hold five to nine items in short-term memory at a time. Making information meaningful helps you to store these things in long-term memory and also retrieve it.



- Chunking is a technique used to organize several units into more meaningful and smaller units. For example, instead of having twenty-five separate items, you could organize the information into five groups of five items. If you are trying to remember the fifty states and their location, you can break them down into different regions such as New England, Midwest, Southwest, Pacific Northwest, Great Plains, and South.



- Mnemonic devices are ways to organize data into groups that are easily remembered. Acronyms are a type of mnemonic device in which you make information meaningful by using the first letter of several words to make one word. For example, HOMES would be an acronym for the Great Lakes: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Eerie, and Superior.



- Semantic encoding is learning information by knowing the meaning of what you're studying. Instead of recognizing a word by just the sound or sight of it, learning the meaning of the word would help you recall it more easily. If you are learning the word "acceptance," you could learn that it means "to agree to" and picture yourself giving an "acceptance" speech for taking the position of class secretary
- Self-reference is another trick to improve your memory. Make information meaningful to you personally. For example, in remembering a list of words, apply each word to you. How does the meaning of the word describe you or how does the word relate to aspects of your life. To remember what the word pacific means, you can say that you are in fact a peaceful person, and this will help you remember that pacific means peaceful.



\*Information used is from Psychology in Modules Seventh Edition by David G. Myers. The book was published in 2004.