

Discover Your Learning Style

Each person has different learning preferences and styles that benefit them. Some may find they even have a dominant learning style. Others that they prefer different learning styles in different circumstances. There is no right or wrong answer to which learning style is best for you – or mix of learning styles. However, by discovering and better understanding your own learning styles, you can employ techniques that will improve the rate and quality of your learning.

There are seven key learning styles. These include:

- **Visual** (spacial) – learning through imagery and spacial understanding
- **Aural** (auditory) – learning through listening, sound, and music
- **Verbal** (linguistic) – learning through speech and writing
- **Physical** (kinesthetic) – learning through hands-on, tactile interaction
- **Logical** (mathematical) – learning through logic, reasoning and systems
- **Social** (interpersonal) – preference for learning in groups or working with other people
- **Solitary** (intrapersonal) – preference for learning alone via self-study

Below we'll explore each of these learning styles in more depth.

Visual Learning Style

If you prefer lessons that employ imagery to teach, chances you're a visual learner, many people are. Visual learners retain information better when it's presented in pictures, videos, graphs, and books. These learners benefit when information is presented on an overhead projector or white board, or on a piece of paper. Visual learners often make sure their notes are very detailed and spend extra time reviewing information from textbooks. Visual learners also frequently draw pictures or develop diagrams when trying to comprehend a subject or memorize rote information.

If you're a visual learner, use pictures, images, color, diagrams and other visual media in your note taking, test preparation and studying. Whenever possible, use pictures instead of text. Try to develop diagrams to understand concepts and story boards to remember important sequences and relationships.

Aural Learning Style

Aural (auditory) learners retain information better when it's presented in lecture format, via speeches, audio recordings, and other forms of verbal communication. While a visual learner would prefer to read a book or watch a video, auditory learners would prefer to attend a lecture or listen to a book on tape. Aural learners are also big on sound and music. They can typically sing, are musically inclined, play an instrument, and can identify different sounds.

If you're an aural learner, integrate auditory media, listening techniques, sound, rhyme, or even music in your learning and studying. You may also consider using background music and sounds to help you with visualization of processes and systems. For example, if you're practicing flight procedures, you may consider playing a recording of an aircraft in the background as you study. You can also use music, rhythm, rhyming and music techniques to memorize and retain information.

Replacing the lyrics of a favorite song with information you're learning is a very powerful way to memorize large amounts of information for aural learners. Use this technique and you'll never forget the information again.

Verbal Learning Style

Verbal learning involves both writing and speaking. People who are verbal learners usually find it easy to express themselves, both verbally and in writing. They often love to read and write, enjoy rhymes, tongue twisters, and limericks. They also have a well developed vocabulary, like to find the meaning of words, and are able to assimilate new words into their vocabulary

with relative ease.

Verbal learners should try employing learning and studying techniques that involve speaking and/or writing. Reading aloud while reviewing subject matter is useful for verbal learners. Word-based techniques such as scripting and assertion are effective strategies for improving memory and recall for verbal learners. Acronym mnemonics are also an effective trick verbal learners can use to memorize lists and sequences.

Physical Learning Style

Physical learners, also referred to as *kinesthetic* or *tactile* learners, retain information best through hands-on interaction and participation – they need to experience things. For example, a physical learner in an automotive repair class would learn better working directly on cars than sitting through a lecture or reading a book about cars. Physical learners excel in classes where they're assigned to study in labs.

If you're a physical learner, employ touch, action, interaction and hands-on involvement in your study and learning activities. If you're going to learn how to sail boat, read your manual, but make sure to spend the majority of your time on a boat working through the techniques and sequences.

Logical Learning Style

Individuals who excel at math and possess strong logical reasoning skills are usually logical learners. They notice patterns quickly and have a keen ability to link information that would seem non-related by others. Logical learners retain details better by drawing connections after organizing an assortment of information.

Maximize your ability to learn by seeking to understand the meaning and reasoning behind the subject you're studying. Don't depend on rote memorization. Explore the links between related subject matter and make

sure to understand details. Use 'systems thinking' to help you better understand the relationship between various parts of a system. This will not only help you understand the bigger picture, it will help you understand why each component part is important.

Social Learning Style

Social learners usually have excellent written and verbal communication skills. These individuals are at ease speaking with others and are adept at comprehending other people's perspectives. For this reason, people frequently seek counsel from social learners. Social learners learn best working with groups and take opportunities to meet individually with teachers. If you like bouncing your ideas off others, prefer working through issues as a group, and thoroughly enjoy working with others, there's a good chance you're a social learner.

If you're a social learner, you should seek opportunities to study with others. If the class you're in doesn't have formal groups, make your own group.

Solitary Learning Style

Solitary learners usually prefer working by themselves in private settings. They do not rely on others for help when solving a problem or studying. Solitary learners frequently analyze their learning preferences and methods. Since solitary learners prefer to work alone, it is possible for them to waste time on a difficult problem before seeking assistance. However, solitary learning can be very effective learning style for students.

To get the most out of your time studying, it is very helpful to identify your personal learning preferences and styles.