

Too busy to study?

Learn in your sleep!

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Overview

- Common learning myths
- Your brain and what it can do for you
- The art of remembering everything
- Overcoming inertia and learning discipline
- Developing strategies for more effective learning

Learning strategies

Which of these strategies do you use?

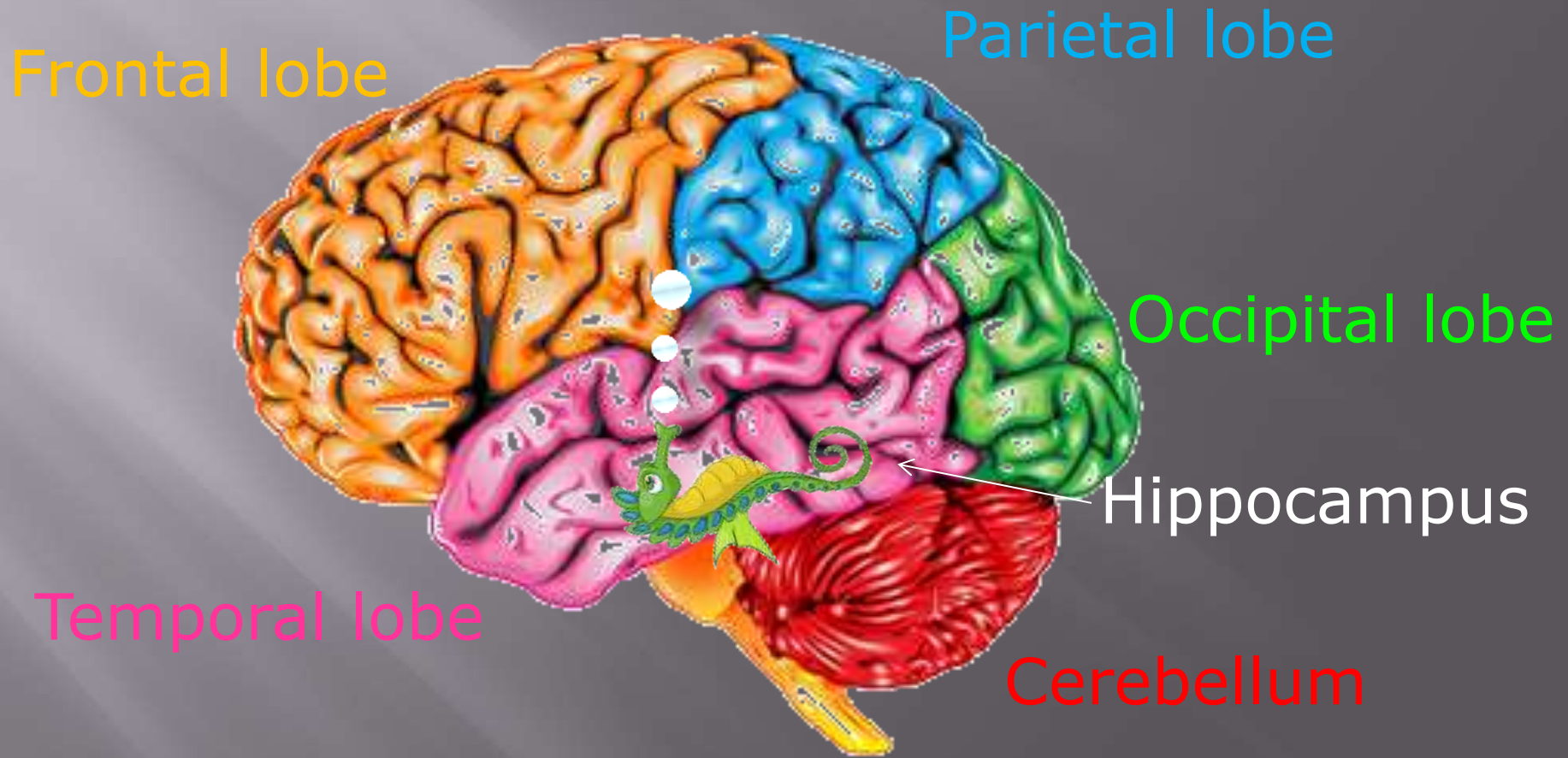
- Highlight important phrases in texts
- Repeat out loud what you have just studied
- Work within your learning style
- Learn words in context
- Re-read texts
- Work on several things at once
- Summarise
- Day dream

Your brain and what it can do for you

The tools you need...

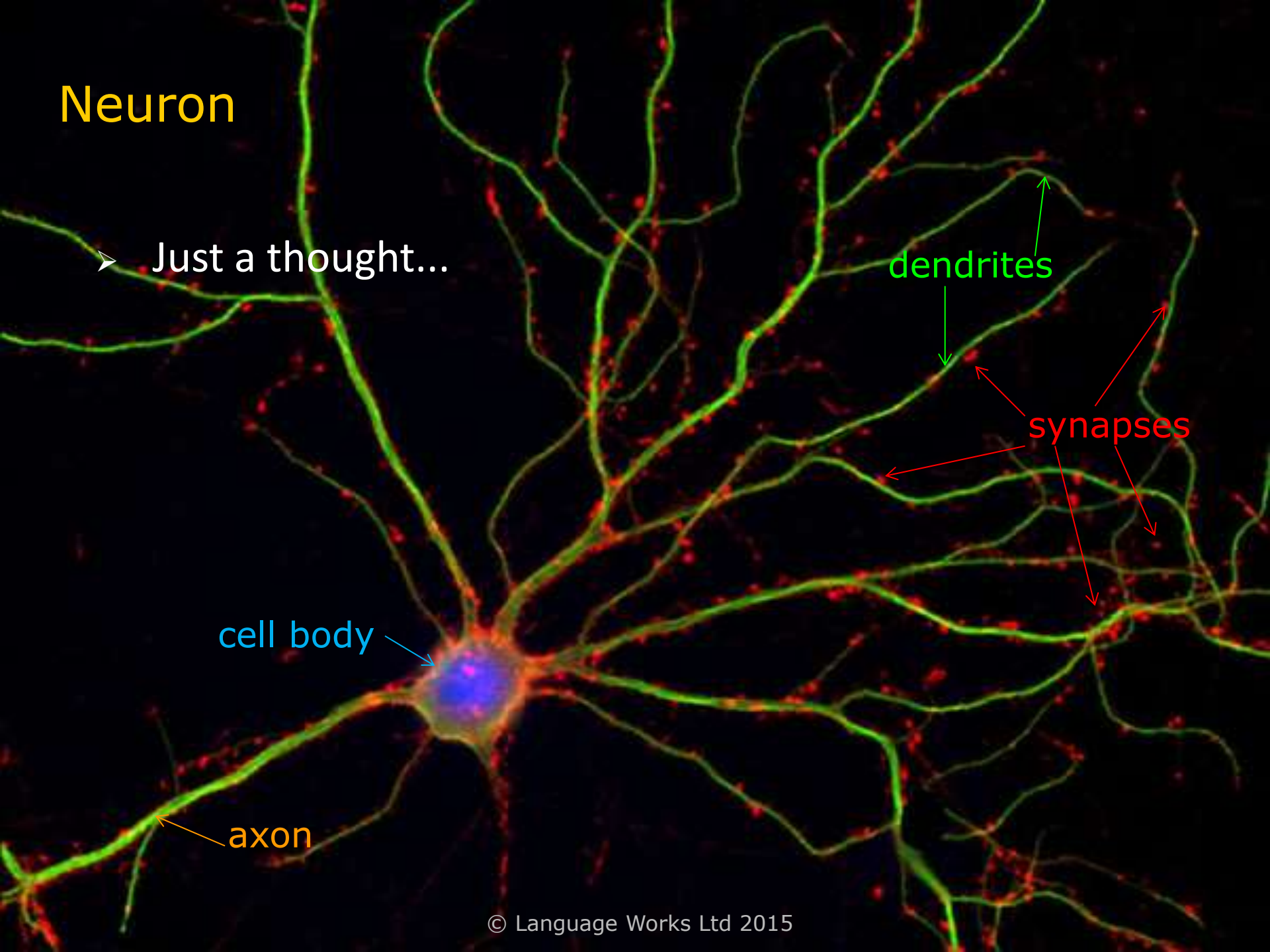


Your brain



Neuron

➤ Just a thought...



dendrites

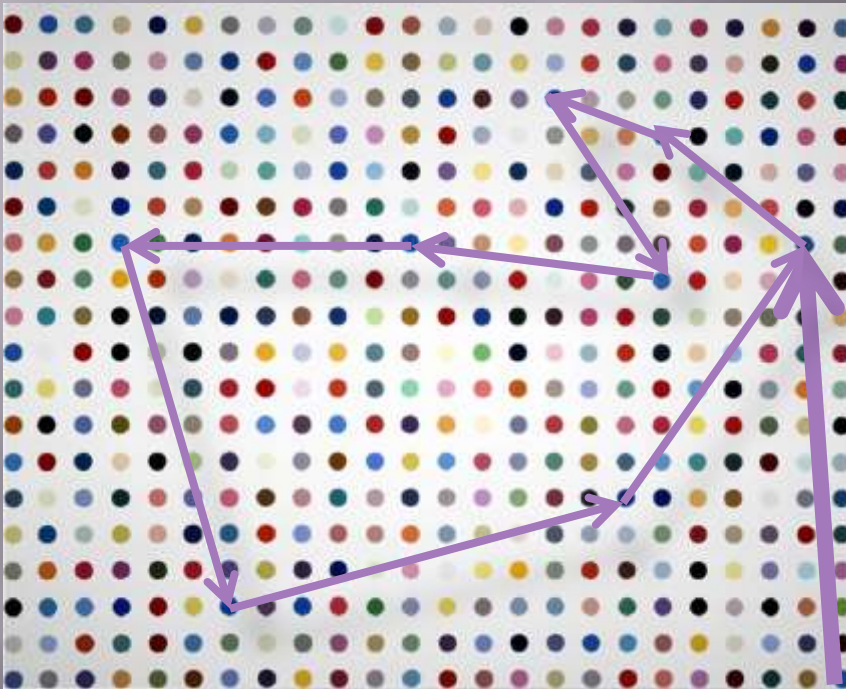
synapses

cell body

axon

Thinking

Focused and diffuse thinking



Focused thinking:

- Familiar
- Routine
- Process
- A concentrated well-worn neural pathway
-but is it *creative*?

Diffuse thinking:

- New
- Fresh
- Uncontrolled
- Unfocused
- Creative!

Understand when you need which mode

The problem

- You can't remember that item of vocabulary you've looked up several times already.....
- You can't concentrate

The solution

- Take a break and think about something else!
- Go for a walk – do some exercise – the brain will continue to work on the problem even when you're not focused on it
- Exercise allows you to operate in diffuse mode

How does this apply to language learning?

Focused thinking:

- Rote learning
- Repetition
- Practice
- Importantly – this sort of thinking doesn't work well when we're stressed, angry or afraid

Diffuse thinking:

- Speaking with a native speaker



Learn in your sleep!

- Your brain works more efficiently if you have slept well – but why?
- The simple act of being awake causes brain cells to swell and trap toxins
- Sleeping shrinks the brain cells and allows cerebrospinal fluid to wash the toxins away
- In addition – your brain is in diffuse mode when you're sleeping and will continue working on new neural pathways even while you sleep
- That could be why you eventually start dreaming in the language you're learning



The art of remembering everything

Working memory

“Short-term” memory:

- It's your instant notepad for jotting down ideas – your RAM
- But it can only hold four pieces of information at any one time...it's like juggling with four balls



Long-term memory

Long-term memory:

- Holds everything you ever tried to learn – it's your storage space – your hard drive
- It's like a vast warehouse....

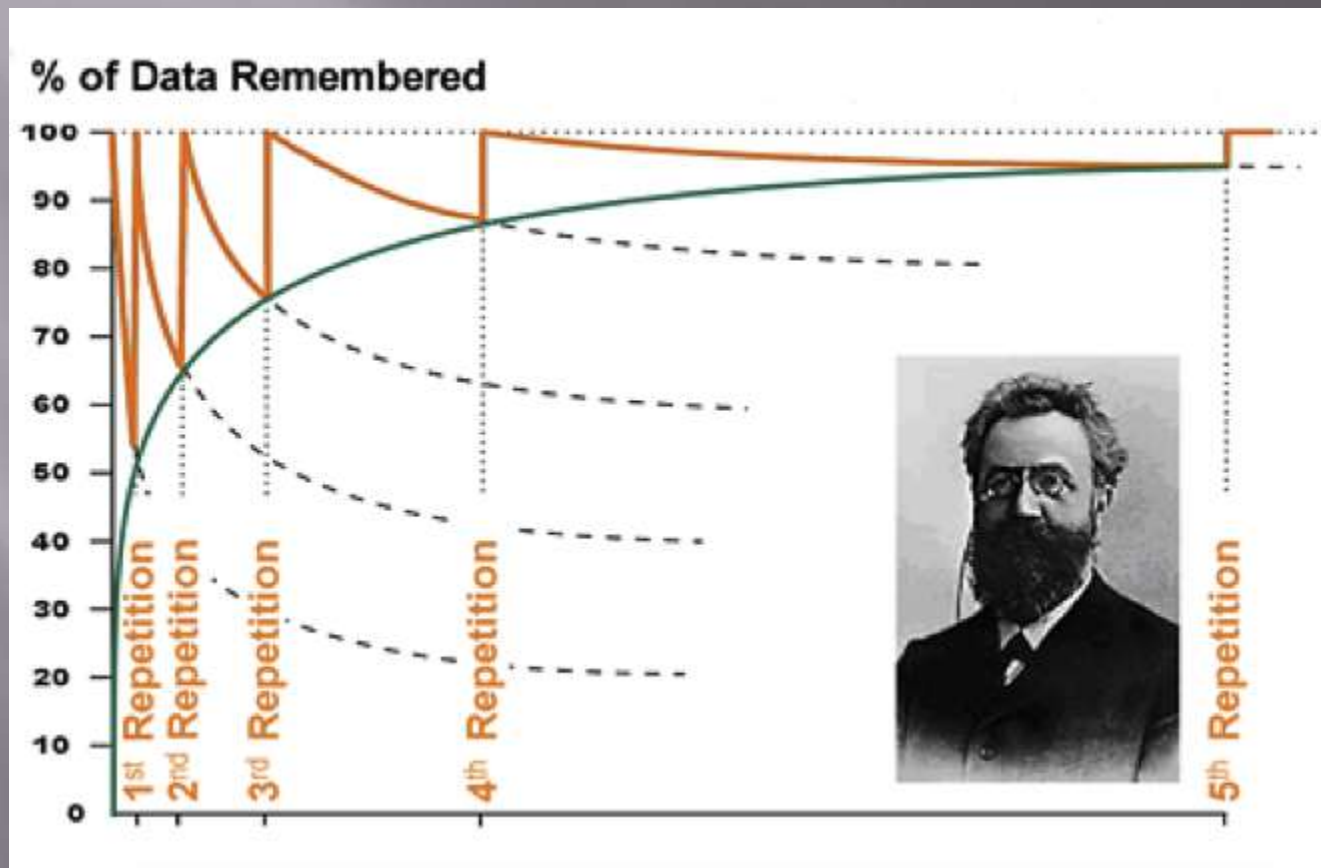


Triggering long-term memory

- When you first learn something new, repeat it several times to move it from working memory to long term memory
- Review the information at regular intervals in order to remind your brain where it has stored it in the warehouse
- Active recall helps access and reinforce neural pathways



Recall and repetition



?




Overcoming inertia and learning discipline

Procrastination

- You know you have to study but you can think of a hundred other things you'd rather do!
- Don't use displacement activity



Discipline

- Haven't achieved what you wanted today?
 - Set the timer to 25 minutes
 - No phones / emails / messages / tweets
 - W O R K at it
 - Then walk away – or go to sleep!
- 
- Your brain needs focused input for diffuse mode to work effectively
 - You need to :
 - study first
 - make an effort!
 - then relax

Developing strategies for more effective learning

Context



Priming

How would you complete the following sentences?

- As Anne approached the bank she.....
....stowed her oars.
- Its bark is....
....gnarled and thick.

Retention



Recall



Learning strategies

DO

- build new information into your jigsaw
- stretch yourself – make an effort
- repeat information to yourself regularly
- practise retrieving the information after a break

DON'T

- kid yourself you're working hard
- stick to "old" strategies that don't work
- limit yourself to one learning style
- learn words out of context

Key Learning Points

- Learning is a physical process and takes time
- Speeding up the process means thinking smart
- Thinking smart means spending time understanding the learning process
- The learning process is about
 - Recall Retention
 - Effort Energy
 - Discipline Daydreaming

Thank you

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References

Images:

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- [Dendrites](#) accessed 150121
- [Juggling](#) accessed 150121
- [Warehouse](#) accessed 150121
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