

Effective Exam Preparation

Tips and Tricks

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Course Plan

I. How to Approach Exams

I. 1. Managing Exam Anxiety

I. 2. Independent Learning

II. Organisation und Planning

II. 1. Time Management

II. 2. Structure

II. 3. Memorising Techniques

III. In the Exam

III. 1. Exam Situation

III. 2. Oral Exams

I. How to Approach Exams

Exam Anxiety
Independent Learning



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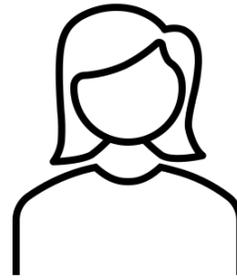
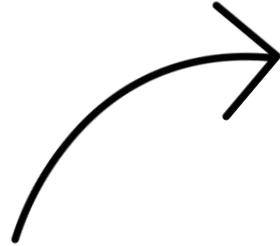
Speaker 2



Facts

2 minutes

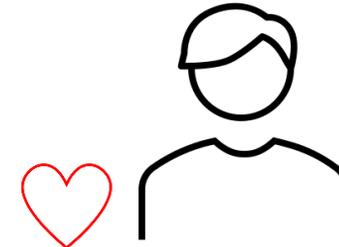
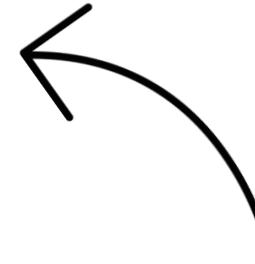
You describe your situation as.../I see potential for...



Speaker 1

Thoughts about exams and exam preparation

3 minutes



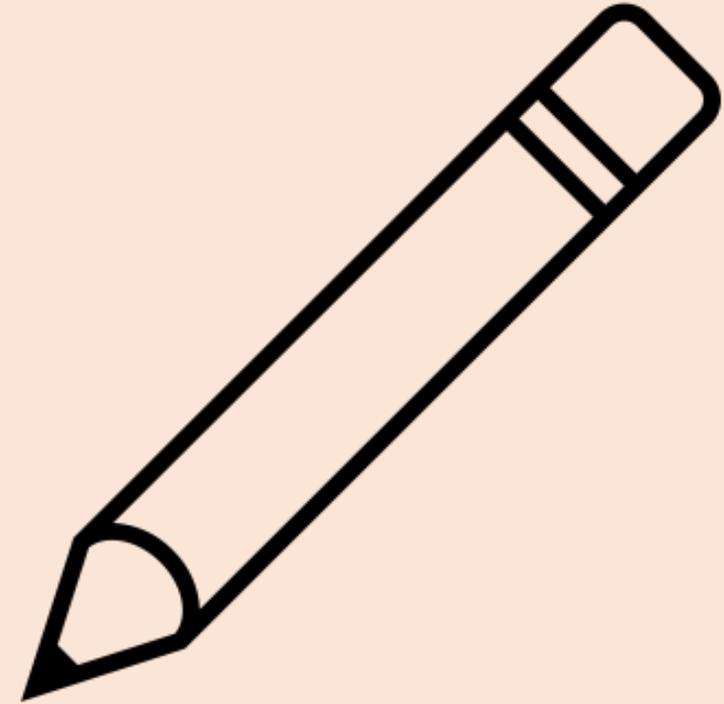
Speaker 3

Compassion

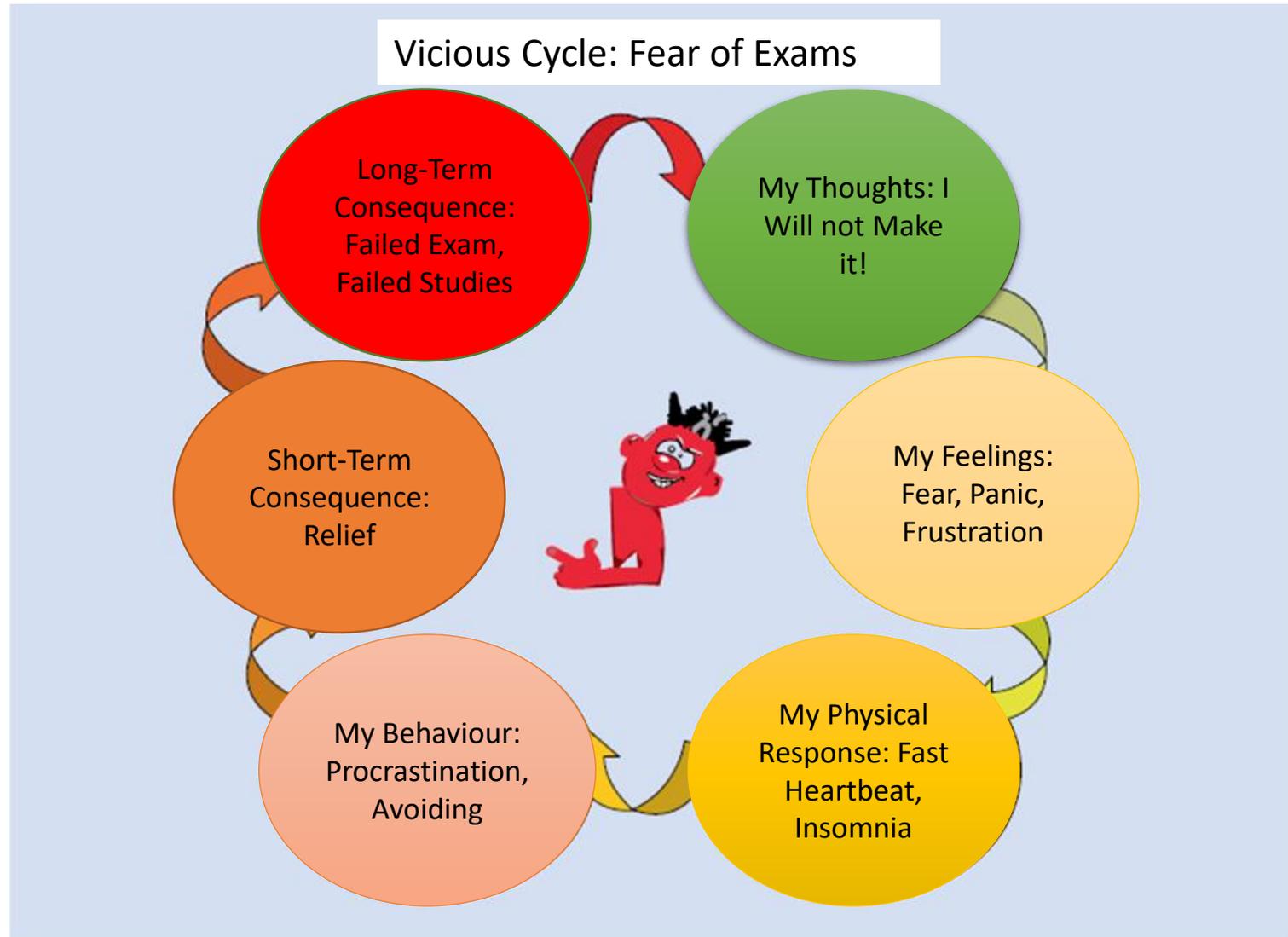
2 minutes

When you spoke about your situation, I felt...

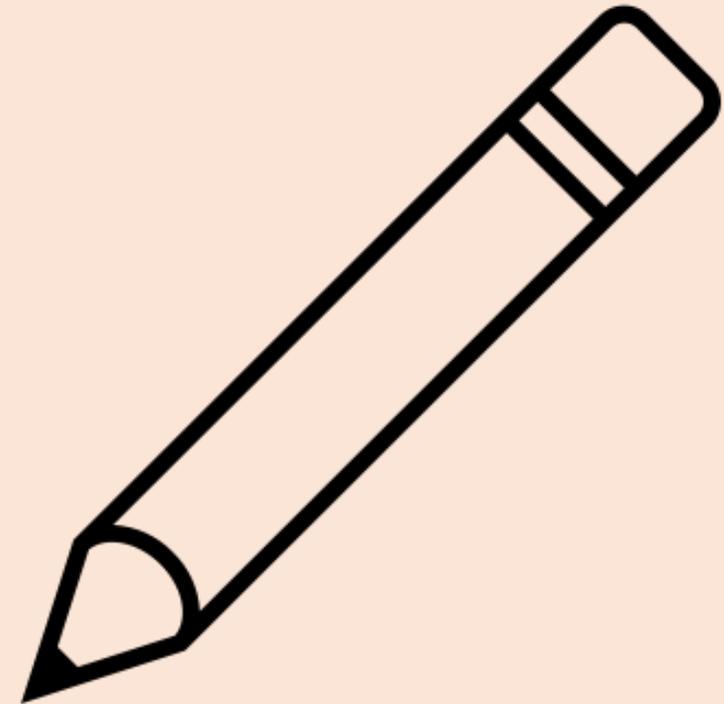
Practice with two friends who are also preparing for their exams. Switch the different speaker roles until each of you has had the chance to explain their thought and feelings about your upcoming examinations. The two recipients should give feedback on what you have explained, clarify and structure your thought-process. How do you feel different after this exercise?



I. 1. Managing Exam Anxiety



The Vicious Cycle of Fear shows: Practice your thoughts! Train yourself to think positively about your situation, the effects of productively preparing for your exams; think about the positive outcome of having successfully completed an exam and the potential that you bring to succeed.





Thought Experiment

How would your behaviour change if you did not experience any fear?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How would you behave if you were more confident?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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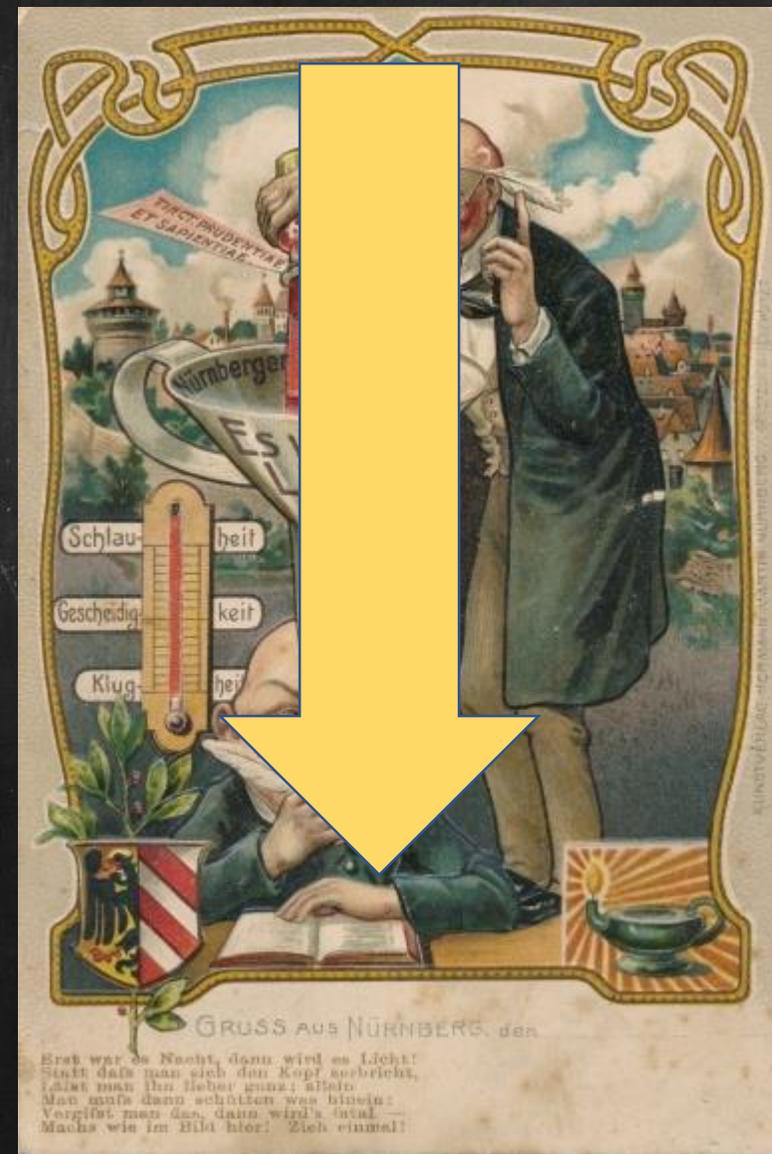
II. 3. Memorising Techniques

III. In the Exam

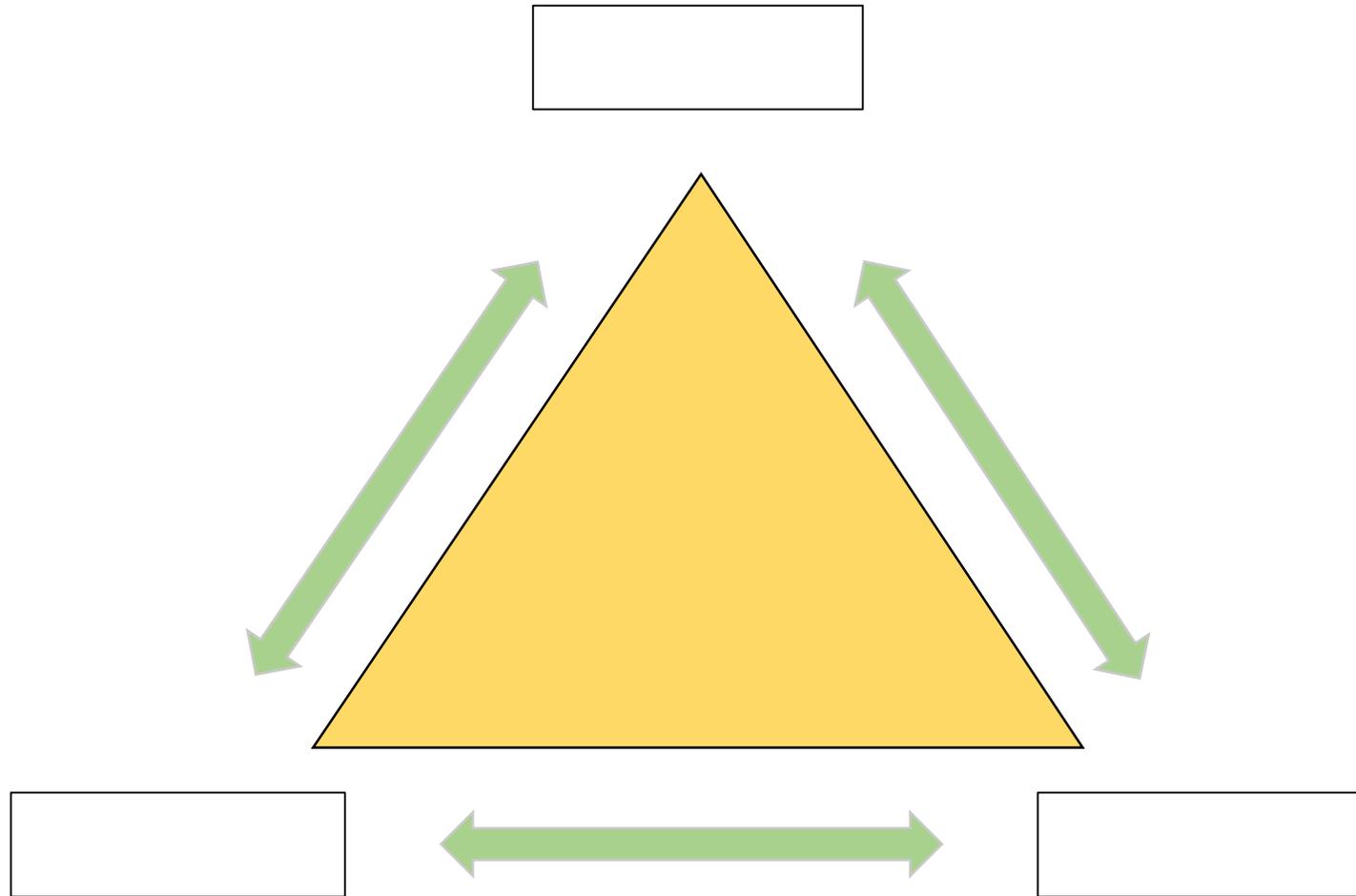
III. 1. Exam Situation

III. 2. Oral Exams

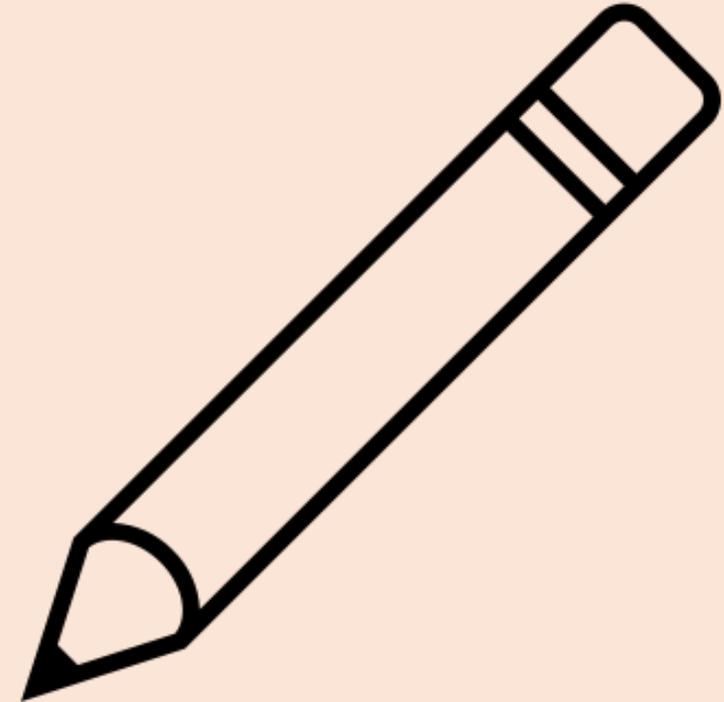
Imparting Knowledge vs. Training Competencies



I. 2. Independent Learning



This model should help you re-define your relationships with your professor, your subject, and the upcoming exam. Instead of expecting the instructor to impart knowledge, begin to view them as facilitators who help you train your competencies to tackle a specific discipline, methods and topics. As an independent learner, you should ask yourself: What do I as an active participant in the learning process draw from the subject we are discussing?



What is Independent Learning?

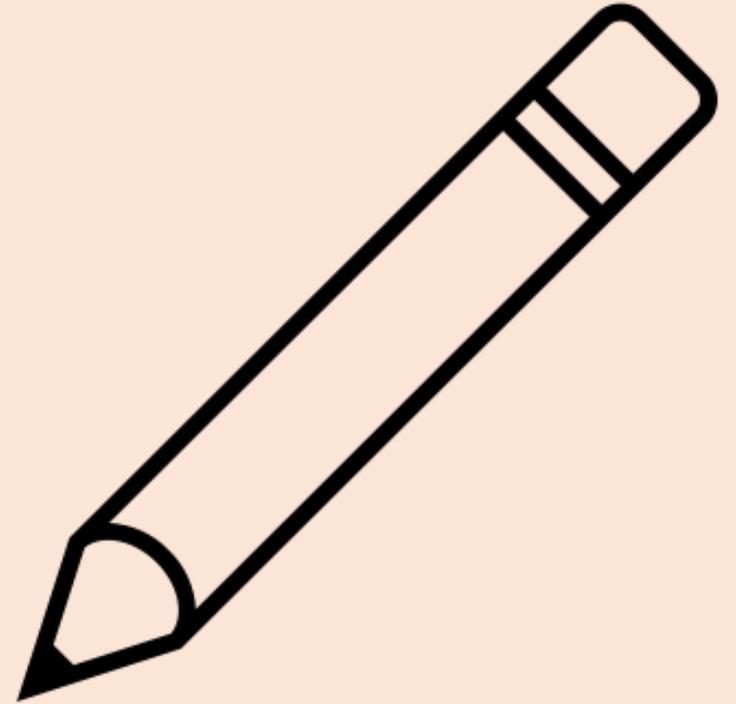
Independent studying implies that the student actively plans, organises and executes their learning process. This entails:

- Setting a goal (what do I want to achieve?)
- Gaining an overview of contents and materials (what do I need to revise?)
 - Manage the study time (when, for how long?)
- Identifying the study method (how do I need to study, what tools do I need etc.?)

I. 2. Independent Learning

Take a pen and paper and write down four sentences:

1. With the next exam I want to achieve...
2. To prepare, I need to revise...
3. For my preparation, I have this much time...
4. What I need to do to revise properly is...



II. Organisation and Planning

Time Management

Reading Techniques

Devising a Structure

Memorising Techniques



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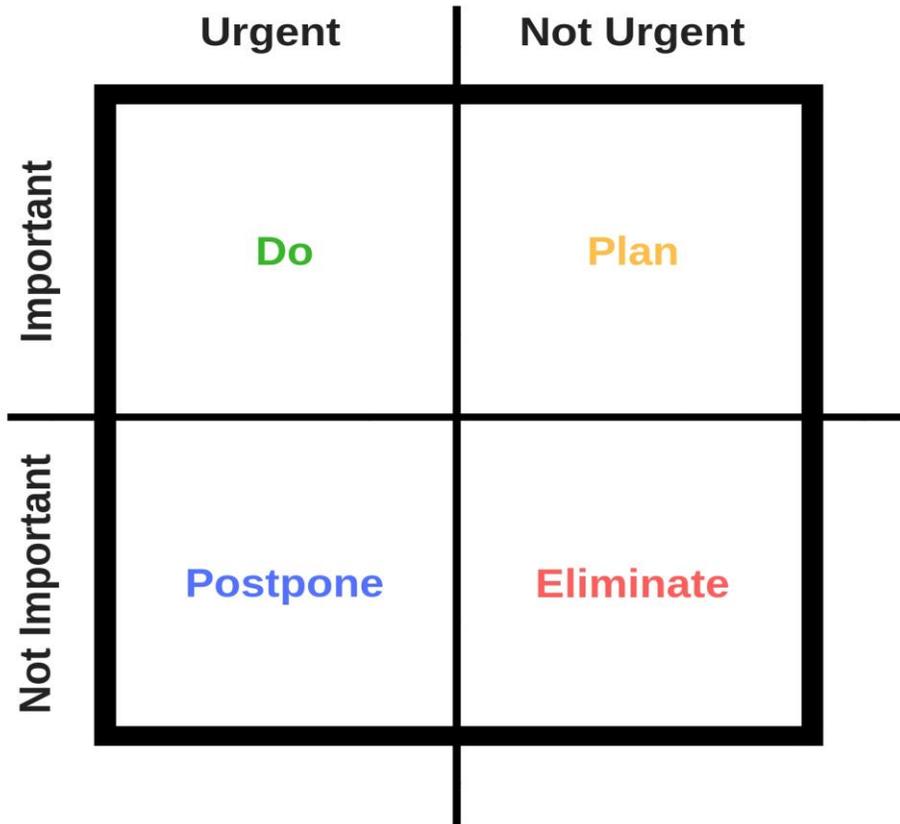
II. 3. Memorising Techniques

III. In the Exam

III. 1. Exam Situation

III. 2. Oral Exams

II. 1. Time Management



Do: Tasks that are crucial to the assignment

Plan: Tasks that are crucial, but need to be revisited many times over a long period of time

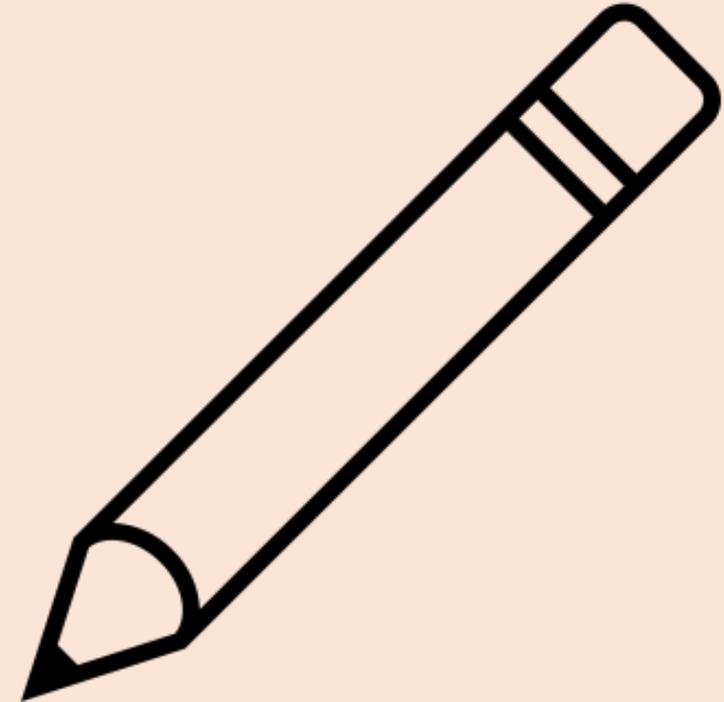
Postpone: Tasks that need to be completed, but have no immediate significance for the assignment

Eliminate: Tasks that are neither necessary nor productive for the assignment

Eisenhower Matrix

Koch, *Studieren mit Köpfchen*, 2015.

Prioritise the different steps in your learning process!
Not every step is equally important. What is the most important component of your preparation and how much time do you have to complete it? Can you disregard other aspects (for now or fully)?



Study Smarter – Not Harder!

1. Use the time you spend in seminars and lectures as study time.
2. Research important theories, concepts, and data once you are introduced to them.
3. Read texts efficiently to filter the most important information.
4. Concentrate on methods and practice applying them.
5. Use techniques that support your memory.

Methods and Contexts are more important than facts!

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II. 2. Structure



Study by Gordon Bower in 1969



Learn those words by heart:

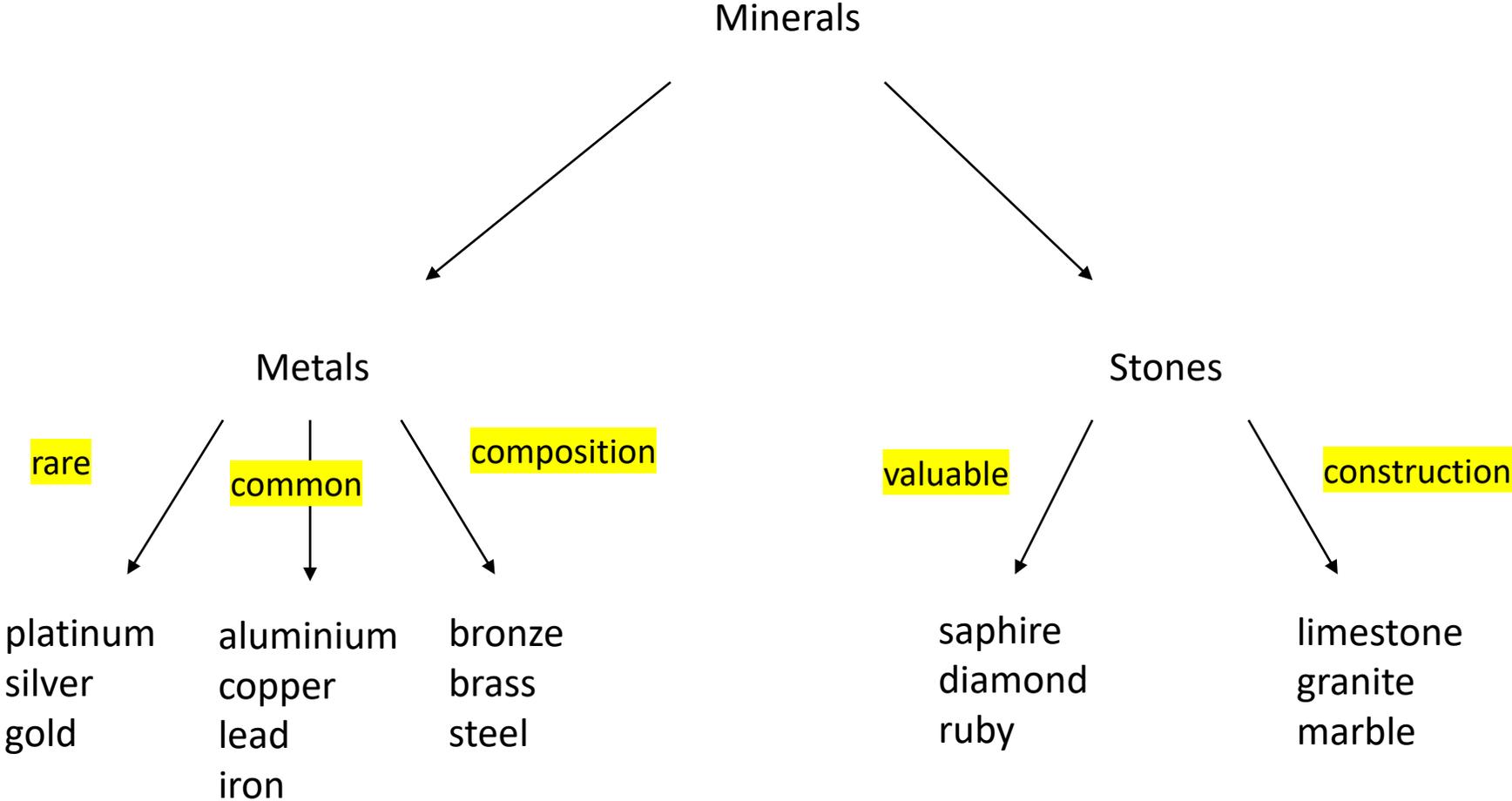


platinum, aluminium, bronze, sapphire, limestone,
iron, silver, copper, gold, steel, diamond, marble,
granite, brass, lead, ruby



**How can you
structure
information to help
you memorise it?**

II. 3. Structure

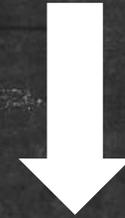


Structuring Information

Reduction of Information vs. Elaboration of Information



Filtering the most
important facts



Adding information to
create context

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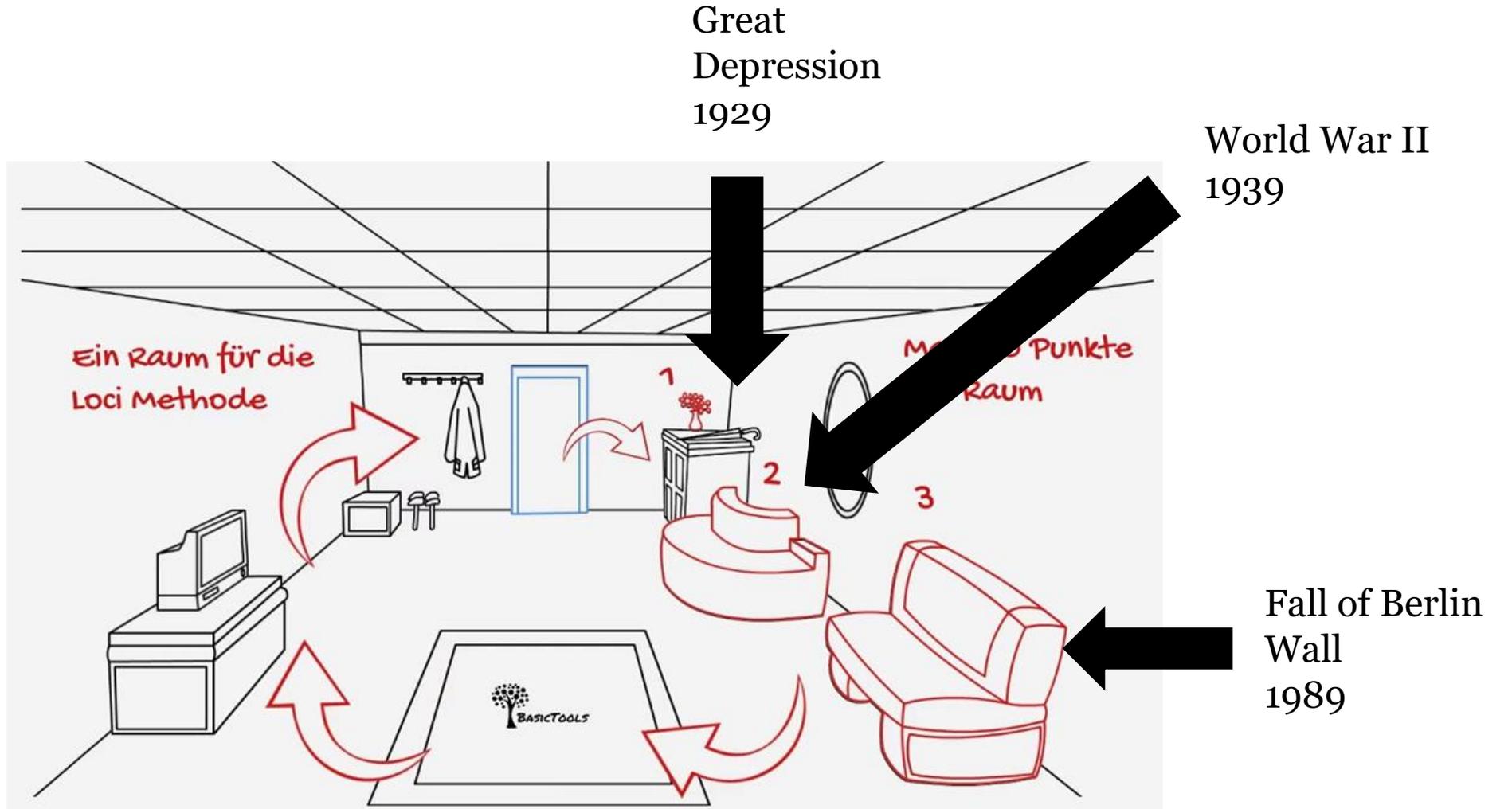
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The Loci Method



II. 3. Memorising Techniques

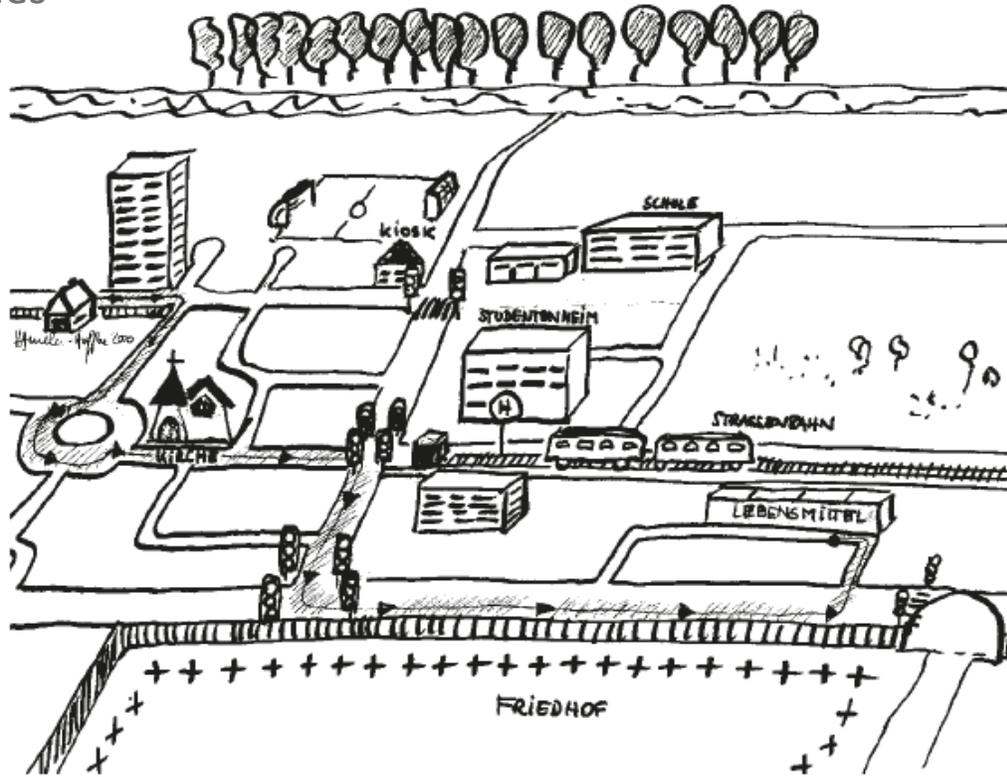
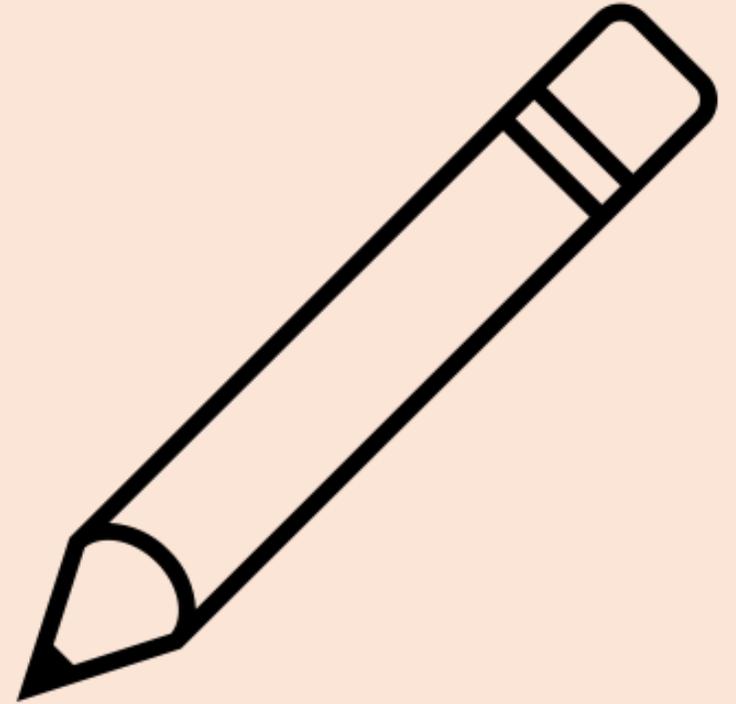


Abbildung 10: Auf dem eingezeichneten Weg vom Einfamilienhaus bis zum Supermarkt (Lebensmittel) könnte man z. B. 8 Orte aussuchen (1 Hochhaus, 2 Verteilerkreis, 3 Kirche, 4 Kreuzung, 5 zweite Kreuzung, 6 Friedhof, 7 Fußgängerüberweg, 8 Eingang des Supermarktes). Wenn man mehr Details einbezieht, können es auch 16 Orte sein: (1 eigene Haustür, 2 Hochhaus, 3 Abzweigung der Sackgasse, 4 Verteilerkreis, 5 Kreuz auf dem Kirchturm, 6 Kirchturmportal, 7 Kreuzung, 8 Ampel, 9 zweite Kreuzung, 10 zweite Ampel, 11 Friedhofsmauer, 12 sichtbares Grabmal, 13 Fußgänger-Überweg, 14 dritte Ampel, 15 Abzweigung zum Supermarkt, 16 Eingang des Supermarktes).

While thinking about your daily route to either the supermarket or other familiar places, try and connect buildings and other spaces you would usually pass to a piece of information that you must remember. List these pieces of information in a chronological order. Once you are in the exam, try and trace the path you have used to store your information. Can you now remember the details you need to pass your exam?

The Loci Method helps you connect facts with places that you know well (also called the “Mind Palace”). Try memorizing facts you need to know by heart in your exam by locating each fact chronologically with a place you can trace in your mind.

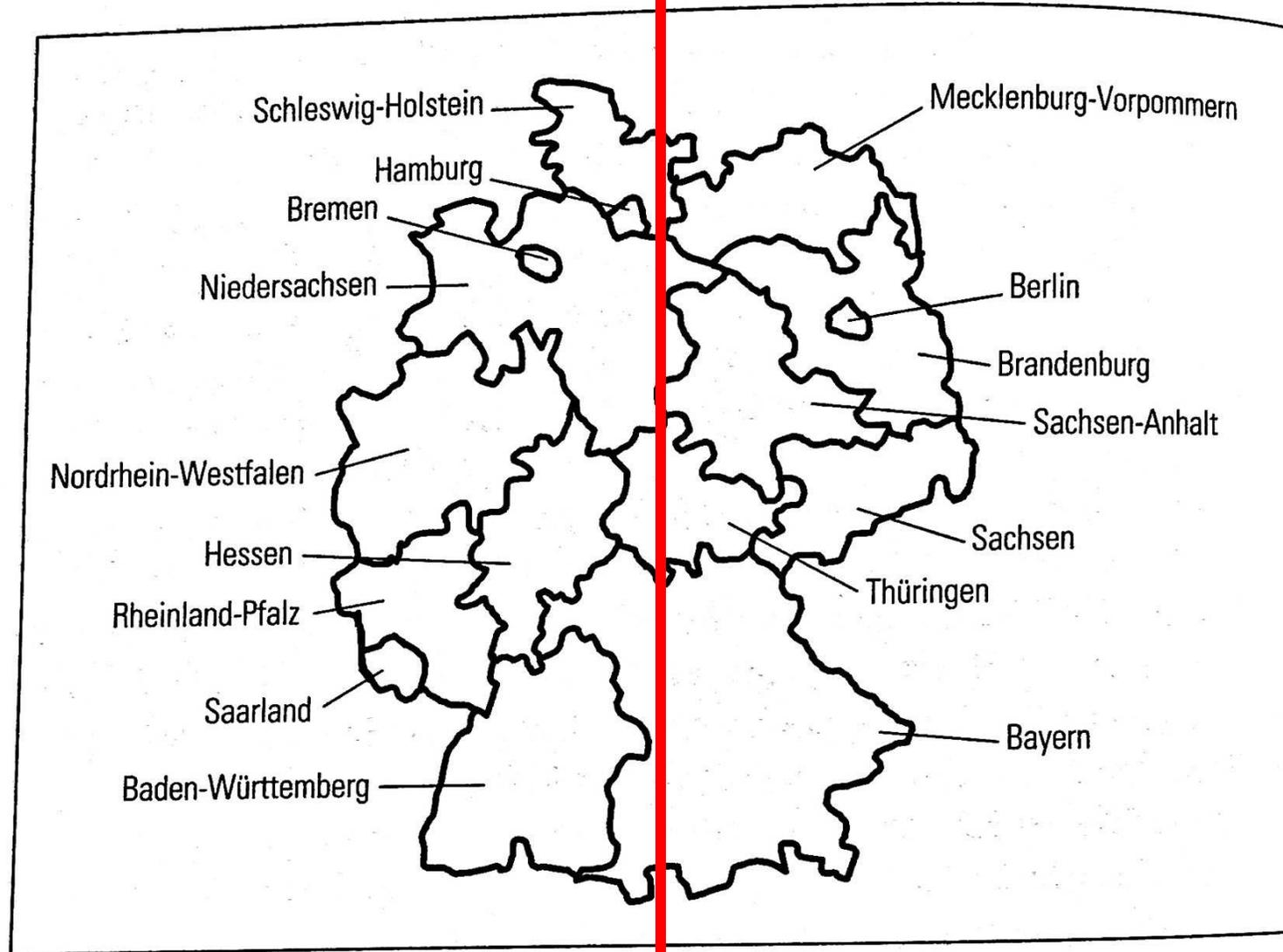


The Initials

She
Hates
Boring
Nights.

Nobody
Has
Really

Seen
Barbara.



My

Big

Brother
Says:

„**S**teal
The

Bike!“

Abbildung 55: Die deutschen Bundesländer – eine Umrisszeichnung

The Story



Optimist: The cup is half full.

Pessimist: The cup is half empty.

Rationalist: The cup is twice as big as it should be.

How does Your Memory Work?

“Every piece of information stored in memory is connected to other pieces of information in a web-like arrangement. The more connections a piece of information has, the more likely it will be retrieved when it is required. Thus, a piece of information is learned in several different ways or at several different times, it is likely to have more connecting pathways than if it is learned under less diverse conditions.”



Will Thalheimer (2006)

III. In the Exam

Exam Situation and Oral Exams



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III. 1. Exam Situation

1. Get an overview
2. Structure how you want to answer
3. Manage your time

Examples Exam Questions

Calculate/Determine the maximum domain of the function f and g .

Name/State and outline three of the five principles of humanistic thought.

Describe the principle of falsification.

Discuss the anti-authoritarian parenting style.

Evaluate the changing landscape of the bay in Tokyo since the 1990s.

III. 1. Exam Situation

bestimmen – determine: identify motives, causes, goals, volume etc. precisely

ermitteln – calculate: solve a task by including specified details

benennen – name: state the elements, authors, factors, theories, concepts etc.

skizzieren – outline: provide an overview by naming the most important facts, problems, statements etc.

beschreiben – describe: reduce issues, questions, concepts to the most important aspects, a neutral depiction of characteristics

Stellung nehmen – state your opinion: decide which opinion you are going with and explain why, include counter-arguments

bewerten – evaluate: assess the value, validity, accuracy of measures, opinions, behaviours etc.

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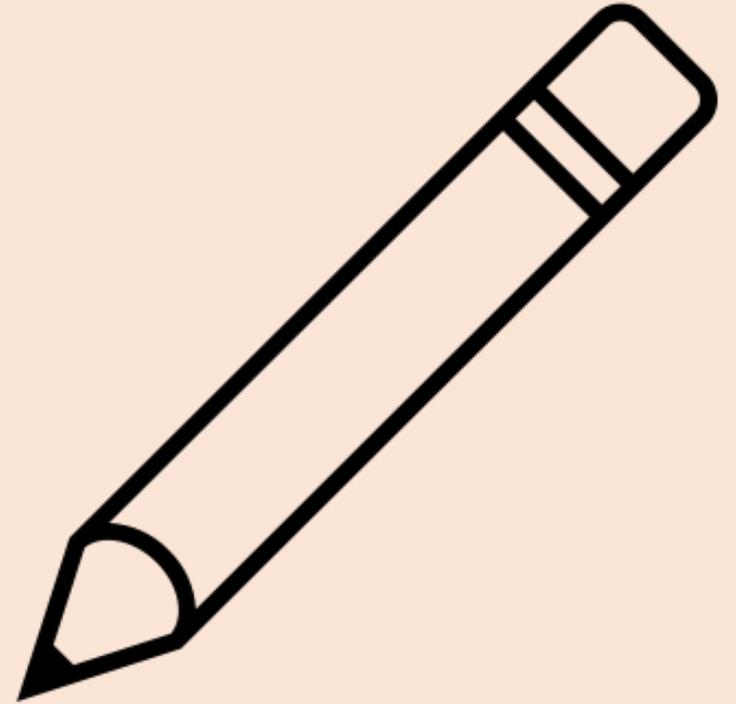
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III. 2. The Oral Exam

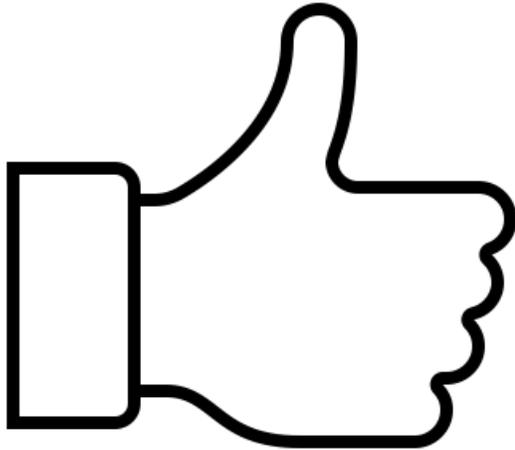


What challenges do you expect to arise given the different styles to be expected from different types of examiners? How can you react to the two situations presented on the slide?

Your goal should be to find room for your own preferred direction of the exam. Be confident and do not shy away from making your interests known – examiners want to hear what you have chosen to focus on and why.



General Study Tips



- Study often, not long hours
- Set study times
- Use mind maps, flashcards etc.
- Set goals for each session
- Explain your subject to someone
- Practice, practice, practice
- Set up a designated place for studying
- Do not listen to music
- Avoid distractions, most importantly your phone

DONE IS
BETTER THAN
PERFECT.