

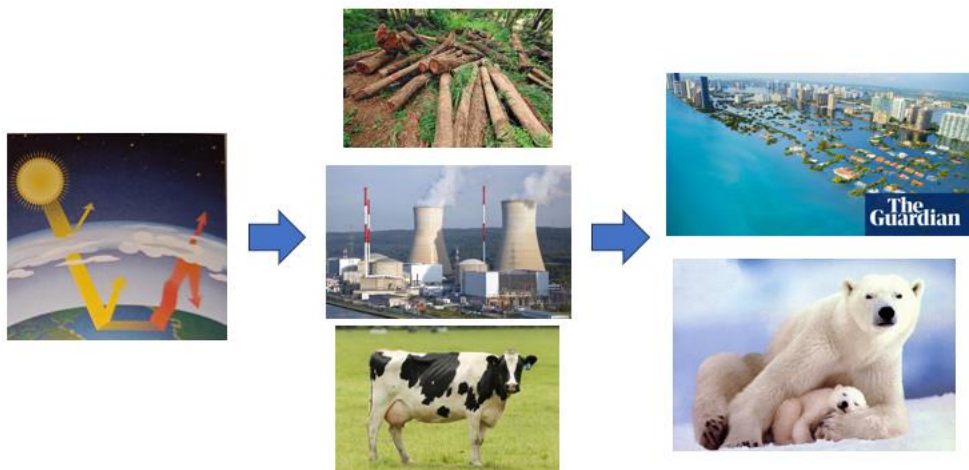
# Encoding – Visualise your Learning

Memorising information is more than remembering words and sentences. Visualising new knowledge is essential for learning because it helps turn abstract information into something concrete and easier to understand and it will help your later retrieval of this knowledge. Information that is stored in your memory through both words and images is easier to remember. This is sometimes referred to as dual coding. This method is successful because it requires you to think about the new knowledge, translating it from words into images.

**Mental Images** - As you study, try to form clear mental images of the concepts, facts or processes you are learning. For example, if you are studying the solar system, imagine the image of the planets orbiting the sun in their respective positions and not just a written list of the eight planets. If you are learning about deforestation imagine the chopped down trees and the damage to the environment.



**Storyboard**- If you are learning a complicated, multi-step process or concept you can turn it into a visual story, like a storyboard. Stories have a privileged status in our memory – they are easy to understand and easy to remember. Turn long, chains of knowledge into a visual storyboard, making links between the different components. In this example the causes and effects of global warming are linked together visually to help tell a 'story'.



*These images represent the greenhouse effect, the human causes such as deforestation, use of fossil fuels and farming leading to sea-level rise, flooding and extinction of species, such as polar bears.*

# Encoding – Visualising your Learning

**Analogies** - An analogy is a comparison between two things that are similar, often used to explain a concept or idea. They make complex or abstract concepts easier to understand by comparing them to something familiar. Search your knowledge for analogies related to what you are learning; even more effective if it is related to your life.

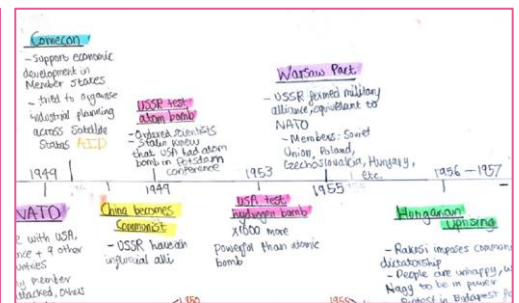
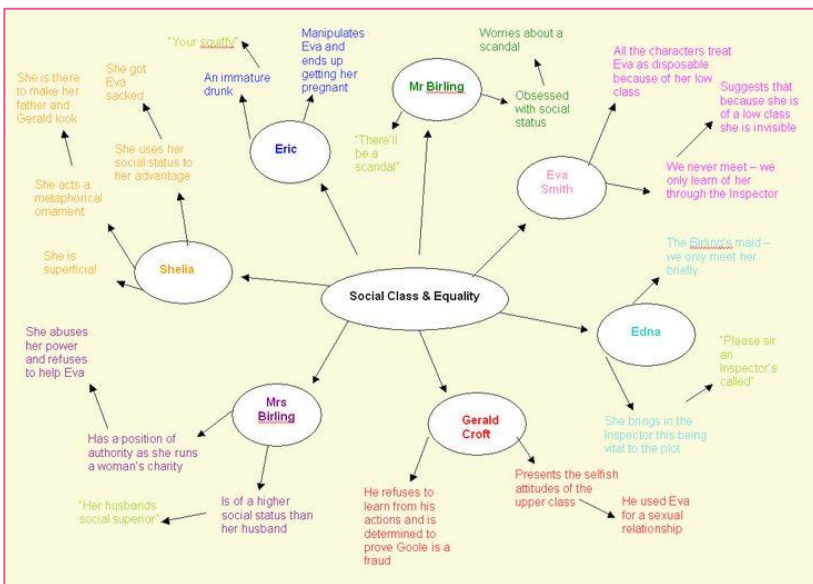


An example is the analogy of a gate, controlling what enters a property, to a cell membrane that selectively allows different substances to pass through it.

Another example is the greenhouse effect being compared to an actual greenhouse, both trapping heat from the sun. In this case the term 'greenhouse effect' is an analogy!



**Concept Maps** - A visual method to summarise the information you are learning and revising is to use a concept map. You need to write down the concepts and knowledge you have learned and connect them using arrows and comments to describe how they relate to each other. Connecting different concepts together helps strengthen your understanding and memory of what you are learning. Effective concept maps need to be created by you and not copied – they are a visual representation of what you understand.



You can also present information learn in graphic organisers, timelines, diagrams and mind maps. These can all be effective methods for making notes, to encode your learning, but be careful to remember that revision time is precious and that the creation of a visual resource is efficient. These resources can also be used for retrieval practice as you try to recreate the resources from memory.