

LEARNING A DECK OF CARDS- after they are shuffled. Part 2

So now to create your unique LINKING story. I was tempted to do a sample number of cards but decided to do an entire pack to see how easy it is to make up a long linking story.

It also helps if you notice anything that could be grouped, worked together easily, or was very silly. The important point is LINKING.

There follows the order of my shuffled pack of cards.

3 spades, 7 diamonds, Jack clubs, Ace of hearts, 10 hearts, 2 clubs, 8 spades, K clubs, 9 diamonds, 5 hearts, 6 diamonds, 8 diamonds, 5 spades, 9 spades, 7 spades, Ace spades, 4 clubs, 4 diamonds, Q diamonds, K diamonds, Q clubs, 3 clubs, 10 diamonds, 2 spades, 6 spades, 9 clubs, Q spades, 10 spades, 5 clubs, 7 clubs, 6 clubs, 8 clubs, 5 diamonds, 1 diamonds, Ace clubs, 10 clubs, 2 hearts, 3 hearts, 4 spades, J spades, 6 hearts, 4 hearts, 7 hearts, Q hearts, K hearts, 8 hearts, J hearts, 9 hearts, 3 diamonds, J diamonds, 2 diamonds, K spades.

I originally suggested using the shape system for the black suits and the rhyming system for the red suits. Still, by now, I hope you are familiar enough with the number images to be able to mix and match these for your linking story. For example, the first card is a 3 of spades: the shape image for 3 is a pregnant lady but using the rhyming image for 3 is a tree, which fits into a story perfectly.

Linking Story

Dig up a Christmas tree (3 spades)

Top it with an angel (heaven) hung with diamonds (7 diamonds), Bambam (Jack of clubs) wants it Distract him with a chocolate (heart) bun (Ace hearts)

He feeds the chocolate to a hen (10 hearts). *Your brain could also make the connection between chocolate and an egg – an Easter egg.*

The hen lays an egg in his (remember he is a caveman) shoe (2 clubs).

Change of scene, but link the shoe

Using a spade as a shoe horn, Marilyn Monroe (8 spades – hourglass) forces on the shoe

Fred Flintstone comes in (K clubs) and courts her with wine (rhyming 9) in a diamond glass (diamonds are a girl's best friend) (9 diamonds)

This is another example of making connections,

He gives her a Crunchie (honeycomb bar coated with chocolate- 5 hearts)

They go for a walk, he picks up a diamond stick (6 diamonds) and they go through a diamond gate (8 diamonds).

Note that you have 3 lots of diamonds close together, broken up by 1 chocolate honeycomb. Keep the gate link, change the scene.

Through the gate, there is a spade hanging on a hook (5 spades)

They fix the spade to a balloon on a string (shape 9 spades) and let it go.

It floats off over a cliff (shape 7 spades) and high over the sea.

So you have a mental picture of a spade attached to a balloon on a string floating over the sea.

There is a huge (exaggerated) pencil floating in the water. Drop the spade on it. (Ace/1 spades).

It sinks, and a boat crewed by cavemen (4 clubs) sails up.

Now focus on the boat.

The cabin has a diamond door (4 diamonds),

The crew go through and meet the Queen and Elton John (K & Q diamonds),

Donna Summer (Q clubs) and Meghan (3 clubs – pregnant lady twerking)

Note a nice group of 4 celebs.

Meghan kneels down and puts a diamond necklace on a hen (10 diamonds).

This works well as Meghan is known as a keeper of hens. Note 2 birds.

But she shoos away a black swan with a spade (2 spades).

Change of scene to a night club but keep the swan.

The swan eats black cherries off a spade (6 spades) but it flaps away when disturbed by a conga line in the nightclub (9 clubs).

Note I have used the rhyming 'line 9' for this because it fits in with the club scene.

The music suddenly stops when Maleficent (Q spades) comes in.

Change of scene, link Maleficent with a cricket pitch.

She strides onto a cricket pitch and hands a spade to the batsman to use as a bat (10 spades bat and ball)

The cricket team are cavemen, Maleficent scares them and they run to the changing room, one takes his club from a hook (5 clubs).

Change scene, this works as stone age man did hunt by chasing prey over cliffs.

He chases Maleficent over a cliff (7 clubs)

He then smashes cherries with his club (6 clubs)

Then he smashes a snowman (8 clubs)

Here, I have chosen a snowman for 8 rather than Marilyn, to avoid a negative image.

Note the sequence of 4 club suits.

Inside the snowman is a diamond hive (5 diamonds)

But a shining sun, also made of diamonds (Ace diamonds), melts the snowman.

Change of scene, the caveman goes back to the cricket pitch

He Runs (1 Ace clubs) in time to make a catch in the cricket match (bat and ball 10 clubs) 'How's Zat'

note 2 aces 1 of diamonds, 1 of clubs.

He has something in his shoe and takes out melting chocolates (2 hearts), which he hangs on a tree to harden up a bit (3 hearts)

Change of scene

The tree is by the sea. He jumps in a boat using a spade as an oar (4 spades). He

picks up the bad boy, Denis the Menace (J spades)

But his oar is a stick made of chocolate (6 hearts) (chocolate finger?)

Change of scene

He lands and goes through a door made of chocolate (4 hearts)

He meets an angel who gives him chocolate (7 hearts)

which he shares with Princess Di (Q hearts) and Elvis (K hearts), who are sitting on a gate and they are all eating chocolates (8 hearts)

Prince Harry (J hearts) comes along following a line of chocolates (9 hearts)

This is a nice little group of hearts. Much as I like the frog prince as my J Hearts, it makes more sense to link Diana with Harry. Note that earlier, we had the King and Queen of diamonds together.

The chocolate line leads to a tree hung with diamonds (3 diamonds) underneath Ed Sheeran (J diamonds) is singing, wearing diamond shoes (2 diamonds), which are stolen by the pirate King (K spades).

The End

Check this silly story through to ensure that you have remembered what card each image represents, noting the change between the rhyming system and the shape system, then test yourself.

Shuffle your cards and create your own story. Do not spend too much time on it. Initially, some bits will stick, others not so much, until the images for the cards become fixed. Look for what hangs together, the celeb court cards, and see if you can put in some music and lots of action.

This is hard, creative and imaginative work, but hugely valuable in fixing those two numerical systems in your memory. I now have no difficulty switching between all three numerical systems, choosing whichever fits best with the scenario I am creating.

TIMING

I have not tried this method of remembering card sequences for about 25 years, which was when I first became interested in mnemonics. Recently, I was asked a question about it on Quora, which is an internet site where I answer many questions to do with memory, and although I knew the theory, I had no idea of the timing involved.

Although personally I have no interest in learning card sequences, I am always interested in new challenges, and I thought it was an excellent opportunity to follow my thought processes as a novice, as the images I created for the cards are, after 25 years, all new. I was pleased to discover that my first effort to remember the story faltered only a couple of times.

I tried to remember the sequence the following day, and I had a few errors towards the end. I checked out the errors and made the sequences stronger. One major change was that I made was that I turned bat and ball (10 spades, 10 clubs) into cricket pitches. First effort I had the sequence perfectly. Then I timed myself and got it to 5 minutes and 37 seconds. Obviously, this time would

improve with a little practice.

Using the interval system, I would normally try it again in a week, but there is no point in learning a card sequence permanently. However, I may be tempted to play the game again, as it is a clever trick to impress friends, and creative practice is a major mental exercise.

To be successful with the exercise, consider the following:

- Really practice those 52 card images until they're second nature. The key is instant recall the second you flip a card—no delays, no 'what was that again?' Your imagination needs to jump straight into crafting the story.
- I found a great practice method: start flipping cards one by one until you make a mistake in your story. Then reset and begin again from the start, stopping at the next error. Keep doing this, and gradually your narrative will flow smoothly. You'll start spotting helpful connections—like a run of cards in the same suit, a pair of Aces with just one or two cards between them, or two court cards landing right next to each other.

You could also use the PAO system, which has the advantage of chunking the cards into sets of 3 for Person Action Object. The disadvantage for beginners is that you will need to have a whole set of images - a Person, an Action or an Object for each card. It's a good mnemonic system and used by many memory experts but a bit daunting for a beginner, whereas the system I have suggested just employs a lot of imagination and I know it works.

This is very challenging because – unlike learning pi or prime numbers, the order will always change, but it is a very useful and creative exercise.

After answering this question on Quora, I had such fun with it that I decided to add it as two podcasts. Clearly learning a pack of cards intrigues people and if it entices anyone to look at mnemonics as excellent exercise for the brain then it is worth the effort. I hope you enjoy this exercise; it is fun and most impressive for onlookers.