

Good students use the following 7 keys to construct meaning.

1. **Create mental images:** Think about what you are learning.
  - What does it look like? Sound like? Smell like? Feel like? Taste like?
  - Make a movie in your mind to help you remember.
  - Draw a picture in your mind.
  - Add a picture to your notes.
2. **Use background knowledge:** What do you already know?
  - Have you learned about this before? What do you remember?
  - Have you ever had an experience related to what you are learning about?
  - Have you ever read about or seen a movie about the topic?
  - Have you ever heard someone talk about this before?
3. **Ask questions:**
  - Ask a question that clarifies meaning.
  - Make a prediction.
  - What's important?
  - Why are we learning this?
4. **Make inferences:**
  - Add what you already know to what you are learning.
  - Draw a conclusion.
  - Make an "if/ then" statement. If \_\_\_\_ is true, then \_\_\_\_\_ must also be true.
5. **Determine the most important ideas or themes:**
  - What's the big idea?
  - What's really important?
  - What is just interesting?
6. **Synthesize information:**
  - How does what I'm learning change what I think or know?
  - Does this new information require me to change my mind about anything?
7. **Use fix up strategies:** What do I do if I don't understand?
  - Do you need to ask questions?
  - Do you need to go to tutorials?
  - Can you do some reading to help you understand?
  - Can you do some research on your own?
  - Do you know someone who can explain it to you?

Keep an open mind about what you are studying. Be willing to change the way you think about things. Remember – if you already knew everything there was to know, you wouldn't need to be in school. Instead of thinking you "don't need to know this stuff", see if you can find ways to apply what you are learning about in your life outside of school.