MajorSystem

The Major System was devised by **Stanislaus Mink von Wennsshein in the seventeenth century.** His aim was to produce a system that could be used to convert numbers into letters and words and back again. This system was further refined in the **eighteenth century by Dr Richard Grey** and it is this system which is now widly accepted and used. The Major System can be used in may ways but its use in **SemCubed** is to provide a **PegSystem** for the numbers 0 to 99. Tony_Buzan**?** describes how **SemCubed**can be used in his book Master Your Memory.

In the Major system, every digit is associated with a sound:

number	phonetic	examples	reminder
0	s, z, or soft c	**s**ew, **z**oo	'z' is the start of zero
1	d, t, th	**t**oa**d**	't' and 'd' have 1 downstroke
2	n	**n**o	'n' has 2 downstrokes
3	m	**m**o**m**	'm' has 3 downstrokes
4	r	**r**ow	4 ends in "r"; picture 4 and R glued back-to-back
5	l	**l**aw	5 fingers, with thumb held out, makes an L shape; L is roman numeral for 50; breaking off the rounded part of the 5 leaves an L shape
6	j, sh, soft ch, dg, soft g	**sh**oe, **ch**ain, **j**aw, **g**ee, e**dg**e	6 is like a golf club, which makes a 'ch' sound in the grass
7	k, hard ch, hard c, hard g, ng, qu	**c**ow, e**gg**	K is like two 7s rotated and combined
8	f, v	i**v**y	8 looks like a small cursive f
9	b, p	**b**o**p**	9 is a rotated b and a flipped p

Not *all* sounds are associated with digits: Vowels (generally spelled a,e,i,o,u,y) and some sounds like "h" or "w" or "th", frequently do not have a numeric value. (Some people like to assign "th" to the number 1.) "Highway," for example, has *no value.*

The sounds without numbers are used as 'fillers,' which allow words to be created from any sequence of numbers. Memorising the Major System Codes can be achieved quickly and once they are memorised it is possible to translate any number into a word or sequence of words and vice versa.

It's important to understand that it's a *sound,* or at least, *related sounds,* that the digit is associated with. **Spelling has nothing to do with it.** The word "exit" is *701*, because we sound it out "ek-sit:"

"exit"	701
"ek"	7
"si"	0
"t"	1

To convert from a number to a word, first take the codes for each digit in order from the above table. Then use the filler codes to create a word. As an example the number 52 gives the codes 'l' and 'n'. Using the filler letters the words lane, lean, lion or loin could be formed. It is usually better to try the vowels in order, a,e,i,o and u so that you can quickly find the word, in this case lane is the preferred word. Similarly the number 41 translates to rat and the number 94 into bar.

In principle any number of digits can be transformed into a word or phrase, for example the number 41149 is first converted to the letters R,T,T,R,P which can be written as the words "rat-trap," or perhaps "rotted rope." The number 5821 can be converted to the word "elephant." In practice however it is not always easy to find longer words or phrases quickly in this way and so most people split longer numbers into pairs of digits, convert them to images and then link them using the **LinkSystem**. This means that only 100 Major System words have to be found for the numbers 00 through 99. This is known as the Major System 100 and a standard set of words has been defined in Tony Buzans book 'Master Your Memory'.

Mnemonic major system

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Major System** (also called the **phonetic number system**, **phonetic mnemonic system**, or **Herigone's mnemonic system**) is a mnemonic technique used to aid in memorizing numbers.

The system works by converting numbers into consonant sounds, then into words by adding vowels. The system works on the principle that images can be remembered more easily than numbers.

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The system [edit]

Each numeral is associated with one or more consonants. Vowels and the consonants *w*, *h*, and *y* are ignored. These can be used as "fillers" to make sensible words from the resulting consonant sequences. The most popular mapping is:

Numeral	IPA	Associated Consonants	Mnemonic
0	/s/ /z/	s, z, soft c	"z" is the first letter of zero. The other letters have a similar sound.
1	/t/ /d/	t, d	t & d have one downstroke and sound similar (some variant systems include "th")
2	/n/	n	n has two downstrokes
3	/m/	m	M has three downstrokes and looks like a "3" on its side
4	/r/	r	last letter of four, also 4 and R are almost mirror images of each other
5	/l/	l	L is the Roman Numeral for 50
6	/ʃ/ /ʒ/ /tʃ/ /dʒ/	j, sh, soft g, soft "ch"	a script j has a lower loop / g is almost a 6 rotated
7	/k/ /g/	k, hard c, hard g, hard "ch", q, qu	capital K "contains" two sevens (some variant systems include "ng")
8	/f/ /v/	f, v	script f resembles a figure-8. V sounds similar. (v is a voiced f)
9	/p/ /b/	p, b	p is a mirror-image 9. b sounds similar and resembles a 9 rolled around
Unassigned		Vowel sounds, w,h,y	These can be used anywhere without changing a word's number value

The groups of similar sounds and the rules for applying the mappings are almost always fixed, but other hooks and mappings can be used as long as the person using the system can remember them and apply them consistently.

Each numeral maps to a set of similar sounds with similar mouth and tongue positions. The link is phonetic, that is to say, it is the consonant sounds that matter, not the spelling. Therefore a word like *action* would encode the number 762 (k-ch-n), not 712 (k-t-n); and *ghost* would be 701 (g-z-t), while, because the *gh* in *enough* is pronounced like an *f*, the word *enough* encodes the number 28 (n-f). Similarly, double letters are disregarded. The word *missile* is mapped to 305 (m-z-l), not 3005 (m-z-z-l). To encode 3005 one would use something like *mossy sail*. Often the mapping is compact. Hindquarters, for example, translates unambiguously to 2174140 (n-d-qu-r-t-r-z), which amounts to 7 digits encoded by 8 letters, and can be easily visualized.

For most people it would be easier to remember 3.1415927 (the number known as pi) as:

MeTeoR (314) TaiL (15) PiNK (927)

Short term visual memory of imagined scenes allows large numbers of digits to be memorized with ease, though usually only for a short time.

Whilst this is unwieldy at first, with practice it can become a very effective technique. Longer-term memory may require the formulation of more object-related mnemonics with greater logical connection, perhaps forming grammatical sentences that apply to the matter rather than just strings of images.

The system can be employed with phone numbers. One would typically make up multiple words, preferably a sentence, or an ordered sequence of images featuring the owner of the number.

The Major System can be combined with a peg system for remembering lists, and is sometimes used also as a method of generating the pegs. It can also be combined with other memory techniques such as rhyming, substitute words, or the method of loci. Repetition and concentration using the ordinary memory is still required.

An advantage of the major system is that it is possible to use a computer to automatically translate the number into a set of words. One can then pick the best of several alternatives. Such programs include "Numzi"[1] "Rememberg"[2] "Fonbee" [3]or the freeware "2Know".[4]

History [edit]

A different memory system, the method of loci was taught to schoolchildren for centuries, at least until 1584, "when Puritan reformers declared it unholy for encouraging bizarre and irreverent images."[5] The same objection can be made over the major system, with or without the method of loci. Mental images may be easier to remember if they are insulting, violent, or obscene (see Von Restorff effect).

Pierre Hérigone (1580–1643) was a French mathematician and astronomer and devised the earliest version of the major system. The major system was further developed by Stanislaus Mink von Wennsshein 300 years ago. It was later elaborated upon by other users. In 1730, Richard Grey set forth a complicated system that used both consonants and vowels to represent the digits. In 1808 Gregor von Feinaigle introduced the improvement of representing the digits by consonant sounds (but reversed the values of 8 and 9 compared to those listed above). In 1844 Francis Fauvel Gouraud (1808-1847) delivered a series of lectures introducing his system which would eventually become the dominant phonetic mnemonic system which is the version listed above. The lectures drew some of the largest crowds ever assembled to hear lectures of a "scientific" nature up to that time. This series of lectures was later published as *Phreno-Mnemotechny or The Art of Memory* in 1845 and his system received wide acclaim. The system described in this article would again be popularized by Harry Lorayne, a best selling contemporary author on memory.

Phonetic number memorization systems also occur in other parts of the world, such as the Katapayadi system going back to at least the 7th Century in India.

Practice [edit]

Memory feats centred around numbers can be performed by experts who have learned a 'vocabulary' of at least 1 image for every 1 and 2 digit number which can be combined to form narratives. To learn a vocabulary of 3 digit numbers is harder because for each extra digit 10 times more images need to be learned, but many mnemonists use a set of 1000 images. Combination of images into a narrative is easier to do rapidly than is forming a coherent, grammatical sentence. This pre-memorisation and practice at forming images reduces the time required to think up a good imaginary object and create a strong memorable impression of it. The best words for this purpose are usually nouns, especially those for distinctive objects which make a strong impression on a variety of senses (e.g. a "Lime" for 53, its

taste, its smell, its colour and even its texture are distinctive) or which move (like an "arrow" for 4). For basic proficiency a large vocabulary of image words isn't really necessary since, when the table above is reliably learned, it is easy to form your own words ad hoc.

Indexing Sequences [edit]

Mnemonics often centre around learning a complete sequence where all objects in that sequence that come before the one you are trying to recall must be recalled first. For instance, if you were using the mnemonic "Richard of York gave battle in vain" for the colours of the rainbow; (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet) to remember what colour comes after indigo you would have to recall the whole sequence. For a short sequence this may be trivial; for longer lists, it can become complicated and error-prone. A good example would be in recalling what is the 53rd element of the periodic table. It might be possible for some people to construct and then learn a string of 53 or more items which you have substituted for the elements and then to recall them one by one, counting them off as you go, but it would be a *great deal easier* and less laborious/tedious to *directly* associate element 53 with, for example, a lime (a suitable mnemonic for 53) recalling some prior imagining of yours regarding a mishap where lime juice gets into one's eye - "eye" sounding like "I", the symbol for *Iodine*. If you were remembering element 53 in the process of recalling the periodic table you could then recall an image for 54, for instance thinking of a friend called "Laura" (54) in the lotus position looking very Zen-like in order to remind yourself that element 54 is *Xenon*. This is an example of combining the Major System with the peg system.