

Learning Styles

Study Guide

What are learning styles?

Everyone has different learning styles; that is, each has a different way of learning and/or retaining material. To elaborate, some understand lessons by watching videos while others prefer to read a guide. Some people may find doing things to be more effective than listening, and the opposite can be true.

How does it help to know my learning style?

It could be very useful to understand how you learn best to study more effectively. You might have spent too much time reading a text, but you find that no matter how much you read and take notes; you may still not retain that information. In this case, reading might not be your preferred learning style. Identifying your learning style helps you understand the optimal techniques for you; this could be applied in while in class or for revision.

The different learning styles

There are different learning styles; however, the most popular one is the VARK model. 'VARK' stands for the four modalities which are: visual, aural/auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic.

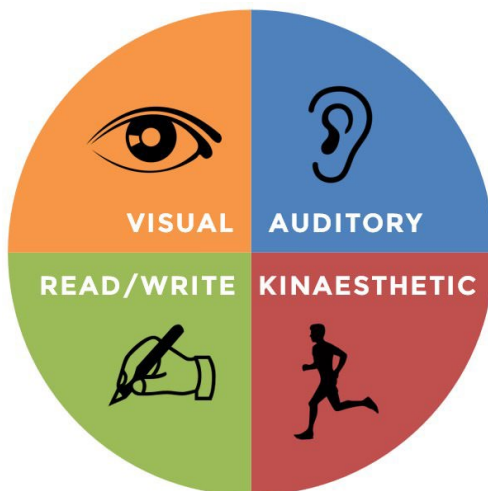


Figure 1. The VARK Modalities (photo retrieved from University of Wollongong)

(V) Visual:

Refers to those who prefer visual representations like maps, graphs, flow charts, arrows, hierarchical chart, and all other illustrations that can replace texts. This modality *does not* include real images, videos, movies or PowerPoint presentations.

(A) Aural/Auditory:

Refers to those who prefer information that is communicated/spoken or heard; It includes speaking out loud and to oneself. The Aural/Auditory learners benefit most from group discussions, conversations/chats (whether electronic or in person), lectures, radio and similar means. They also tend to repeat statements, ask questions that have already been answered, or reformulate ideas to retain that information better.

(R) Read/Write:

This is the preference for information displayed in text. People with this preference enjoy reading articles, texts, brochures, and PowerPoint presentations, browsing the internet, checking the dictionary, taking notes... practically anything that involves text-based input and output of information.

(K) Kinesthetic:

Kinesthetic learners are those who prefer practical learning, whether simulated or real. This modality may include other modalities sometimes as practical information can be relayed through examples, hands-on experience, practice, and tutorials. Kinesthetic learners tend to watch tutorial and demonstrative videos of 'real' things; it may also include using the five senses, writing (if the task is writing itself), and anything involving experience and practice.

(MM) Multimodal:

One person can have some or all preferences, with the preferred style varying from topic to another. For example, you might best retain scientific information kinaesthetically during lab sessions but prefer to read the manual to work out how the new machine you bought works. They might also have an equal preference for all styles, easily switching from one mode to another. Another type of multimodal learners is those who need one or more (if not all) modes to retain information or grasp the concept fully.

Note: the information provided above is an overview. For more details, [click here](#), or use the link <https://vark-learn.com/introduction-to-vark/the-vark-modalities/> or watch the introductory video <https://youtu.be/arv9V-G2UIs>.

How do I identify my learning style?

After you learn more about each modality and get a full understanding of each, you can do a self-assessment by observing your habitual behavior; notice yourself, when you are operating household machinery, do you refer to the manual or do you look for a video and try it step by step? When you're studying, do you tend to read the content out loud or repeat it to yourself? You can reflect on what modality/modalities apply to you in different situations. Otherwise, you can fill out a questionnaire to give you a general glimpse of learning style(s).

[Click here](#) to fill out the questionnaire or visit <https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>.

VARK strategies

After you discover your learning style(s), you can look at some strategies for each modality. Don't worry if some don't work for you, there no 'one fits all' when it comes to information retention. Take your time and experiment with each strategy and see what suits you best.

Visual:

Visual learners often prefer drawing, working with plans and maps, doing tasks with recognizable patterns, using colors and shape, interpreting texts into charts, and much more.

Suggested tips:

- ✓ Read books with diagrams and pictures.
- ✓ Use maps and free-drawn plans.
- ✓ Use flowcharts, decision trees, family trees, organizational charts, and graphs.
- ✓ Turn tables of figures into graphs.
- ✓ Read the words and convert them into your own-designed diagrams.
- ✓ Use different fonts, upper and lowercase letters, underlining, **different colors**, and **highlighting**.

- ✓ Use symbols @, #, & and white space (the extra spaces between text and diagrams).
- ✓ Try different spatial arrangements on the page.
- ✓ Convert your "notes" into a learnable package by reducing every three pages down to one page.
- ✓ Reconstruct any images in different ways to suit your way... try different spatial arrangements.

- ✓ Redraw your learnable pages from memory. Replace some keywords with symbols or drawings.
- ✓ Look at your pages and search for patterns.
- ✓ Practice turning your visuals back into words.

Aural/Auditory:

Aural/Auditory learners prefer talking things over, explaining things by talking, listening to others' ideas and feedback on theirs, having debates and discussions, and using different voices to emphasize things.

Suggested tips:

- ✓ Discuss topics with others. Argue your case.
- ✓ Comment on ideas as soon as you get an opportunity.
- ✓ Repeat information and use your voice to show your emphasis.
- ✓ Explain new ideas to other people.
- ✓ Listen to your own self-talk and have conversations with yourself.
- ✓ Use voice recorders and listen to audio recordings or podcasts.
- ✓ Shift any pictures and graphs into talk and chat.
- ✓ Taking notes could distract you from listening, so consider recording the session or going back to recorded sessions (if you have that option) and expand your notes by talking with others and collecting notes from other sources. Leave spaces in your notes for later recall and 'filling'.
- ✓ Read your summarized notes aloud.
- ✓ Explain your notes to another person.
- ✓ Record your summarized notes and listen to them.
- ✓ Attend classes, discussions, and tutorials.
- ✓ Confirm your understanding of a topic by reformulating your knowledge either in a question format or statement.

Read/Write:

People with a Read/Write preference prefer using lists (a, b, c, d, and 1, 2, 3, 4), categorizing and label things, extracting meanings from headings and titles, they also tend to challenge rules and regulations because of their wording.

Suggested tips:

- ✓ Create lists
- ✓ Use titles and headings that clearly explain what follows.
- ✓ Use bullet points and numbered paragraphs.
- ✓ Categorize your notes; organize them in ways that make sense to you.
- ✓ Use dictionaries and glossaries, and articles about trends in word usage.
- ✓ Spell-check; correct written language errors.
- ✓ Use definitions, constitutions, legal documents, minutes, and rules.
- ✓ Read the suggested additional readings.
- ✓ Organize any diagrams, or graphs ... into statements, e.g. "This graph shows that the trend is..."
- ✓ Use synonyms to ensure your understanding of a topic.
- ✓ Note down the page and resource for any extract that helps you understand an idea or is interesting to you.
- ✓ Paraphrase concepts you find challenging.
- ✓ Resort to other articles/books if the one you're currently reading isn't enough. Try texts that explain the concept in more detail.

Kinesthetic:

Kinesthetic learners prefer watching documentaries and autobiographies, practicing/applying things before learning the theoretical aspects, doing case-studies, problem-based or simulation-based learning, and look for ways to make whatever they are studying tangible.

Suggested tips:

- ✓ Use all your senses – sight, touch, taste, smell, hearing...
- ✓ Read case studies.
- ✓ Watch videos, especially those that show real things.
- ✓ Look at exhibits, samples, photographs....
- ✓ Attend laboratory and practical sessions.
- ✓ Use surveys, field trips, and interviews.
- ✓ Use recipes and solutions to problems.
- ✓ Take notice of real-life examples and personal stories.
- ✓ Look for examples of principles.
- ✓ Learn by trial and error.
- ✓ Use actions to help your understanding (this can include gestures, body language, or facial expressions, depending on the topic).
- ✓ Put plenty of examples into your notes and answers.
- ✓ Find pictures and photographs that illustrate an abstract idea, theory, or principle.
- ✓ Use previous exam, assessment and test papers.
- ✓ Role-play the test situation in your own study room.

Multimodal:

Multimodal learners have varying preferences; they can have a stronger preference for visual and aural learning, or perhaps kinesthetic. Their preferences can also vary from one topic to another.

It is recommended to test out the strategies above depending on your dominant preference or the subject at hand.

Further help

You can always book an appointment with a learning advisor, or drop-in at any of the campuses! A learning advisor will help you tailor strategies to your preferences, needs, and situation.

Keep in mind: whenever in doubt, simply [click here](#) to book an appointment, pass by your campus' Study Hub, or visit <https://students.tafesa.edu.au/getting-help/study-hubs>.