

# Anki: Optimize Your Learning

[www.rationality-freiburg.de](http://www.rationality-freiburg.de)

08.12.2023

# What will you get out of this?

- Why care about memorization?
- Learning to use Anki
- Creating good cards
- Do's and Don'ts

# Install

- <https://apps.ankiweb.net/#download>

# Takeaways

- **Don't tinker** (settings, templates) but get started learning cards immediately
- Success depends on creating **good cards**
- Anki helps you memorize **ONLY** what you already **understand**



*“[SR software is] a testament to the Enlightenment ideal of improving humanity through reason and overcoming our human flaws.”*

— Gwern

<https://gwern.net/spaced-repetition>

*“Anki isn't just a tool for memorizing simple facts. It's a tool for understanding almost anything.”*

— Michael Nielsen

<http://augmentingcognition.com/ltn.html>

*“[...] it's a mistake to underestimate the importance of memory. I used to believe such tropes about the low importance of memory. But I now believe memory is at the foundation of our cognition.”*

— Michael Nielsen

<http://augmentingcognition.com/ltm.html>



# What do I use Anki for?

# Memorizing random words

mattomer

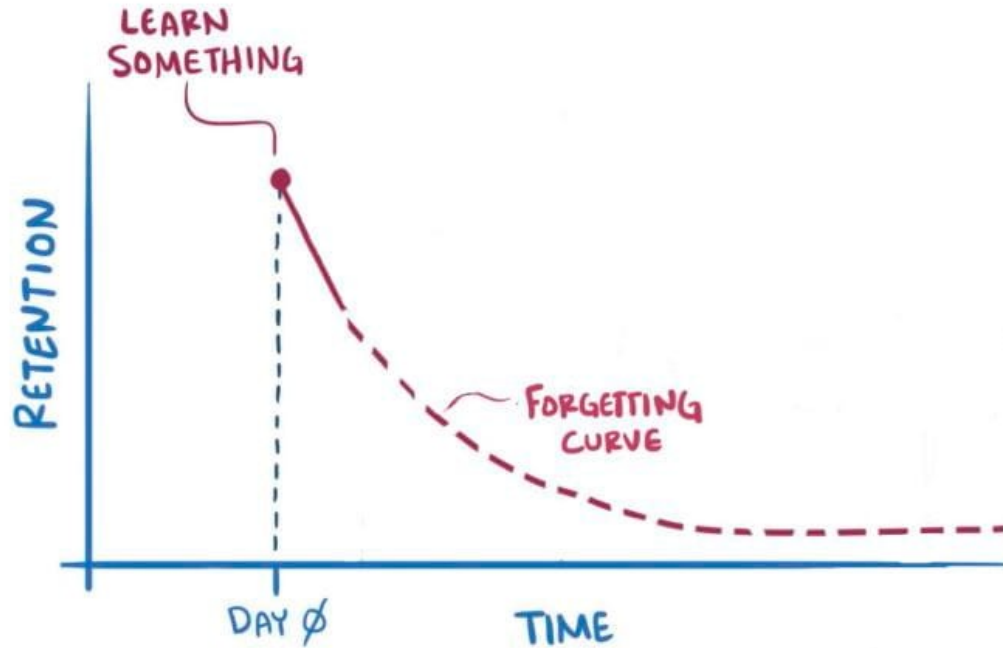
tuation

fedecruct

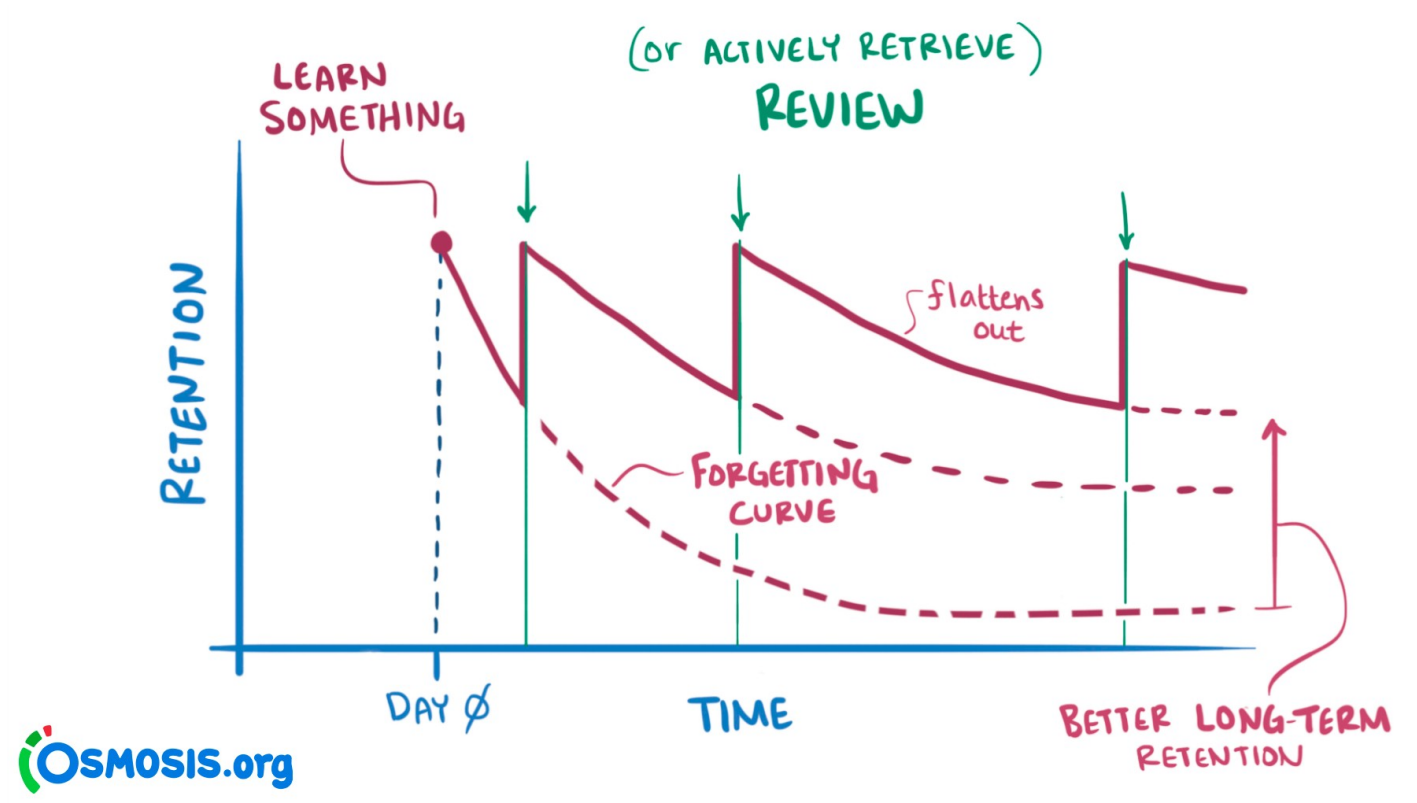
roundens

hesionalismars

# Forgetting Curve



# Forgetting Curve



**Oskar Potiorek** (20 November 1853 – 17 December 1933) was an officer of the Austro-Hungarian Army, who served as Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1911 to 1914. He was a passenger in the car carrying Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Duchess Sophie of Hohenberg when they were assassinated in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Potiorek had failed to inform the driver of a change of route which led the royal car to take a wrong turn, stalling after trying to turn around, and ending up in front of Gavrilo Princip. In World War I, Potiorek commanded the Austro-Hungarian forces in the failed Serbian Campaign of 1914. He was removed from command, retiring from the army shortly afterward.



# Active Recall Testing

- Who was the governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1911 and 1914?
- When was Oskar Potiorek the governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- Who was in the car with Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria the day he was killed?

# Anki: Card

# Anki: Note



# Anki: Deck

# Anki: Collection

# Cloze deletion

# Anki: Leech



# Anki: Tag

# Anki: Ease

# Anki: Types/States of Cards

- New
- Learning
- Review
  - Young
  - Mature
- Relearn
  
- Buried
- Suspended

# Anki: Adapt Options

- New cards/day: 10 (Default: 20)
- Leech action: Suspend (Default: Tag Only)
- New card sort order: Random (Default: Card type)
- Review sort order: Deck, then due date (Default: Due date, then random)
- Burying: All to yes (Default: All to no)



# Anki: Deck Structure

- Default
  - 01 – High
  - 02 – Medium
  - 03 – Low

# Twenty rules for formulating knowledge

- 1) Do not memorize if you do not understand.
- 2) Start with an overall picture.
- 3) Build upon the basics.
- 4) Stick to the minimum information principle.
- 5) ...

# Good cards

- Do you actually care about this piece of information?
- Clear and **simple** question
- Unambiguous answer
- No dependencies (i.e. don't impose order)
- Understand (!) what you are memorizing first

# Create your own cards!

- The science of candles  
<https://www.explainthatstuff.com/candles.html>
- Pain is not the unit of Effort  
<https://www.lesswrong.com/s/cv2aZaRR22MPC5QwE/p/bx3gkHJehRCYZAF3r>
- "Die kleinste gemeinsame Wirklichkeit". Mir hat's aber geholfen. Seite 146 bis 153.

# Anki: Recommendations

- Don't play with options and templating
- Use tags for topics
- Keep “Default::01 – High” almost empty
- Use only “Basic” and “Cloze” Notes
- Review every day
- Don't import third-party decks
- (... do all this for 3 months, then we'll talk again)

# Next

- You should use TAPs & Murphyjitsu
- I'll do an intermediate talk in March if 5 Anki-newcomers here use Anki for 30 days total (with interruptions) and send me a screenshots of the stats to prove it. Who commits?
- I commit to writing a blogpost until the end of the year

# Links

- Spaced Repetition Algorithm - Jarrett Ye:  
<https://github.com/open-spaced-repetition/fsrs4anki/wiki/Spaced-Repetition-Algorithm:-A-Three%E2%80%90Day-Journey-from-Novice-to-Expert>
- Gwern: <https://gwern.net/spaced-repetition>
- Nielsen: <https://augmentingcognition.com/lrm.html>
- <https://www.supermemo.com/en/blog/the-true-history-of-spaced-repetition>
- <https://www.supermemo.com/en/blog/twenty-rules-of-formulating-knowledge>
- <https://michaelnotebook.com/tag/tft.html>
- <https://docs.ankiweb.net/getting-started.html>