

# Hot Leads!

## A Memory Demo

Students are more motivated when they understand why things do or don't work for them, and what to do about it. Motivation enables learning and encourages a growth mindset. The demo/activity below is designed to explain why the brain needs more than just one exposure to a new word and its meaning.

**Tools needed: at least 100 index cards of about 4 assorted colors (at least 10 of each).**

### Activity

1. Pass out the cards to students and have them fill out one side with a definition of a word they've learned, until all cards have one definition each on them.
2. Secretly fill out one yourself with the following definition: *an exact opposite* (this is the definition for **antipode**).
3. Collect and mark up the cards as outlined on page 2 of these instructions by starting with 6 of each color and systematically reducing and adding new markings until the **antipode** card is uniquely marked.
4. Mix all the cards in a bin (except the antipode card which you'll keep out of the mix until the last minute just in case someone gets lucky and finds it too early for the demo to make its point ☹️). Tell students the bin full of cards represents your brain's storage of the latest word definitions learned.
5. Tease the students with a story about how you taught them the definition of **antipode** last week. Ask them why don't they remember it...or just ask them to pretend they learned it last week but can't remember what it means (because they only just learned one thing about it).
6. Ask for a volunteer to put their hand in the bin and pull out the definition of **antipode**, which of course will not work.
7. Explain this is what the brain has to do when trying to remember (locate) the definition of a newly learned word when only one piece of information (such as a definition) has been tossed into your brain, and only one time.
8. Now share that what your brain needs are leads, hot leads that steer you through all the choices (cards) to help you find the right definition (card). Start by providing the hot lead stating the color of the card they should be looking for. Be sure you give them the color of the antipode definition card (see #3 above) to search for. Discuss the how this changes the chances they can stick their hand into the brain bin now, look and pull out the right definition using this hot lead.
9. Continue to add hot leads one at a time having a fresh volunteer select one card each time that fits all the leads up to that point. The leads that narrow down to how the antipode card is marked start with color, then add hole-punched, then X'ed, then creased, next underlined. Before adding the final hot lead (marked with the symbol ≠), slip the **antipode** card into the bin with the others. With this final lead, of course, the card will be found.
10. Share that research has learned that our brains typically need 6 leads to remember a new word. This exercise demonstrates how each additional lead would continue to narrow down the chance at locating the right definition until you could be sure.

# Remembering words by using Hot Leads: ⚡

## So What Do Leads Look Like When we Learn a Word?

A new lead can be produced each time you visit your understanding of a word:

1. For example, lead #1 happens the first time you see the word in context and learn its definition.
2. Journals can help create more leads. When you write something down, your brain sees and feels the meaning you have written down and that produces another hot lead, #2.
3. When you draw a picture that represents your understanding, that makes hot lead #3.
4. Reading or hearing the word in a new context can provide hot lead #4.
5. Revisiting your journal and adding some thoughts or contexts in writing makes lead #5.
6. Explaining your word and your understanding to a peer can create the powerful hot lead #6.

**You can combine any of the following activities to build up to 6 or more hot leads per word:** [Vocabutrix](#), [Pyramid Wordup](#), [POP!](#), [Worder Nerds](#), [Word Find](#), [SES](#).

### How to mark up your cards for the demo:

- Make a stack of cards composed of exactly 6 cards of each color and add in the **antipode** card. Hole punch one corner (including the antipode card).
- Remove one hole-punched card from each color set (without removing the **antipode** card) and put an X on the back of the remaining hole-punched cards (include **antipode**).
- Remove one hole-punched and X'ed card from each color set then fold the remaining cards in the middle and unfold to leave a crease (include antipode).
- Remove one hole-punched, X'ed, creased card from each color set and underline the definition of the remaining cards (include antipode).
- Your antipode definition card will be in the remaining fully marked group. Put the ≠ symbol on the antipode definition card right under the definition. It is now the only card with 6 different identifiers on it.