

# Mastery Learning Folder Instructions

These three videos explain and demonstrate how to use a Mastery Learning Folder to address individual learning needs. All three are relevant to both teachers and parents with the first video also helpful for students.

Background Knowledge



[youtu.be/9gm0L-jp3ZQ](https://youtu.be/9gm0L-jp3ZQ)

Weekday Practise Demo



[youtu.be/8oaF0HMDInQ](https://youtu.be/8oaF0HMDInQ)

Weekly Practise Demo



[youtu.be/uLhzdRYnIK0](https://youtu.be/uLhzdRYnIK0)

## LEFT SIDE OF FOLDER

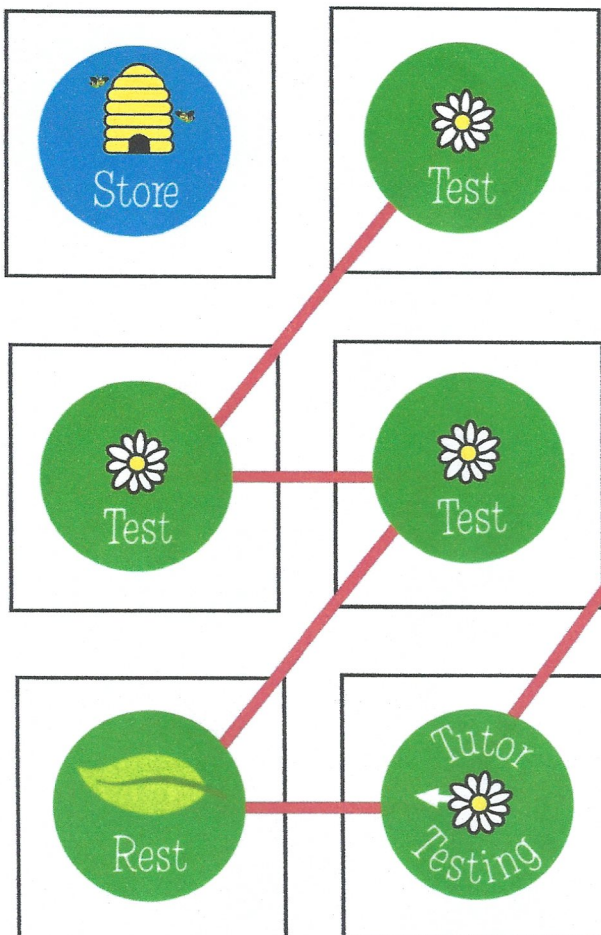
### Weekday Practise

Usually conducted by parents

Testing starts from the "Tutor Testing" pocket and works backwards, pocket by pocket.

Correct flashcards move forward, incorrect ones return to the same pocket.

Flashcards in the REST pocket move to the next pocket without being tested.



## RIGHT SIDE OF FOLDER

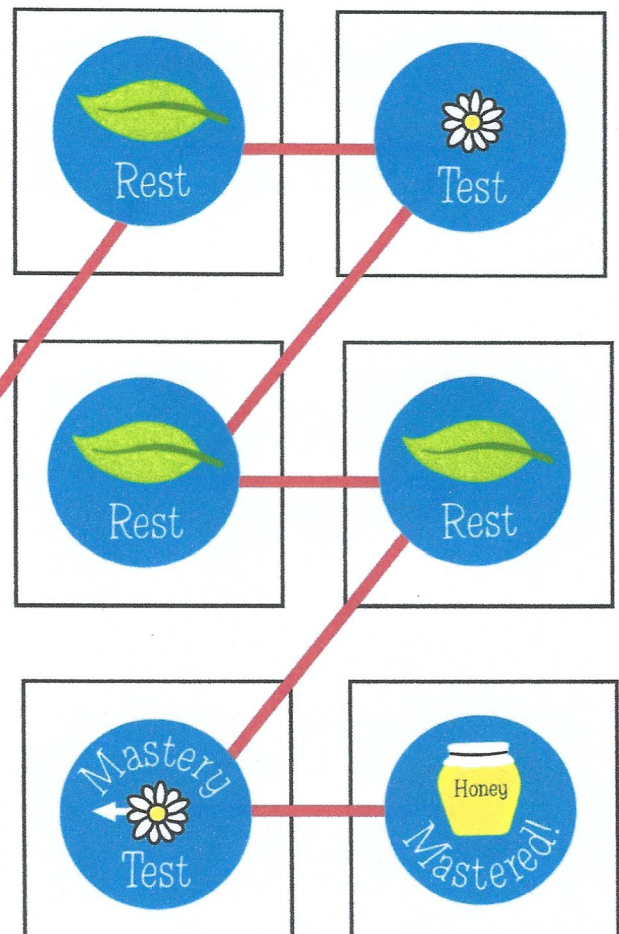
### Weekly Practise & Mastery Testing

Usually conducted by the teacher

Testing starts from the "Mastery Test" pocket and works backwards, pocket by pocket.

Correct flashcards move forward, incorrect ones return to the same pocket.

Flashcards in the REST pockets move to the next pocket without being tested.



TURN OVER FOR DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS

Mastery Learning Folders enable educators and parents to support individual student progress through targeted practise of classroom learning. The folder process uses multiple evidence-informed learning science strategies including spacing (distributing learning over time), retrieval (practising recall) and interleaving (mixed content) within a self-paced mastery process. Please view the video demonstrations prior to reading these instructions.

**1. Theoretical Foundation** The Desirable Difficulty Framework (Bjork & Bjork, 2011) asserts that the brain does not like the effort associated with trying to remember, and so, when challenged to remember, it increases the strength of the memory (in this case, the flashcard content) to reduce future effort. As content is remembered over short durations (days), the folder process increases the spaced intervals to half a week, two weeks and finally, three weeks which maintains the recall challenge and increases the durability of the learning (Cepeda et al., 2008). The mastery element of the process involves incorrect flashcards returning to the same pocket. This maintains the content at the same spaced interval until it is correctly retrieved, after which it moves forward.

**2. Folder Content** The website Flashcard Club contains free flashcards and blank templates. Teachers use their observations and assessment of classroom learning to identify appropriate learning content. They place the relevant flashcards into the Store pocket of each student's folder. Moving around twenty flashcards (the 'active content') into the first Test pocket will result in folder sessions of approximately five-minutes duration.

**3. Weekday Practise (green pockets)** Each folder session is conducted one-on-one with a 'tutor' (for example, a parent, education assistant or student leader). These sessions usually occur three to five times per week before the bell at the start of the school day, as supervised homework or through small withdrawal groups. SAER students or those that fail to make progress, may need more frequent sessions.

**a. Retrieval Practice** The folder session always begins with retrieval practice. Prior to 'testing' each pocket, the tutor removes the bundle of flashcards and rearranges them into subject areas (for example, maths / spelling / reading). The tutor starts from the green Tutor Testing pocket (junior labels) or the Test Start pocket (senior labels), which have white back arrows to indicate the testing direction. If the pocket is empty, the tutor moves backwards through the pockets to the first pocket containing flashcards. During testing, incorrect flashcards are returned to the same pocket whilst correct flashcards move forward to the next. Flashcards in the Tutor Testing / Test Start pocket that test correctly, move forward to the blue Rest pocket, leaving the weekday practise stage. For this reason and for this pocket only, a new flashcard is moved from the Store pocket into the first Test pocket to maintain the same number of active flashcards being practiced during the week. The tutor then works backwards through the pockets, testing the student on the flashcards in each, except for those in the Rest pocket. These flashcards are moved forward as a bundle without testing to create a longer (more challenging) spaced interval. The goal for all students is *effortful but successful retrievals* so allow students up to 10 seconds thinking time before answering.

**b. Feedback** After each flashcard is tested, the tutor assists the student to remember the content by checking for understanding and asking a question about it. It is important to remind students that it is the struggle to remember that helps to move learning into long-term memory.

**4. Weekly Practise and Mastery Test (blue pockets)** Once a week, the teacher or education assistant conducts retrieval practice starting from the blue Mastery Test pocket. If correct, these flashcards have been remembered across a three-week interval, and so they move into the Mastered pocket. Incorrect flashcards return to the same pocket. Moving backwards, the flashcard bundles in each Rest pocket move forward to the next without being tested. The flashcards in the next blue Test pocket are then tested. Moving backwards, the flashcards in the final blue Rest pocket are moved forward into the Test pocket and the session is finished. This may be a convenient time to add additional flashcards to the Store pocket which should always have content. Additionally, if required, the number of active flashcards may be adjusted to reduce or increase the average weekday session duration. Students may tally or graph their ongoing total of mastered flashcards and store them in a zip-lock bag.