

# Effective Flashcards: Remembering & Understanding Definitions

Flashcards can be an effective method to remember information; however, when it comes to definitions, we tend to memorize facts mechanically without actually understanding what the concept is about. So, when testing professors need to make sure you understand the subject, so they may use different wording or a particular angle, thus if we only memorize a definition like a poem or the lyrics of a song without actually understanding what it means, chances we won't be able to answer correctly.

The following are some simple steps to keep in mind when dealing with definitions and to incorporate in flashcards. These not only will help you remembering but also understanding the subject.

1. Identify and look up all the **unknown words** in your definition.
2. Provide some context by finding an **example or fact** that illustrates the definition.
3. Draw an **image** linked to the example/definition.

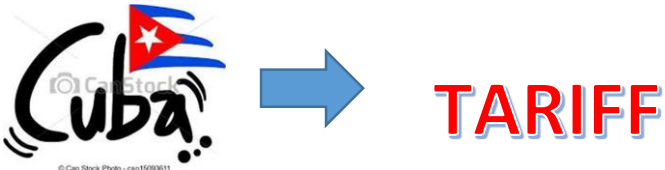
Let's look at what the back of flashcard for the definition of *tariff*\* would look like by using the steps:

**TARIFF: A system of duties of imports and/or exports.**

**1. Unknown word:** *duties*  
**Duties:** A tax imposed on imports (and sometime exports) by the customs authorities of country to raise revenue, and/or to protect domestic industries.

**2. Example/fact:** The US first imposed the tariff to Cuba in 1959 after the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

**3. Graphic memory aid:**



The graphic shows the word "Cuba" in a stylized, handwritten font with a Cuban flag above it. A blue arrow points from "Cuba" to the word "TARIFF" in large, red, outlined letters.

\*Adapted from: Bruckner, S. (2011, April 6). *LBCC-How to Remember for Tests* [video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rncitiqvXcg>