

Setting up Anki

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What is Anki? Anki (pronounced ahn-key) is a computer program which makes flash cards. Some smart people did some research, and it gives you the cards at just the right time to transfer it from your short-term memory to your long-term. You can also do cool things like insert pictures and audio files.

Why bother with Anki? In my eleven years of college, Anki is, simply put, by far the best memorization tool I've come across. Nothing replaces hard work, but Anki comes close. And while you can lose physical flash cards, and they take supplies to make, Anki is free and stays secure on your computer. Oh, and it's part of your homework grade.

Now for the actual installation steps.

1. Go to <http://ankisrs.net>.
2. Scroll down and click the blue box which reads "Download Anki for Windows" (unless you use a different operating system, in which case download Anki for your OS).
3. A window should pop up. Click "Save File."
4. Once it has downloaded (might take a few minutes), run the file.
5. A window should pop up. Hit "Install."

At this point, installation is done. Now let's make a deck¹

- 6 Now that it's installed, open it from where your programs are.
- 7 Now that Anki's open, hit "Create Deck" at the bottom.
- 8 Call your desk "Test."
- 9 Now you should see the word "Test" near the top. Click on it.

¹It's called a deck, because it's like a collection of cards. Flash cards.

10 Click “Add” near the top.

11 That should open up another window. Near the top, next to “Type,” change it to “Basic (and reversed card).”

12 Let’s make two cards.

(a) Type “linear equation in one variable” in the top box, and “Anything which can be written in the form $ax+b=0$.” Then hit “Add.”

(b) Type “discriminant” in the top box, and “The BLANK of $ax^2+bx+c=0$ is b^2-4ac .” Then hit “Add.” It’s hard to see, but there are carets between the x and 2, and again between the b and 2.

Now your deck is made. To use it, hit “Study Now,” and push the appropriate buttons at the bottom.

To add new material to an existing deck, open the deck and hit the “Add” button at the top.

Remember to use your Anki once per day (I do mine every morning), and to add new material when necessary.

The real boon of Anki is shared decks.

People made Anki decks and put them online, to help others. To access these, once you open Anki, hit “Get Shared” at the bottom. Want to learn some Japanese? Or Anatomy? Or names and dates for History? Or English words for the ACT? Just make some Anki decks.

Note: There’s a version of Anki on iOS (\$25) and Android (free).

Suggestion: It’s a good idea to back up your Anki decks. I put them in my Dropbox folder (ask me about this if you’re interested; also, Dropbox is a great program).