Localizing Information

**Background:** Before text became the standard for communication, speech was used by those with control over it to present, express, and convince. Orators would often speak for hours on end on topics they had prepared ahead of time. In order to do this, some serious memory was required. Luckily, they had some tricks to help. One was called Loci: the arrangement of ideas spatially for recollection.

**Assignment:**

Think of a location with which you are intimately familiar. Buildings work best: your home, your grandparent’s house, or perhaps a place of employment. Take the time to envision yourself walking through the space. Make note of details and where things are located.

Once you remember the layout, draw a visual guideline for those that would tour that space. I found that floor plans are the best visual representation for me.

Now that you have a visual representation of a space, allocate elements of your presentation to parts of that space. Start where you enter the space, and move around with your points. Familiarize yourself with how your presentation is organized spatially, then try incorporating more elements of your points by allocating them with details of the setting.

When it is time to give your presentation, imagine moving through the space as you discuss the components related to that space. When it comes time for questions and answers, when someone asks a question about a particular topic, move back into that room and focus on the details.

**Example:**

As we enter the foyer, the first thing I do is remove my coat to place it in the foyer’s coat closet. As I do so, I recall my thesis and “hang it up.” I take a look down the hall to where my main points are before moving left into the living room, where the background information is kept. Contextual information is on the wall opposite the entry, while the wall on my left has research done in the field.

As we move forward, the dining room may be allocated with methodology, the kitchen with the first main point (whose evidence may be allocated with the sink, fridge, and stove), and et cetera, until we reach the conclusion where I restate my thesis (re-don my coat) and exit.