

[• USE CASES](#)

How do students and researchers use SumizAI?

Studying with an AI model has an obvious failure mode: you understand something at eleven at night, feel clever, and have nothing to show for it in June. **The understanding was real; the record was a scrollbar.** This is the workflow that fixes that, with the app doing the filing.

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Q. How should a student organise vaults?

One vault per subject, not per assignment. A subject lasts, accumulates and benefits from context; an assignment is a chapter inside it.

The reason is what a vault does: it decides what the model can see when you ask a question. When you ask about a concept in week eleven, you want everything you learned in weeks one to ten in the room — and nothing from an unrelated course using the same vocabulary.

Personal life and work go in their own vaults for the same reason, not for tidiness.

Q. What kind of question produces a note worth having in June?

One that asks for structure, not just an explanation.

"Explain the central limit theorem" produces a fine answer and a mediocre note. "Explain the central limit theorem, the assumptions it needs, and two cases where it fails" produces a note with an argument in it — something you can revise from rather than reread.

Ask one thing at a time. A note is generated per exchange, so a question containing four questions produces one note trying to be about four things, which then files badly and merges badly.

Q. How does this help with revision specifically?

Three ways, in increasing order of how much time they save.

The **summaries** let you scan a term in ten minutes and find the three things you have actually forgotten.

The **table of contents** becomes a syllabus you did not write — a map of what you covered, with the shape of the subject visible in the nesting.

The **PDF export at summary detail** turns a vault into a revision document in one step. Full detail gives you the reference version for the topics you got wrong.

Q. What does a researcher do differently?

Uses the source material, and uses it constantly.

Every note keeps the full original question and answer, append-only. For research that is not a nicety — it is the difference between a claim you can trace and a paraphrase you half-remember writing. When a note says a method has a particular limitation, you can read exactly what was said and in what context.

The merge behaviour matters here too. A concept you return to across a year becomes one note that grew, with every contributing conversation still legible underneath, rather than eleven notes you have to reconcile.

Q. Can I bring in material that did not come from a conversation?

Indirectly, and it is worth being clear about what the app does and does not do.

There is no PDF importer and no document ingestion. What there is: a vault is a folder of Markdown, so a note you write yourself and drop in `notes/` is a note, and reindexing brings it into search and backlinks.

The other route is conversational — read the paper, then talk about it, and let the note be your engagement with the material rather than a copy of it. For studying, that is usually the better note anyway.

Q. How does this hold up over a full degree?

The thing that changes at scale is the table of contents, so use the rebuild.

Filing at creation time places one note against the tree as it stands. After a term, the tree that made sense in October is holding twice the material. The rebuild reads everything at once and lays the chapters out again, keeping the result flat — at most four levels, no umbrella chapter.

The other habit worth having is renaming. Titles drift after merges, and because the filename follows the title, a rename keeps the folder readable from the outside.

Q. Is a dollar a month a reasonable thing for a student to pay?

The subscription is a dollar; the model is not. You bring your own API key, so the real question is your provider bill.

Two ways to keep that near zero. Connect OpenRouter and use the free tier — the model list is ordered with free models above paid ones precisely for this. Or run a local Ollama, where the marginal cost is electricity.

It is also worth knowing that an unpaid account can still read and export its vaults. If you stop paying over the summer, your notes are still there and still exportable.

Q. What is the one habit that makes the difference?

Asking the vault questions, not just adding to it.

Students who only capture end the term with a well-organised pile. Students who ask their vault questions — "what did I conclude about this", "where does this contradict what I wrote in week four" — get answers assembled from five of their own notes, with the sources listed.

That is the point at which the notes start doing work rather than sitting there, and it takes about thirty seconds a day.