

How to become a memory champion



Are you good at remembering things? Can you remember a long list of English vocabulary quickly and easily? If the answer to these two questions is 'no,' help may be at hand. A new study says pretty much anyone can have an upgraded memory if they train their brain. Scientists say that we can train our brain to be a "memory athlete" just like athletes train to be champions. Neuroscientist Martin Dresler wrote in the journal "Neuron" that just six weeks of brain training can turn people with average memories into people with an incredible ability to remember things. Dr Dresler even suggested people could train their brain to enter the World Memory Championships that are held in March every year.

Dr Dresler compared MRI scans of the brains of 23 of the world's top 50 memory champions with the brains of "normal" people. He said: "We were interested in what differentiates memory champions from normal people, like you and me." He was surprised to find no differences. This made him believe we can all become memory athletes with the right training. Dresler found that 40 days of daily 30-minute training sessions using a memory technique called mnemonics more than doubled a person's memory capacity. Mnemonics is an ancient memory device that helps people remember things, especially in list form. Who knows? It could help you with those words for your next vocabulary test.

BEFORE READING



MEMORY SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about memory in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

| | STUDENT 1 | STUDENT 2 | STUDENT 3 |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Q.1. | | | |
| Q.2. | | | |
| Q.3. | | | |
| Q.4. | | | |
| Q.5. | | | |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

WARM-UPS

1. MEMORY: Students walk around the class and talk to other students about memory. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, talk about these topics or words from the article. What will the article say about them? What can you say about these words and your life?

remembering / vocabulary / help / answer / athletes / average / incredible / ability / MRI scans / champions / normal / differences / memory / technique / doubled / list

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. WORD LISTS: Students A strongly believe word lists are the best way to learn vocabulary; Students B strongly believe otherwise. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

4. REMEMBER: What are the good things about remembering these things? What are the difficulties? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners often and share what you wrote.

| | Good things | Difficulties |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Spelling | | |
| Dates in history | | |
| Capital cities | | |
| Song words | | |
| People's names | | |
| Jokes | | |

5. LIST: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "list". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

6. THINGS TO REMEMBER: Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things to remember at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- English vocabulary
- birthdays
- e-mail password
- what shopping to buy

- telephone numbers
- people's names
- appointments
- words to songs

Find the answers in next MONDAY issue

ANSWER KEY TO THE LAST EIS PAGE ACTIVITIES (DATED APRIL 17, 2017)

TRUE / FALSE (p.4)
a F b F c F d T e T f T g T h F

SYNONYM MATCH (p.4)

- surprise
- confirms
- get to the bottom of
- adverse
- unaffected by
- reveals
- insufficient
- compared
- risk
- keeping

- revelation
- verifies
- find out why
- unfavourable
- immune to
- shows
- inadequate
- contrasted
- possibility
- holding back

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.8)

- Mothers
- Nearly 3,000
- What affects adults' sleep
- Energy levels
- Children in the house
- Children
- 4.6%
- 4.8%
- Four
- Better health

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.9)

- c
- a
- a
- b
- d
- b
- a
- c
- d
- a

ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2. (It's good for your English ;-)

1 TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- The article asks if you can remember lists of vocabulary easily. T / F
- The article says your hand can help you to remember things. T / F
- A study said we can train ourselves to become memory athletes. T / F
- The annual World Memory Championships are held in March. T / F
- A doctor looked at brain scans of 23 world memory champions. T / F
- The brains of memory champions and normal people were different. T / F
- People did 30 days of 40-minute brain training sessions. T / F
- Mnemonics is a memory technique invented in the year 2000. T / F

2 SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms. The words in bold are from the news article.

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. at hand | a. leading |
| 2. pretty much | b. only |
| 3. just | c. ability |
| 4. incredible | d. almost |
| 5. enter | e. ordinary |
| 6. top | f. near |
| 7. normal | g. particularly |
| 8. technique | h. join |
| 9. capacity | i. method |
| 10. especially | j. unbelievable |

3 PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. remember a long list | a. from normal people |
| 2. help may be | b. memories |
| 3. pretty | c. doubled |
| 4. people with average | d. scans |
| 5. an incredible ability | e. much anyone can |
| 6. MRI | f. training sessions |
| 7. what differentiates memory champions | g. of English vocabulary |
| 8. daily 30-minute | h. memory device |
| 9. more than | i. at hand |
| 10. Mnemonics is an ancient | j. to remember things |

MEMORY DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- What did you think when you read the headline?
- What images are in your mind when you hear the word 'memory'?
- What do you do to remember things?
- Do you have a good memory?
- How many different meanings of the word 'memory' do you know?
- Could you be a memory champion?
- How do you train your brain?
- Why are some people better at remembering things?
- How would life be different if you could remember everything?
- What happens at the World Memory Championships?

MEMORY DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- What do you think of when you hear the word 'champion'?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Why do we forget things?
- Would you like to be a memory athlete?
- What techniques do you use to remember vocabulary?
- Should we have brain training at school?
- What would you do if your memory capacity doubled?
- What do you know about mnemonics?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

AFTER READING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'memory' and 'remember'.

| memory | remember |
|--------|----------|
| | |

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| • long | • 23 |
| • hand | • what |
| • just | • believe |
| • wrote | • 40 |
| • ability | • doubled |
| • even | • next |

