

What is Memory?

HCTC Success Tools

Memory is the process of storing and recalling information. Memory breaks into two sections, short-term (working) memory and long term memory.

Short-term:

The memory that allows you to remember information from several seconds up to a minute without rehearsing it. Short term memory can store up to about 7 items at a time. It is possible to store more information using techniques such as chunking.

Let's say you have to memorize the following:

C4IN22FBI3

If you chunk this, or break it apart into shorter pieces it should be easier to remember. It is ideal to create "chunks" of 3-5 letters each.

C4 IN 22 FBI 3

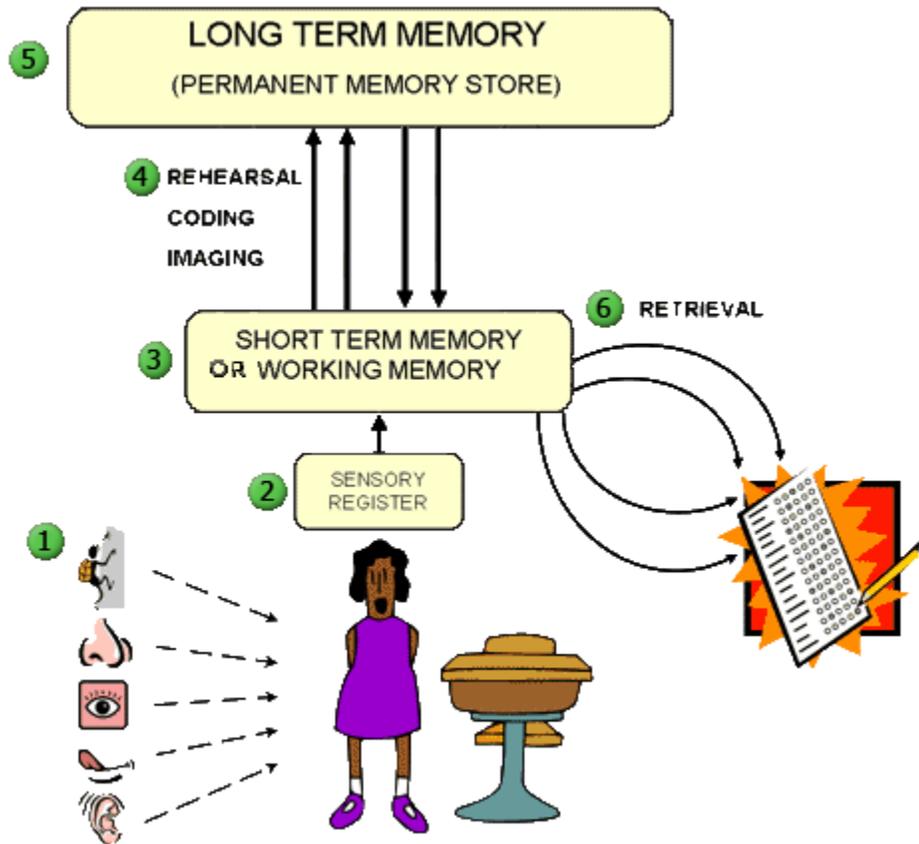
Long-term:

Long term memory holds onto information longer than short term memory, although most of the time it is not stored indefinitely. An example of long term memory being lost: If someone stopped playing an instrument for several years, they would forget a lot about how to play it, especially if they didn't play that long to begin with.

It is believed that sleep plays an important role when it comes to memory, thus the need to get plenty of sleep the night before a test.

Memory Flowchart

This is a basic diagram of how memory works. Each section is labeled with a number which corresponds with the number list below the image.



Healthy Memory

Because memory is part of your physical makeup, your memory can benefit from healthy habits.

Exercise: It increases blood flow, giving your brain more oxygen and promoting cell growth. Also when you exercise you reduce the risk of disease and are more alert and awake. Any small increase in physical activity can help, whether it be taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking further away.

Eating Habits: I'm sure you have heard this many times: Eating fruits and vegetables is a key source of B vitamins and antioxidants. B vitamins protect neurons and are involved in making red blood cells. Antioxidants help prevent damage to arteries.

If you do decide to eat fruits and vegetables avoid anything that comes in a can. You will get more nutrition from drinking the water from the can than from eating the vegetables inside it.

Avoid Stress: When you are stressed, hormones are released that actually damage your brain. Stress makes it hard to concentrate when you are trying to retain information.

Self Testing (SFT)

Don't Smoke: Memory loss and increased chance of Alzheimer's disease are some of the many side effects of smoking.

How to Improve Memory: For the most part anyone can improve their memory using some specific techniques and general guidelines.

Mnemonics: Mnemonics are memory tools used for remembering information that may be hard to recall. The point of Mnemonics is to use as many parts of your brain as possible to remember information.

Imagery: Correlate pictures and visuals to what you are trying to remember. Make sure they are positive and pleasant, as your brain will block out unpleasant ones.

Emotions: Use humor, peculiar, or even rude things to go along with what you are trying to learn. You will find it easier to remember something if you find it odd or funny.

Chunking: If you are trying to remember information, chunk parts of it together so that it is easier to remember.

Using the Information to Be Remembered: Associate the items to be remembered with something that you know well - the rooms in your house or a name or other familiar word. For example the "name" Roy G. Biv was created to help remember the order of colors in a rainbow: **R**ed, **o**range, **y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **i**ndigo, **v**iolet.

FBICSITWA becomes FBI CSI TWA

In General

Here are general guidelines to follow to help you with your memory:

Focus

Always focus on what you are learning; if you are multitasking you will not retain information as well. If you find yourself falling asleep in class, try to find a way to change your schedule so you don't. Exercising in the morning can help wake you up for the day. So can eating breakfast.

Repetition

Repeat, repeat, repeat. The more you hear, see, and think about something, the more of it you will remember. This may be tedious and boring, but it is a tried and true method of retaining information. Find ways to make it fun.

Be Organized

Being organized makes it easier to find things and get things done. This will free up your ability to concentrate because you won't be putting effort into finding things such as your keys.

Self Testing (SFT)