



EduTrend Contents

W4C · SOCIOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY · PRIMARY

Memory Masters

Test how memory works and which strategies help

Ages 8–11

Level: Developing

60 minutes

Pairs · up to 30

Activity 02

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 pupil worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 02 · AT A GLANCE

Memory Masters

In pairs, pupils test how many items they can remember from a list, then try strategies such as chunking, making a story or using pictures. They record scores, compare results as a class and discover which strategies work best, like real psychologists.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session pupils can:

- carry out a simple fair memory test;
- record and compare scores;
- explain strategies such as chunking and making links;
- suggest how to use memory strategies for learning.

KEY WORDS

memory · short-term memory · strategy · chunking · experiment · fair test · results · average

CURRICULUM LINKS

Science: working scientifically and fair tests. Maths: averages and bar charts. PSHE: learning to learn.

1**WONDER**

Why do people act like this?

2**PREDICT**

Make a hypothesis

3**ASK OR TEST**

Survey, observe, experiment

4**RECORD**

Collect data

5**ANALYSE**

Find patterns

6**REFLECT**

Ethics and meaning

Materials (per pair)

- Word lists of 12 items (three different lists of equal difficulty)
- Number strings
- Timer
- Score sheets
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Prepare three word lists of similar difficulty.
- Prepare long number strings to practise chunking.
- Prepare a class results chart.
- Plan timings: 30 seconds to study, 1 minute to recall.

SAFETY

Scores are private within pairs; the class compares averages, not individuals. Keep it light and fun.

ACTIVITY 02 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Pupils often find the story strategy works best; let the data show it.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Read a phone-number-length string once. Who can repeat it?	<i>“What makes this hard?”</i>
10–20 min Test 1	Pairs test recall of list A with no strategy.	<i>“How many did you remember?”</i>
20–30 min Test 2	Teach chunking; test with list B.	<i>“Did chunking help?”</i>
30–40 min Test 3	Teach the story method; test with list C.	<i>“Which strategy worked best?”</i>
40–55 min Analyse	Calculate class averages for each strategy and draw a bar chart.	<i>“Is the difference big enough to trust?”</i>
55–60 min Apply	Plan how to use a strategy for spellings or times tables.	<i>“When will you use this?”</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Test three ways of remembering a list, record class results and decide which strategy works best.

ACTIVITY 02 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The social science in brief

Short-term memory holds a small amount of information for a short time. George Miller's famous 1956 paper suggested people can hold about seven items, plus or minus two. Chunking groups items into meaningful units, so we can remember more.

Linking items into a story or picture makes them meaningful and easier to recall later. Psychologists test memory with careful experiments: same time limits, similar lists and many participants, so the comparison is fair.

Common ideas to listen for

- "Some people just have good memories." Strategies make a big difference for everyone.
- "One test proves it." Results are more reliable with many people and repeats.
- "Memory is like a video recording." Memory rebuilds information and can make mistakes.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use lists of eight items and picture cards.

Stretch

Test whether recall is better after 1 minute or after 10 minutes, and explain the result.

WORKSHEET 1

My results

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Record how many items you remembered.

Scores

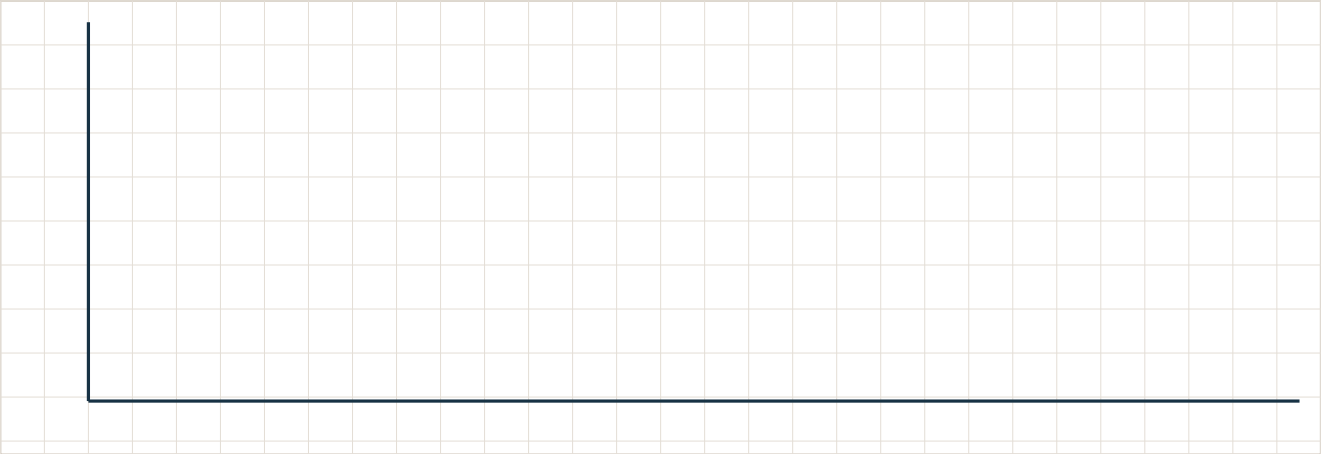
Test	Strategy	Items remembered (out of 12)
1		
2		
3		

WORKSHEET 2

Class results

Draw a bar chart of class averages.

Bar chart



y-axis: average items remembered

x-axis: strategy

WORKSHEET 3

What we found

Think like a psychologist.

The best strategy was... because...

How we kept the test fair

How I will use this to learn

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight pupils; copy as needed.

Pupil	Carries out a fair test	Records and compares data	Explains memory strategies

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Memory Masters is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Sociology & Psychology programme (primary, level: developing). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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