

# Working memory.



# No 1: Working Memory

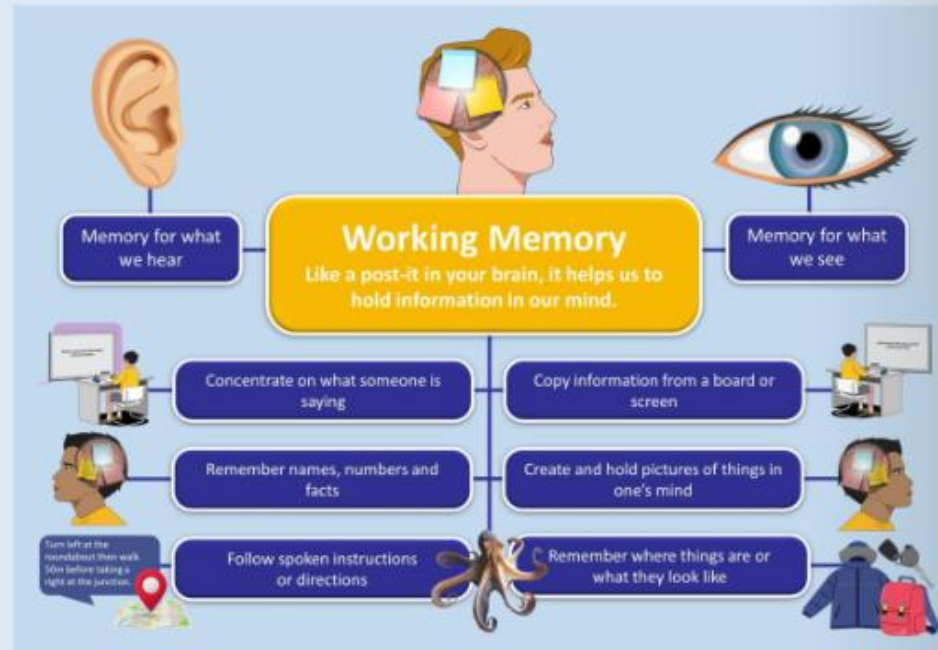


## What is Working Memory?

Working Memory is how much information you can keep in your mind at one time to then use.

It makes a difference to how well we can remember something someone has said or shown us.

Here's a mind map to explain times we need Working Memory:



## Different types of memory: Introducing Octopus & Dolphin

### The Octopus: Working Memory



Octopuses have a great **Working Memory**. That means they can keep loads of things in their head at one time without forgetting stuff.

Octopuses are the sort of people who always remember the things they need for the day and seem really organised.



### Octopus thinkers are great at remembering:

- Instructions or things they've been told
- Calculation or numbers in their head in maths
- What they've just read – they can read a few pages of information and keep all the information in their head to answer questions
- All the things they want to write and keep the sentences in their head
- All the different parts of a task they are doing

## Memory Continued



Some people have a great **Octopus Memory** for pictures and other things they **see**.



Some people have a great **Octopus Memory** for words, names and things they **hear**.

Some people do not have such a good Octopus Memory.

They may:

- Forget people's names.
- Leave their stuff around.
- Walk upstairs and forget what they were going up there for.
- Be given a direction and forget the first part before they start.
- Be told a page number and forget it before they open the book.



## Memory Continued

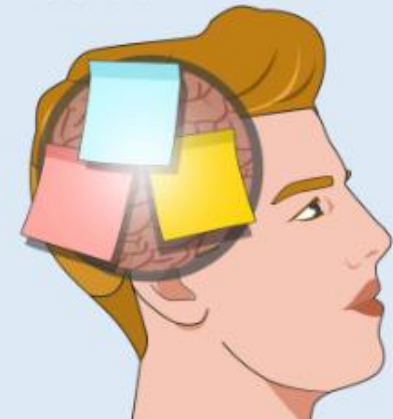
### Why do some people have a poor Working Memory?

There are many reasons why someone may have a poor working memory.

It can be linked to Attention Control or Thinking Speed (see Chapter 9 and 11 for more information).



It can simply be because the person has what we describe as a 'smaller working memory post it pad' in their brain.



## Other Types of Memory



THE DOLPHIN:

## LONG TERM MEMORY

We also have long-term 'Dolphin' memory. This is what someone can remember over a longer period of time.

**Dolphins are great at remembering:**

- Things that happened to them a time ago.
- Fun times – they might be able to remember like it's a video in their head.
- Interesting things they have seen or done.
- Physical things – like a dance sequence or how to put a bicycle back together.



**Some people have a poor Octopus Memory but a great Dolphin Memory.**

## Memory



**Dolphins are great at:**

- Remembering emotional experiences (fun, sadness, fear) in vivid detail
- Retelling memories from a long time ago
- Remembering past conversations
- Remembering places visited, meals eaten and celebrations enjoyed as if a video being replayed

**Octopuses are great at:**

- Remembering things to use for a current task
- Remembering a list of things to get done
- Remembering and following instructions
- Remembering and following directions
- Remembering equipment and belongings

## What can stop us remembering so well?

Our Working Memory can also become worse when our physical, sensory or emotional needs are not met well.



If we are in pain or very hungry or tired, it is harder to keep things in our head.



If it is too noisy, too bright or we are too hot, it is also harder to hold things in our working memory.



When we feel anxious or upset, it will be harder for us to hold on to information.

## What can help us to remember at our best?



When we feel happy, calm and are doing something we feel good at, it is much easier to remember.

When we feel cared for and supported, it is also easier to hold information in our brain.



**It is easier to remember when we feel:**

1. Comfortable in our body
2. Connected to others and cared for
3. That we count and matter
4. Capable in what we are doing
5. Feel a sense of control over what is happening to us



If these needs are not met, we should look for ways to solve this or ask for help.

## What can help us to remember at our best?

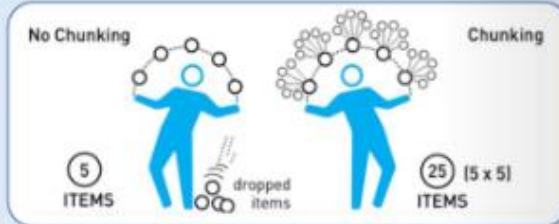
If you have problems holding information in your head, don't worry! There are lots of things you can do to help yourself.

Here are some strategies which can help people to hold things in their head. Try them out so you can find which work best for you.

- Chunk information into parts.

**Without chunking – hard!**  
075924368291

**With chunking – easier!**  
0759 24 36 82 1



- Making a story up about the information.

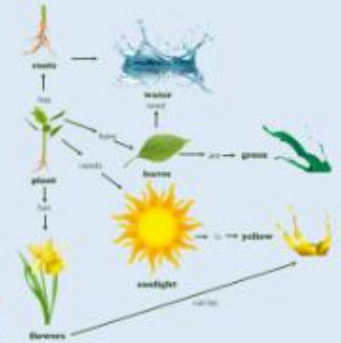
- Categorise and group information – look for things that are similar about the information.



## What can help us to remember at our best?

- Link the information to other information you already know. Think about things that are similar or different.
- Use Memory Pegs

(<https://infovoresecrets.com/what-is-memory-peg/>)



1 bun	2 shoe	3 tree	4 door	5 hive
6 sticks	7 heaven	8 gate	9 line	10 hen

Link information vividly to:

- A number memory peg you have memorised, part of your body or a place. Don't forget – it's got to be vivid so make it funny, silly or crazy.
- Use location and place to help: say the information in different parts of a room or different rooms in your house so you link the information to a place.



e.g. imagining the different world continents are rooms in your house or placing pictures of things you want to remember in parts of a room and walking to each repeating the information whilst looking at it.

# Thinking About Your Memory



▪ How good is your **Dolphin** memory?



▪ How strong is your **Octopus** memory?



**Where would you put yourself on the scale for each one?**

▪ What about when you are doing something you love? Are you in the same or a different place on the scale?

**Think about your memory at different times, in different places and with different people.**

▪ How about when you are in maths? Reading a book? Listening to instructions in science? Listening to instructions when you are gaming or playing sport?

**Scale your memory for these different activities.**

# Top Tips for how you can help yourself remember better

## What you can do to help yourself

If we don't feel ok physically and emotionally, our Working Memory will be worse, so ...



**1. Prepare to be at your best** before you start – work out what you need to feel good in the class. Check the blue physical and green emotional Needs cards. Which of these might be a problem for you and stop you from feeling good and focusing well? What could you do to improve them?

**2. Explore how you remember best:** find the best way that works for you to remember information, jobs to get done or instructions to follow.

This may be writing lists, drawing pictures or recording yourself saying the main points. It may help to anchor information to something you already know, a place in your house or part of your body (see our information on Memory Pegs).

**3. Set up routines** for things you have to remember all the time – keys, coat, bag etc. The more you sort routines, the less work for your working memory.

**4. Plan how you are going to remember** instructions or information **before** you start.

**5. Learn how to look out for the main points in information** – this will help you to write bullet points and create Mind Maps. Ask someone to teach you how to do this then carry out 6 & 7 below.

## Top Tips for how you can help yourself remember better

### What you can do to help yourself



- 6. Practice finding the main points in information** – do it with short video clips about things you are interested in. Practise writing these main points down in bullet points.
- 7. Practice creating Mind Maps** to record the main points in information you have heard or read as a Mind Map. The more you do this, the easier it will be. Try doing it with information you are really interested in.
- 8. Ask for more time** if you feel rushed.
- 9. Ask for information in chunks of 3.**
- 10. Ask for information visually** - in pictures/ diagrams or photos.
- 11. Ask people to give you real life examples** so you can link it to your experiences.
- 12. Ask people to give a demonstration** so you have an experience to remember – if your episodic memory is good, this will help you LOADS.

You may feel a bit nervous about asking people to give information to you in a way that helps you learn at your best. If you do not feel you can tell people face-to-face, you could ask someone to help you write down information about what works best for you and email (or print and give it) to teachers and other adults who help you.

# Top Tips for how **others** can help you to remember better

## How others can help you



- 1. Give you a chance to plan** how you are going to remember instructions or information **before** you start.
- 2. Give you plenty of time to process information** or instructions.
- 3. Keep information and instructions in chunks of 3 or less.**
- 4. Give you information in a visual way** – never ask you to rely only on your auditory memory i.e. just hearing things. Always use pictures, diagrams, photos or showing you something to help you remember.
- 5. Ask you to repeat what you need to do** for an activity to check you have understood.
- 6. Teach you how to listen for the main points** in information and jot them down as **bullet points**. This will support your working memory so you can keep track of lessons.

## Top Tips for how **others** can help you to remember better

### How others can help you



**7. Teach you how to create a Mind Map** of the main points you hear to help you use the information you have heard to complete tasks.

**8. Teach you how to read actively** and create a mind map of what you are reading to help you understand what you are reading (see the PQ3R method).

**9. Provide you with a tablet so you can:**

- Record parts of the lesson
- Take photos of the board / parts of the lesson
- Jot down bullet points
- Complete a Mind Map of the main points

This will mean can remind yourself later and will help you remember information better. It will also help you to complete tasks.

**10. Help you set up routines** for homework, equipment etc. so you do not have to rely on your working memory so much. Help you set up reminders and alarms on your tablet or watch to help you keep to these routines better.

# Activities to develop the skill:

Here's How:

- Play games that challenge them to remember sequences, like "Simon Says" or matching card games. practice memory exercises with increasing complexity
- Repetition: Practice repeating information to help them remember.
- Mnemonic devices: Teach simple memory aids, like songs or rhymes.
- Task sheets – iPad or laminated sheets.

Check Progress:

- Regularly practice memory exercises with increasing complexity.
- Use assessments to measure memory improvement over time.
- Use prompts to maintain focus and engagement
- Visual reminders and timetables
- Memory Games