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Opening extract from

How to Remember (Almost) Everything Ever

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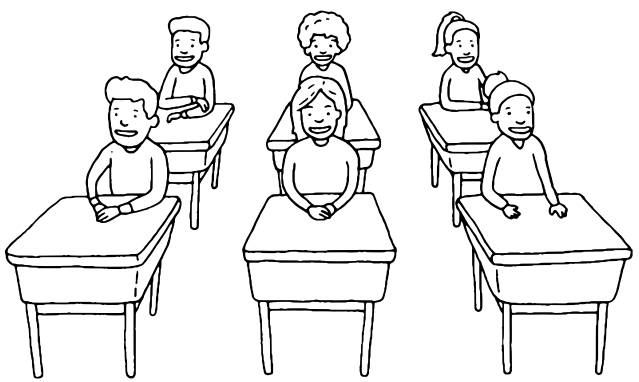
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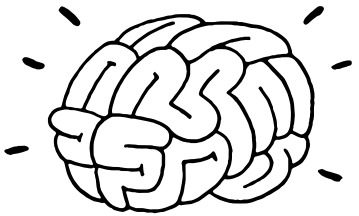
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More Memory Tips

The author of the first complete English dictionary, Dr Johnson, once said, 'The true art of memory is the art of attention.' He meant that if your mind isn't concentrating properly, then you won't remember anything. This experiment explains it perfectly:

Experiment 7

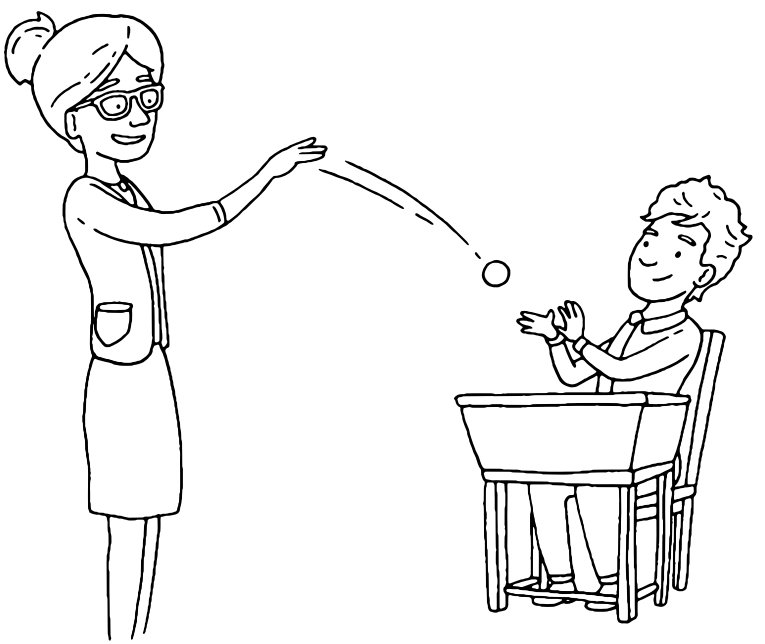
Tele(re)vision?

Switch on the TV and turn to something that interests you. Then, spend two minutes trying to memorise this list of ten words:

BOX
CRANE
CAR
PIG
DOOR
SHELF
HELTER SKELTER
RAINCOAT
WASP
TREE

Can you concentrate on the TV and still learn all ten words? Test yourself. Try learning ten different words with the TV switched off. Was it easier? Most people find that their performance is much worse when they are distracted than when they are able to concentrate.

Concentrating and paying attention take a lot of effort. Some teachers use a very curious method for getting pupils to concentrate while they are learning. As a teacher asks a question, he or she will throw a ball to the student. This method is said to produce more correct answers because it relaxes the mind and frees the memory! What do you think? Try it out with a friend or suggest it to your teacher.



How Do Computers Remember?

Suppose you have a piece of information you want to remember, such as 'Pandas live in China'. So that you can find it later, you might turn to, say, page 24 of a notepad, and write the words 'Pandas come from China'.

Saving information in a computer is a bit like keeping it in a notebook – except that computers don't save the information in words but in a language of numbers. Every number is either a 0 or a 1. A computer will store the information 'Pandas come from China' as something like this:

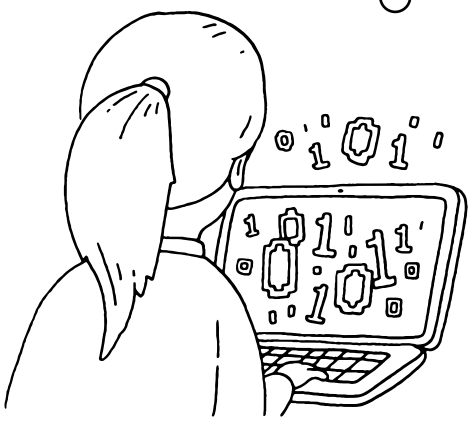
00001001010110011001110100101110001011101010100110101001011111001

This number sequence is put away exactly where the computer knows to find it again, and each 1 and 0 is stored as a tiny electrical charge.

The amount of information that a computer can store has doubled every two years as technology has advanced. People used to talk about computers with kilobytes of information. Then came megabytes and gigabytes, but now we are entering the era of terabytes, which are one thousand times bigger than gigabytes. A tera-fying thought!

The world's biggest computers are getting more powerful all the time. Today, the most powerful can do more than 100,000,000,000,000 calculations per second (that's one hundred trillion). Some believe that's close to the rate at which the human brain can work.

Each 1 or 0 saved in a computer is called a 'bit'. 8 bits are called a 'byte'.



The first electrical computer with a memory was built by Konrad Zuse of Germany in 1936.

Until the 1950s, humans were still able to compete with computers in mental calculations. Even in the 1990s, the best human chess players beat the best computers at chess – but not any more!

Experiment 10

Word Chain

Here is a word chain experiment to try out on yourself or with friends. Your task is to create a chain of six words. Starting with the word chosen below, write down a word that links to it. Then write down another word that links to that one and so on, until you have a chain of six words. Here is an example that starts with **WINDOW**:

WINDOW makes you think of **GLASS**

(a window is made from it)

GLASS makes you think of **DRINK**

(you drink from a glass)

DRINK makes you think of **COLA**

(a drink)

COLA makes you think of **BUBBLES**

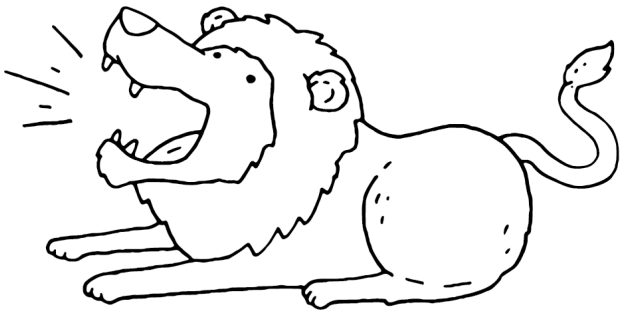
(they fizz up in the cola)

BUBBLES makes you think of **FLOATING**

(which is what bubbles do!)

so the word chain goes:

WINDOW... GLASS... DRINK... COLA... BUBBLES... FLOATING



Now make your own six-word chain starting with **LION:**

LION

_____

_____

_____

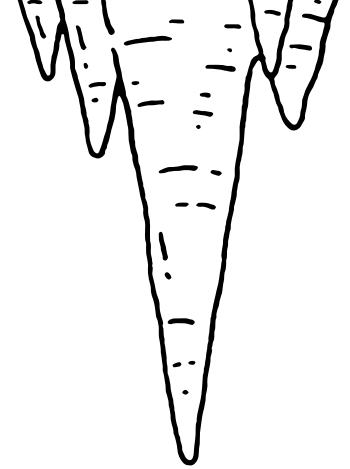
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_____

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Try this out with different people to see where the chain ends up. You should find that everybody's chain of thought is different.

For example, three people who each began with **LION**, finished with **ADVERTISING**, **PIZZA** and **SWAMP**. This shows how the same word can set off trains of thought that run in opposite directions!



22 Temperature

How can you translate Fahrenheit temperatures into Centigrade? The complicated way is to subtract 32, multiply by 5 and divide by 9. However, for most temperatures on a weather chart, there is a simple rule that gets you close enough to the right answer:

FAHRENHEIT TO CENTIGRADE:
TAKE AWAY 30 AND HALVE IT.

CENTIGRADE TO FAHRENHEIT:
DOUBLE AND ADD 30.

For 10° Centigrade and 50° Fahrenheit, this formula works out exactly right!

23 Stalagmites and Stalactites

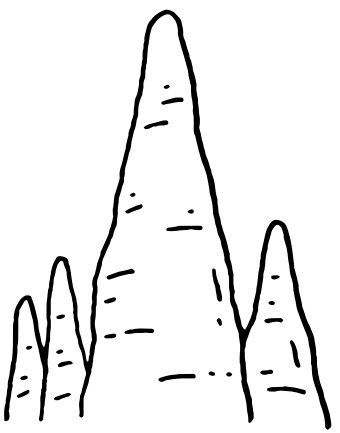
Stala**C**tites hang from the **Ceiling**
*Stala**G**mites come up from the **Ground**.

Some people learn a different rule – they say:

MITES crawl up and **TIGHTS** fall down.

Another one goes:

Stalac**TITES** have to hold on **TIGHT** or they will fall off!

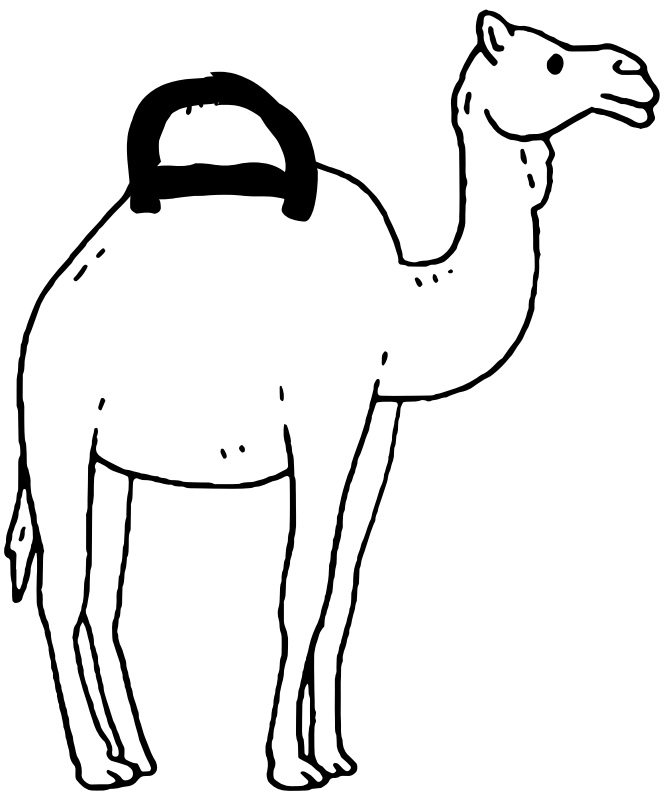


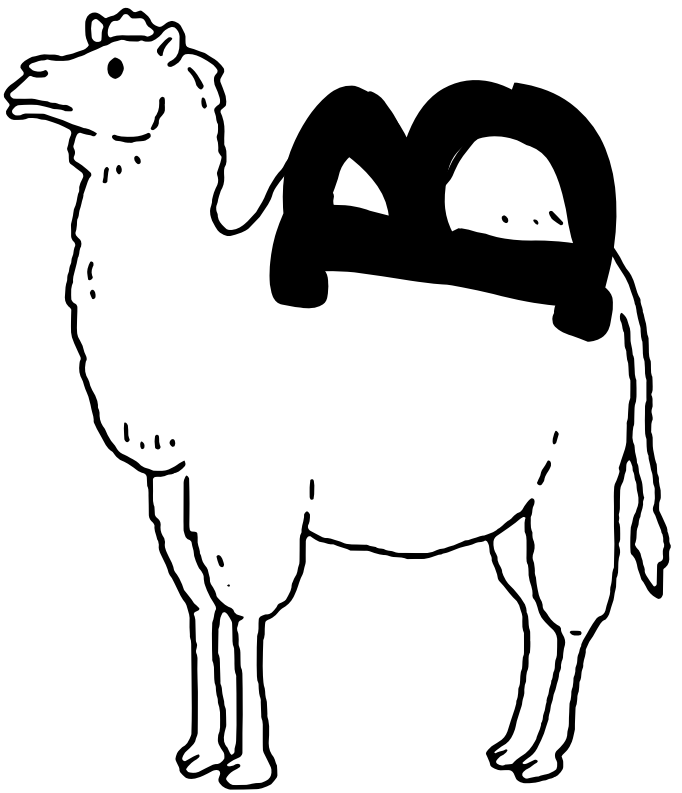
27 Know Your Camels

THE CAMEL HAS A SINGLE HUMP.
THE DROMEDARY, TWO,
OR ELSE THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
I'M NEVER SURE. ARE YOU?

That rhyme was by Ogden Nash. Here is a helpful way to answer his question.

There are two common types of camel, the Bactrian and the Dromedary. If you flip the first letter of each name on its side you can see how many humps there are!







30 Henry VIII, England's Most Famous King

Henry VIII was a famous king for many reasons, but he is probably remembered best because he had six wives. He divorced two of them, another died, two had their heads chopped off on his orders and one survived him.
The order of the wives was:

Catherine of Aragon

Anne Boleyn

Jane Seymour

Anne of Cleves

Catherine Howard

Catherine Parr

This is the rhyme that tells you what happened to them, in order:

DIVORCED, BEHEADED, DIED
DIVORCED, BEHEADED, SURVIVED!

One way to remember that Catherine Parr had the happiest end is the rhyme:

CATHERINE PARR
WENT FAR