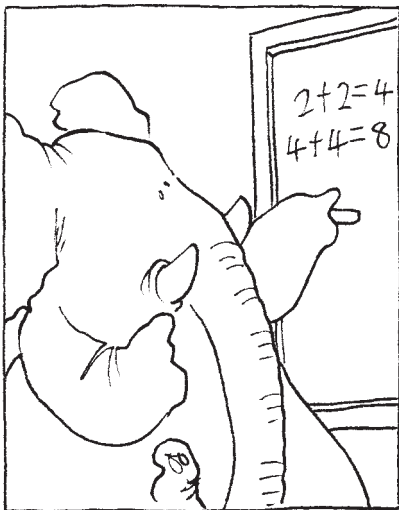


You Can... **Help your children to use memory strategies**

As with any other skill, we can improve and increase our ability to remember things by learning some simple strategies. Having a better memory will help your children in areas such as spelling and the retention of facts and information.

Thinking points

- In order to improve our memories, we need to be aware of how the brain works when we think.
- As we grow and experience the world, the cells within our brains link up together. A network of pathways is created so that electrical impulses can pass from one cell (or neuron) to another.
- We remember things best when we mimic this linking process, by making connections between things.
- Negative experiences will often stick in our memories far more strongly than more positive ones, for example a disgusting taste or a bad experience from our own school days.



Tips, ideas and activities

- In groups, ask your children to talk about memory, discussing:
 - Their earliest memory, encouraging them to describe this in as much detail as possible.
 - Why they have remembered this particular event.
 - Whether there are any similarities between the first memories of different group members.
 - How their brains make these particular events 'stick' in their minds.
- Explore some mnemonics with your class (a system that helps you to remember something, often using memorable words and phrases). Think about how and why this approach works. Look at www.eudesign.com/mnems/ for some great suggestions. Here are some classic mnemonics that you might remember from your own childhood:
 - '**N**ever **E**at **S**hredded **W**heat'; for remembering the order of the points on the compass (**N**orth, **E**ast, **S**outh, **W**est).
 - '**R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain'; for remembering the order of the colours of the rainbow (**r**ed, **o**range, **y**ellow, **g**reen, **b**lue, **i**ndigo, **v**iolet).
 - 'I before E, except after C'; for remembering how to spell words that have 'ie' in them.
 - **B**ig elephants can add up sums easily; for remembering how to spell 'because'.
- Examine the key role of our senses in remembering. Ask the children to think about each of their senses in turn, and to consider which ones provide the most vivid memories. Perhaps surprisingly, smell often brings up the most powerful memories, the slightest scent taking us instantly back to a place or time from the past.
- Teach your children a simple number memory system:
 - Pick a rhyming word for each number, from one to five. For example, link 'one' with 'sun', 'two' with 'shoe' and so on.
 - Choose five things to remember, for example five objects around the classroom.
 - Teach the children to create links between their number words and the objects, by creating vivid mental images connecting the two. For example, to remember 'window', create a mental picture of a really hot sun burning through the window on a summer's day.