

Scientists know more about how we forget

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Some people are very forgetful, while others can remember everything they have done. Scientists know a lot about how our brains store and remember facts and experiences. There is little research on how or why the brain forgets things. A new study looks at forgetting. A team of researchers from the USA studied the brain's process of forgetting things. The researchers are cognitive neuroscientists. They study the brain and how it thinks and works. Their work may help people who have memory problems. It may also help those with depression and dementia. The lead scientist, Marie Banich, said: "It may sound surprising that people can control what and how they forget."

Professor Banich said forgetting is important. She said it keeps the brain working smoothly. Her research found ways that people remove information from their brain. She said: "We have control over the ability to remove information from...our thoughts." This is important because it means we can focus on more important tasks. However, although we can control what and how we forget, the act of forgetting needs a lot of effort. Another researcher, Sara Festini, agreed. She said: "We've found that intentionally forgetting no-longer-relevant information from the mind is beneficial, but it doesn't happen automatically." Researchers will now look at why we forget recent events, like where we left our keys.

Sources: neurosciencenews.com / inc.com / eurekaalert.org

Writing

It is useful to be able to forget things. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

forgetful / scientists / facts / research / brain / memory / depression / dementia / information / control / focus / tasks / effort / beneficial / mind / recent events / keys

True / False

- 1) The article says we are all forgetful. T / F
- 2) Scientists know a lot about how the brain forgets things. T / F
- 3) The scientists' research may help people who are depressed. T / F
- 4) A researcher said it's not surprising that we can control what we forget. T / F
- 5) A professor said forgetting helps the brain work smoothly. T / F
- 6) The act of forgetting needs a lot of effort. T / F
- 7) Forgetting unimportant information doesn't happen automatically. T / F
- 8) Researchers say everyone forgets where they leave their keys. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. forgetful | a. power |
| 2. remember | b. difficulties |
| 3. process | c. like clockwork |
| 4. problems | d. recall |
| 5. surprising | e. deliberately |
| 6. smoothly | f. action |
| 7. ability | g. useful |
| 8. focus | h. absent-minded |
| 9. intentionally | i. unexpected |
| 10. beneficial | j. concentrate |

Discussion – Student A

- a) How forgetful are you?
- b) Who is the most forgetful person you know?
- c) What have you forgotten to do recently?
- d) What are you good at remembering?
- e) What are your earliest memories?
- f) What do you know about the brain?
- g) What do you know about depression and dementia?
- h) What advice do you have to help people remember things?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Some people are very | a. and dementia |
| 2. how our brains store and | b. important tasks |
| 3. help people who have memory | c. scientist |
| 4. help those with depression | d. our keys |
| 5. The lead | e. to remove information |
| 6. She said it keeps the brain working | f. remember facts |
| 7. We have control over the ability | g. problems |
| 8. we can focus on more | h. information |
| 9. forgetting no-longer-relevant | i. forgetful |
| 10. where we left | j. smoothly |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you do to help your brain?
- Are there things you would like to forget?
- What things must you not forget to do this week?
- What's the biggest thing you've forgotten to do?
- What do you do when you forget someone's name?
- Do you ever forget where you left your keys and phone?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Spelling

- Some people are very gffruotle
- our brains store and remember tsacf
- studied the brain's epsosrc
- help people who have mmyreo problems
- help those with ssiepedrno and dementia
- The lead isnestict
- it keeps the brain working shloytom
- the ability to eomrev information
- rnvetlea information
- the mind is einieafclb
- it doesn't happen autaltcmialoy
- look at why we forget ncetre events

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. f	4. b	5. i
6. c	7. a	8. j	9. e	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Birthdays

You think birthdays offer the best memories. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things do not create as good memories. Also, tell the others which is the least memorable of these (and why): vacations, playing sport or amusement parks.

Role B – Vacations

You think vacations offer the best memories. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things do not create as good memories. Also, tell the others which is the least memorable of these (and why): birthdays, playing sport or amusement parks.

Role C – Playing Sport

You think playing sport offers the best memories. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things do not create as good memories. Also, tell the others which is the least memorable of these (and why): vacations, birthdays or amusement parks.

Role D – Amusement Parks

You think amusement parks offer the best memories. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things do not create as good memories. Also, tell the others which is the least memorable of these (and why): vacations, playing sport or birthdays.

Speaking – Memories

Rank these with your partner. Put the best memories at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| • Birthdays | • Playing sport |
| • First dates | • A family event |
| • Vacations | • Amusement parks |
| • Hiking | • English classes |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	F	5	T	6	T	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.