

How to become a memory champion

11th March, 2017



Are you good at remembering things? Can you remember a long list of English vocabulary quickly and easily? If the answer to these two questions is 'no,' help may be at hand. A new study says pretty

much anyone can have an upgraded memory if they train their brain. Scientists say that we can train our brain to be a "memory athlete" just like athletes to be champions. Neuroscientist Martin Dresler wrote in the journal "Neuron" that just six weeks of brain training can turn people with average memories into people with an incredible ability to remember things. Dr Dresler even suggested people could train their brain to enter the World Memory Championship that is held in March every year.

Dr Dresler compared MRI scans of the brains of 23 of the world's top 50 memory champions with the brains of "normal" people. He said: "We were interested in what differentiates memory champions from normal people, like you and me." He was surprised to find no differences. This made him believe we can all become memory athletes with the right training. Dresler found that 40 days of daily 30-minute training sessions using a memory technique called mnemonics more than doubled a person's memory capacity. Mnemonics is an ancient memory device that helps people remember things, especially in list form. Who knows? It could help you with those words for your next vocabulary test.

Sources: npr.org / sciencenews.org / sbs.com

Writing

Training your brain is the same as training your body. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

remembering / vocabulary / help / answer / athletes / average / incredible / ability / MRI scans / champions / normal / differences / memory / technique / doubled / list

True / False

- a) The article asks if you can remember lists of vocabulary easily. T / F
- b) The article says your hand can help you to remember things. T / F
- c) A study said we can train ourselves to become memory athletes. T / F
- d) The annual World Memory Championships are held in March. T / F
- e) A doctor looked at brain scans of 23 world memory champions. T / F
- f) The brains of memory champions and normal people were different. T / F
- g) People did 30 days of 40-minute brain training sessions. T / F
- h) Mnemonics is a memory technique invented in the year 2000. T / F

Synonym Match

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

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. at hand | a. leading |
| 2. pretty much | b. only |
| 3. just | c. ability |
| 4. incredible | d. almost |
| 5. enter | e. ordinary |
| 6. top | f. near |
| 7. normal | g. particularly |
| 8. technique | h. join |
| 9. capacity | i. method |
| 10. especially | j. unbelievable |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you do to remember things?
- b) Do you have a good memory?
- c) How many different meanings of the word 'memory' do you know?
- d) Could you be a memory champion?
- e) How do you train your brain?
- f) Why are some people better at remembering things?
- g) How would life be different if you could remember everything?
- h) What happens at the World Memory Championships?

BreakingNewsEnglish - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. remember a long list | a. from normal people |
| 2. help may be | b. memories |
| 3. pretty | c. doubled |
| 4. people with average | d. scans |
| 5. an incredible ability | e. much anyone can |
| 6. MRI | f. training sessions |
| 7. what differentiates memory champions | g. of English vocabulary |
| 8. daily 30-minute | h. memory device |
| 9. more than | i. at hand |
| 10. Mnemonics is an ancient | j. to remember things |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why do we forget things?
- Would you like to be a memory athlete?
- What techniques do you use to remember vocabulary?
- Should we have brain training at school?
- What could you do if your memory capacity doubled?
- What do you know about mnemonics?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- English ucvblayora
- yttpr much anyone can
- an rueddagp memory
- tleatshe train
- people with gaeevra memories
- an cbrdnieile ability to remember things
- Dr Dresler ecrodmap MRI scans
- the world's top 50 memory nmahoipcs
- 30-minute training issseon
- a memory ecugnhtei called mnemonics
- an inneatc memory device
- eailpylsec in list form

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – English Vocabulary

You think English vocabulary is the most important thing to remember. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): passwords, words to songs or jokes.

Role B – Passwords

You think passwords are the most important things to remember. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): English vocabulary, words to songs or jokes.

Role C – Words to Songs

You think words to songs are the most important things to remember. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): passwords, English vocabulary or jokes.

Role D – Jokes

You think jokes are the most important things to remember. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as important. Also, tell the others which is the least important of these (and why): passwords, words to songs or English vocabulary.

Speaking – Remember

Rank these with your partner. Put the most important things to remember at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • people's names | • English vocabulary |
| • appointments | • e-mail password |
| • words to songs | • what shopping to buy |
| • birthdays | • telephone numbers |

Answers – True False

a T	b F	c T	d T	e T	f F	g F	h F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.