





### What you'll need

- Ten random objects
- A cloth or teatowel

### What to do

**Introduction:** Lay out your ten random objects and cover them up before your child/children see them.

Tell them they have 30 seconds to look and try to remember as many objects as they can, then uncover the objects. Give them 30 seconds and cover the objects back up. Have the kids try to recall the objects.

They should find it quite difficult to remember all ten.

**Activity:** Give the kids a chance to think of other ways, above and beyond just looking, that they think will help them remember more objects. Maybe touching, or writing the names in a list.

Eventually suggest that you make up a story together to help link the objects together.

The order of the objects doesn't matter, but you must link the objects together in pairs. It is important that each pair overlaps, so pair 1 is objects A and B, then pair 2 is also object B and then object C, pair 3 is objects C and D, and so on.

Let the kids make up connections between the objects, the sillier they are, the better they will remember them later on. Have them discuss each pairing and imagine what they will look like.

When your story is complete, cover all the objects.

Show your child/children the first object from the story and see if they can remember the pair, then the next one, then the next.

They should find it easy to get all the way through all ten objects.

**Follow up:** Have your child/children compare the success of each technique, how many could they remember each time?

### Being safe

So long as you use sensible objects this is a very safe activity.



### Questions to ask children

#### Before the activity:

Where do you store memories?

What things can you remember really well?

What things do you find difficult to remember?

#### After the activity:

Which was the best way to remember things?

Why might stories help us remember?

Does something need to be more interesting to be more memorable?

### The science

At first we are using our short term memory to try and remember 10 pieces of information, the individual objects, and we struggle to store more than about nine 'chunks' of information at a time. By pairing the items up, two items can now be considered 1 'chunk', so we could perhaps remember twice as many things. We're also overlapping these pairs, so when one 'chunk' of information is recalled, it triggers a connection to the next 'chunk' creating a chain of memories.

#### Going Further

How many objects can you remember using this technique? And how long can you remember your original objects for? Try checking back in a week, two weeks, a month...

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