

Memory Loss



Have you ever forgotten your personal identification number (PIN) or your own phone number? Are you becoming more forgetful as you age? In this lesson you will learn about 10 Causes of Memory Loss. *Which types of memory loss do you have control over? Which types are out of your control?*

Pre-Reading

A. Discuss

“A good snapshot keeps a moment from running away.”

—Eudora Welty

With today’s digital cameras and smartphones, we capture more than just the most important memories. Has technology made it harder for us to keep track of our milestones?

C. Checklist

Work with a partner. Have a partner test you. Compare your answer with a partner’s answers. Which do you think is stronger, your short-term memory or your long-term memory?

- I remember the names of the past four leaders of my country.
- I can easily memorize my partner’s phone number or address right now.
- My first childhood memory was before the age of three.
- I can name most of my past teachers.
- I remember what I had for dinner last Friday night.
- I can memorize seven items that my partner places in front of me right now.

B. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is your first childhood memory?
2. Which memories are easier to remember, good memories or bad memories?
3. Why is memory loss a scary subject?
4. Which milestone or memory do you hope you’ll never forget?
5. What personal tricks do you have for remembering important information?

Reading

10 CAUSES OF MEMORY LOSS

1. *Head Trauma*

A blow to the head can cause short and long-term **amnesia**. The impact can cause bleeding or **swelling** in the brain. Many athletes suffer from these types of **concussions**.

2. *Stroke*

A **stroke** causes the blood to stop flowing to the brain. This can damage brain tissue. Stroke victims often suffer from short-term memory loss, which may improve over time.

3. *Aging*

Forgetfulness is a normal part of **aging**. The human brain slows down as we get older. It is normal for people over the age of 30 to have occasional **memory lapses**. People who are over 65 often call these “senior moments”.

4. *Poor Nutrition*

The brain requires protein and fat to function properly. A person whose diet is low in vitamin B may suffer from memory problems.

5. *Lack of Sleep*

Sleep deprivation makes it difficult to focus, learn, and remember what you take in. No wonder it's important to get a good night's sleep before a test!

6. *Drugs, Alcohol, and Medication*

The use and abuse of drugs or chemicals often result in memory loss. While under the influence of drugs, the brain has difficulty encoding, storing, and retrieving memory.

7. *Depression or Anxiety*

An inability to focus is often an early sign of depression. Stress can also make it difficult to **concentrate**. Memory storage becomes more difficult when you can't pay attention. People may also block out memories that they don't want to remember.

8. *Pregnancy*

Many pregnant women complain of having “baby brain”. Hormones **fluctuate** during pregnancy. This can interfere with short-term memory.

9. *Distractions*

Noise, technology, and even too much activity can make it difficult to store memories. Now you know why it's useful to study in a quiet space, free from **distractions**, where you can focus on the task at hand.

10. *Dementia*

Dementia is a more serious form of memory **impairment**. It results in the shrinking of the brain. People who suffer from Alzheimer's disease (the most common form of dementia) may get lost suddenly. They may also forget how to do routine things, such as tying their shoes.

Did You Know?

The word “age” can be a noun or a verb.

- My grandma's age is 75. She is aging gracefully.

Comprehension

Listen to your teacher read some statements about the text. If the statement is true, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F and correct the information on the line. If it is not mentioned, write NM.

- _____ 1. _____
- _____ 2. _____
- _____ 3. _____
- _____ 4. _____
- _____ 5. _____

Vocabulary Review

A. Word Forms

Look at the words in the chart and find them in the reading. Then identify the word form in context (noun/verb/adjective). Then write an example sentence to illustrate the vocabulary. Try to use a different word form.

#	Word	Form in Reading	Example Sentence
1	swelling	<i>noun</i>	<i>My feet swell (verb) when I travel by airplane.</i>
2	forgetfulness		
3	aging		
4	concentrate		
5	fluctuate		
6	distraction		
7	impairment		

Vocabulary Review

B. Odd One Out

Which word does not belong in the group?

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1. a) head injury
b) concussion
c) accident
d) fluctuation | 2. a) anxiety
b) damage
c) weakness
d) impairment | 3. a) forget
b) swell
c) increase
d) enlarge | 4. a) focus
b) lapse
c) concentrate
d) pay attention | 5. a) stroke
b) amnesia
c) hormones
d) dementia |
|---|--|---|---|--|

Writing

Create your own list about memory or memory loss.

Example Topics:

- Five Reasons Humans are Forgetful
- Five Signs of Dementia
- Five Reasons to Wear a Helmet

TITLE: _____

1. _____ _____ _____	4. _____ _____ _____
2. _____ _____ _____	5. _____ _____ _____
3. _____ _____ _____	

Role-Play

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

Create a dialogue between a doctor and a young student who is becoming forgetful. The doctor asks questions to find out why the student is having trouble remembering information for his/her exams. The doctor provides tips based on the list on page 2.

Try to use vocabulary (in bold) from the reading.

Discussion

1. When it comes to aging, what are you more worried about, losing your mental abilities or losing your physical abilities?
2. Why is Alzheimer's so difficult on family members?
3. What can be done to reduce concussions in sports?
4. How can you tell if a friend or family member is suffering from depression or anxiety? What can you do to help?
5. Has anyone in your family or social circle suffered from amnesia? Share the experience with your classmates.

Critical Thinking

Which do you value more, your short-term memory or your long-term memory? Write down your answer. Then discuss it with the class or a partner.

Did you change your answer after the discussion, or do you still feel the same way?

- I feel the same.
- I've had a change of heart.