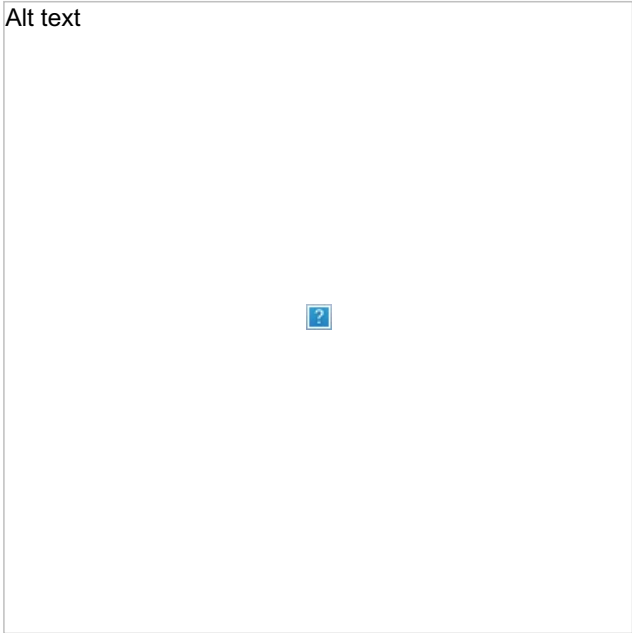


Strengthening the recall of knowledge

How quickly a piece of knowledge can be recalled when needed depends on two factors:

1. Its **retrieval strength** - retrieval strength refers to how easily you can retrieve a piece of knowledge from your working memory. As a teacher, you want knowledge to have a high retrieval strength, so that your pupils can recall facts easily.
2. Its **storage strength** - storage strength is how embedded or connected a memory is in your mind. As a teacher you want knowledge to have a high storage strength so that the memory does not fade over time.

Your aim would be to support pupils to have knowledge that has a **high retrieval strength** and a **high storage strength** as indicated by the top right hand box in the table below. This means that pupils would be quick to recall knowledge when asked a question about it (high retrieval strength), and would be able to remember it in two months' time when they needed to use the knowledge again (high storage strength).



An example of a memory that has high retrieval and high storage strength is your current address. Regardless of when or where you were asked for your address, you would be able to tell someone what it was without hesitation.

How does this relate to the classroom?

In a lesson you may introduce new content and find that when you assess your pupils, after this initial teaching, the majority demonstrate a good level of understanding. However, a couple of weeks later, the same assessment is likely to lead to a much lower number of pupils able to demonstrate that same level of understanding.

So how can you support pupils to remember?

The question for teachers is, how do you create a memory that is high storage and has a high retrieval rate, effectively converting thinking into long term learning?

To answer this, let's go back and consider why your current address might easily retrieved and easily retained. The answer is because of the number of times you have repeated it, how often you have recalled it into your working memory, and how many times you have practised writing it down or telling it to someone. You have recalled this information many times, increasing the storage strength, so that when asked, you can retrieve the information in a flash.

Retrieval practice

The same principle outlined above should be applied to the learning of any key knowledge or concepts that you want your pupils to retain. It is important that you build in regular time in your lessons for pupils to practise and repeat what has been previously taught, retrieving the critical knowledge from their long-term memory. If you do not build in this additional practice, the knowledge will become weak, and pupils will not be able to recall the information when it is needed. Throughout this early career framework course, you will see this principle in action: concepts are purposefully returned to in order to increase the retrieval and storage strength in your long-term memory and help you embed them as part of your everyday teaching practice.

Watch the videos that best fits your phase to see how retrieval practice has been implemented in the classroom.

Early years



Direct Link: [Retrieval of prior learning - Early Years](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Retrieval of prior learning - Early Years](#)
([this link opens in a new window/tab](#))

Primary



Direct Link: [Retrieval of prior learning - Primary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Retrieval of prior learning - Primary](#)
([this link opens in a new window/tab](#))

Secondary



Direct Link: [Retrieval of prior learning - Secondary](#)

Direct Link to an audio described version of this video: [Retrieval of prior learning - Secondary](#)

In the next section we will explore effective strategies that will support with the retrieval of key information but before you move on, complete the reflection below.



Over to you!

Think about your teaching practice, consider the following questions and record your responses using the [notes tab](#) (or your own notebook):

- Have you experienced your pupils showing a high retrieval rate at the end of the lesson but low storage rate when you returned to the concept later in the term?
- What was the context?
- Did it affect all pupils equally?