

Definitions and Concepts for AQA Psychology A-level

Topic 2: Memory

Capacity: The maximum amount of information that memory can hold.

Central executive: An important feature of the working memory model that is poorly understood, but is said to direct information to the appropriate slave systems in the model.

Coding: The way different memory systems store information, by converting that information into a suitable format for our brain.

Duration: The length of time a memory stays stored in memory.

Episodic buffer: A component of the working memory model that puts information from all the other components to make a combined, sensible memory.

Episodic memory: A type of conscious long-term memory which consists of multiple senses integrated together to form “every-day” memories.

Leading questions: A type of question which when asked, encourages a certain answer. For example, “Was the perpetrator black?” being asked instead of the question “What ethnicity was the perpetrator?”

Long-term memory: A type of memory storage that has potentially unlimited storage, in which we hold different kinds of memories for potentially unlimited time.

Phonological loop: A component of the working memory model that holds information regarding words, composed of words we repeat in a loop to ourselves and perceiving words we hear for a short duration of time.

Proactive interference: An explanation for forgetting which suggests information we have learned previously interferes with new information we are trying to store. For example, a psychology teacher forgetting the names of her new students, and instead remembering the names of her old students. (Proactive = forward acting = new memories are interfered with.)

Procedural memory: A type of unconscious long-term memory that stores information regarding the way we carry out actions without conscious involvement i.e. walking, driving.

Retroactive interference: An explanation for forgetting which suggests new information we learn interferes with information we already know. For example, a psychology teacher forgetting

This work by [PMT Education](https://www.pmt.education) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



the names of her old class because of her new students. (Retroactive = backwards acting = old memories are interfered with.)

Semantic memory: A type of conscious long-term memory that contains information regarding “facts” we have learned. This type of memory is uncomplicated and does not include contextual information as episodic memory does.

Sensory register: A place that holds information gathered through your senses for a very short amount of time, perceiving information before it is stored or processed by any other memory store.

Short-term memory: A type of memory store lasting about 30 seconds that can hold 5-9 pieces of information. Information from here can be moved into long-term memory via rehearsal.

Visuo-spatial sketchpad: A component of the working memory model in which visual and spatial information is stored for a short amount of time.

