

THE GENETICS OF LEARNING AND MEMORY

Rate Your Memory

Is your memory like a:

Steel trap	Sponge	Sieve
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Try this short memory quiz to see how accurate your memory really is

Read through these 3 lists of words.

Try and remember as many words as you can in **one minute**, *without* writing them down.

LIST 1	LIST 2	LIST 3
Bed	Thread	Apple
Rest	Pin	Vegetable
Awake	Eye	Orange
Tired	Sharp	Kiwi
Snooze	Sewing	Citrus
Dream	Thimble	Ripe
Wake	Point	Pear
Blanket	Prick	Banana
Doze	Haystack	Berry
Slumber	Thorn	Cherry
Snore	Hurt	Basket
Nap	Syringe	Juice
Peace	Injection	Salad
Yawn	Cloth	Bowl
Drowsy	Knitting	Cocktail

When you are done, test your memory on the next page

Test Your Memory

Which of these words were on the lists that you just saw?
Circle the words you remember from the lists, then scroll down to the next page to check your answers.

citrus	yellow	dream	fruit
book	hurt	snow	plain
sleep	needle	doctor	cozy

Check Your Answers

Here is how the words relate to the original word lists.
How many did you remember correctly? How many did you remember incorrectly?

plain	Not on list: unrelated
cozy	Not on list: related to “sleep” list
citrus	On “fruit” list
book	Not on list: unrelated
sleep	Not on list: false target
yellow	Not on list: related to “fruit” list
hurt	On “needle” list
needle	Not on list: false target
dream	On “sleep” list
snow	Not on list: unrelated
doctor	Not on list: related to “needle” list
fruit	Not on list: false target

If you got 10-12 correct, your memory is like a steel trap! Way to go!

If you got 6-9 correct, your memory is like a sponge! Not bad.

If you got less than 6 correct, your memory is like a sieve! What was that?!

What happened? Is your memory as accurate as you thought it was?

How did the relationships between these words influence your memory?

Did you think SLEEP, NEEDLE or FRUIT were on the lists? They weren't! These were **false target** words – words that were not on the lists, but were related to each of the words that *were* on the lists. These were the words we wanted you to associate with in your mind. Did it work?



All of our knowledge is based upon existing ideas. Because of this, what we already know influences what we learn. This impacts scientists too. What they already know about a situation influences every thing they do: how they ask questions, set up investigation, analyze data and come up with explanations.

What if this happened to a witness in court? For more about false memories, go to “False Memories” in the Explore!Gallery.