

词汇: memory 记忆

How is your memory? Remembering things is an important function of our brain – if we can't **recall** how to do something, we can't survive. If you think about it, there is so much we have to remember – from where we left our car keys to how we walk. Maybe it's no surprise that sometimes we are **forgetful**.

Memory allows the brain to **store** and **retrieve** information when required. Our **short-term** memory can hold a small amount of information for a short time, while our **long-term** memory can hold an unlimited amount of information for a long time. Our memory is amazing, but why do we still forget things?

It's possible we don't always store information in our memory **effectively**, maybe because we are in a rush or we consider it **irrelevant** at the time. When we do store information, we often make connections with other things, which helps us recall it later. If you don't have these connections, then it can be easier to forget. Writing for the BBC's Science Focus magazine, Luis Villazon says "It is also possible that memories **decay** over time. As they have not been **revisited**, their biological 'trace' becomes weak." It's true that if you don't perform a task for a long period of time, it can be difficult to recall how to do it. This could be because, just like in a computer, our memory is full, or that our short-term memory is easier to access.

But sometimes even our short-term memory can let us down. Have you ever gone into a room to fetch something only to forget what you wanted when you got there? This is called '**The Doorway Effect**'. Writing for the BBC Future website, psychologist Tom Stafford explains that this "occurs because we change both the **physical** and **mental** environments, moving to a different room and thinking about different things." Put simply, we are metaphorically trying to **spin too many plates** at the same time.

So, if you have **a mind like a sieve**, it could be because you have too much **on your mind**. But we do need to keep our memory **sharp** by continually using it, especially as beyond our 50s our brains tend to shrink in volume and our memory begins to decline. That's when we're at more risk of getting **Alzheimer's disease**.

However, as Luis Villazon says, “Forgetting is not always a bad thing! It would waste **cognitive resources** if we remembered every detail of the world around us.” That’s something worth remembering!

词汇表

recall	回想起
forgetful	健忘的
store	储存
retrieve	找回
short-term	短期的
long-term	长期的
effectively	有效地
irrelevant	无关紧要的
decay	减弱，衰退
revisit	重新回想
The Doorway Effect	“门口效应”（指瞬间忘事的现象）
physical	物质的
mental	精神的，心理的
spin too many plates	兼顾太多事情
a mind like a sieve	“记忆像滤网”，容易忘事，健忘
on your mind	脑子里想着
sharp	敏锐的，机敏的
Alzheimer’s disease	阿尔茨海默病
cognitive resources	认知资源

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. How much information can our long-term memory hold?
2. What can happen to our memory when we are in a rush to do things?
3. When can it be difficult to recall how to do a task?
4. At roughly what age does our memory begin to decline?
5. What do psychologists call it when we forget why we have gone into a room to do something?

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. I'm so _____ that I can't even remember my own birthday!

forgetting	forgettable	forgetful	forgot
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2. I need to _____ some important documents from the office before it closes for the weekend.

recall	retrieve	irrelevant	decay
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3. After doing my accounts I need some _____ relaxation such as listening to some classical music.

physical	mental	sharp	effectively
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4. At work I have to _____ – it's hard to know what I am doing some of the time.

spinned too many plates	spin too many plate
spun too many plates	spin too many plates

5. She has a _____ mind and is quick to spot a good business opportunity.

sharp	effectively	physical	long-term
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. How much information can our long-term memory hold?

In theory, our long-term memory can hold an unlimited amount of information for a long time.

2. What can happen to our memory when we are in a rush to do things?

We might not be able to store information in our memory effectively.

3. When can it be difficult to recall how to do a task?

If we don't perform a task for a long period of time, it can be difficult to recall how to do it.

4. At roughly what age does our memory begin to decline?

Beyond our 50s, our brains tend to shrink in volume and our memory begins to decline.

5. What do psychologists call it when we forget why we have gone into a room to do something?

It's called 'The Doorway Effect'.

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. I'm so **forgetful** that I can't even remember my own birthday!

2. I need to **retrieve** some important documents from the office before it closes for the weekend.

3. After doing my accounts I need some **mental** relaxation such as listening to some classical music.

4. At work I have to **spin too many plates** – it's hard to know what I am doing some of the time.

5. She has a **sharp** mind and is quick to spot a good business opportunity.