

What is Retrieval?

Retrieval is the practice of recalling learned information from memory in order to make it stronger.

What does the research say?

Retrieval practice is rated by Dunlosky et al (2013) as having high utility for classroom practice.

Retrieval practice is based on understanding of Ebbinghaus' Forgetting Curve which outlines how quickly information can be forgotten after a few hours. By retrieving this information, students will be supported to store it in their long-term memory and can reduce a student's cognitive load leaving them able to take on more knowledge in a lesson.

"Forgetting focuses remembering and fosters learning; remembering generates learning and causes forgetting; begets remembering, and supports new learning." Bjork 2011

Further Reading.

Karpicke; Retrieval Based Learning
Kate Jones; Retrieval Practice
Pooja Arghwal; Powerful Teaching
Tom Sherrington; Rosenshine's Principles in Action

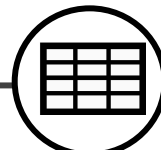
Retrieval in History

There are many ways in which you can use Retrieval Practice in the classroom. Here are just a few tried and tested methods.



5 a Day

- Students are given 5 questions at the start of the lesson to test them on prior knowledge.
- This can be focused on knowledge they need for that lesson, or on different topics.



Retrieval Grid

- Students are presented with a grid (about 12 boxes) with a range of questions that vary in the level of difficulty.
- The points increase with the level of difficulty.



Knowledge Dump

- Students dump as much knowledge as they can about a particular topic.
- Give them time to do this then check as a class.

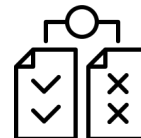


Cops and Robbers

- Students write as much as they can from memory about a certain topic
- Students then get out of their seats to "rob" ideas from other students.

Do's and Don'ts

To make Retrieval Practice more effective follow this guidance on do's and don'ts.



- Keep it low stakes – the purpose is not to track, use circulation or hands up to gauge success.
- Create opportunities for success – Ensure tasks are not too easy, but that students are able to be successful.
- Ensure all students are involved.
- Make it workload efficient – students should mark their own.
- Let students use their book. Discourage the use of notes so students have to rely on their memory.
- Use the same retrieval practice every lesson – vary the diet to strengthen future recall.
- Keep the knowledge hidden – it is better if students know the set of knowledge any retrieval will be based on so that can study, prepare and self-check

In the History Classroom

Below are some examples of History specific Retrieval Activities:

Find and Fix

Students have to find and fix the historical inaccuracies in a grid e.g. dates

Narratives

Students re-tell the story of an event and see what key knowledge is missing



List it

Pupils have to list as many key words, events or individuals within a topic as they can

Find the link

Students have to explain the link between pairs of key terms, dates or events