

## Unit 2 Then and now

### Video script

You sometimes hear people say that they have 'the memory of a goldfish'. What they mean is they have a terrible memory, referring to a common belief that goldfish only have a five-second memory. This may be a bit unfair on the goldfish – studies have shown that they can actually recall information for up to five months. But it is true that some of us are better at remembering and memorising information than others.

**Woman 1:** I'd say I have a pretty good memory. I can memorise friends' phone numbers after hearing them just a couple of times, and I still have vivid memories of things that happened to me when I was very young.

**Man 1:** I don't know why, but my memory is just really bad. The worst is remembering people's names. One time, I forgot the name of someone I had met one minute before – it was really embarrassing!

Creating a memory is a complex process, with vast amounts of information being processed and stored in the brain. Memory can also be influenced by many factors, such as the emotion we feel and the stimulation to our senses at the time. Most people find that they can recall more vividly very happy, sad or frightening events in their life, or moments that they can associate with their sense of touch, smell or hearing.

Furthermore, actively trying to remember information – for an exam, maybe – is much more difficult if you are under stress at the time. And, to complicate matters even more, memory is just a construct of our brains so, unlike a camera, it is often not 100% reliable. One study found that by asking people to think of an action over and over again – such as smashing a window with their hand – they were more likely to believe they had experienced it in the past, even if it had never actually happened to them.

While it's true that some people have better memories than others, it is possible to increase your ability to recall information. Keeping regular sleep patterns, eating a healthy diet, socialising with other people and exercising are all great ways to improve your memory. You can also exercise your memory by doing activities like crosswords. Or you can try different memory techniques to help you retain information.

**Woman 2:** I used to have a really good memory, but then I felt like I was forgetting more and more. So, I started doing things to exercise my brain and memory. It sounds boring, but actually just learning to play a musical instrument or solving a puzzle can be really useful. Me, I started knitting. I feel like my memory is getting better, and I have lots of new socks!

**Man 2:** I used to be bad at memorising anything – especially for tests – but some memory techniques helped me a lot. Here's one I used when I was young to remember the musical notes on a treble clef: 'Every Good Boy Deserves Food': E, G, B, D, F. There – I still remember it after all these years!