

Determine if using mnemonics can improve memory

Research Information

Memory is an important part of learning. For example, without memorizing multiplication facts it is difficult to solve fraction problems requiring finding the lowest common denominator. Some people have naturally good memories. Other people need to develop techniques for memorizing important information. Mnemonics is a technique similar to advertising techniques that aid in memorization. Like catchy slogans and songs that company's use in advertising, mnemonics uses techniques that help information stick in your brain. In this investigation, a mnemonic is used to test how it increases memory .

Terms

mnemonics: a memory technique using sounds such as music, alliteration, rhymes, and acronyms

alliteration: phrase or sentence in which all the words begin with the same letter

acronym: word formed from the first letter of a series of words

Research Questions

What is memory?

Are there techniques for improving the memory?

Do mnemonics help increase memory?

Materials

- A list of things to memorise
- Computer and Printer
- Stopwatch

Method

- Decide on the list of items to use for this experiment. The list should include at least 10 items. Type the list and print two copies of the list.
- Create a mnemonic for the list. The mnemonic could be a simple song, rhyme, or an acronym.
- Select 10 subjects willing to memorize the list.
- Show one of the subjects the list. Allow the subject to study the list for three minutes.
- After the three minutes, encourage the subject to continue with normal activities for one hour. Do not let them keep the list or make a copy of it.
- After an hour, ask the subject to recite or write the list. Use the stopwatch to time how long it takes to recreate the list. Record the results.
- Then teach the subject the mnemonic technique. Encourage the subject to continue with normal activities for one hour. Do not let them keep the list or make a copy of it or the mnemonic technique.
- After another hour, ask the subject to recite or write the list. Use the stopwatch to time how long it takes to recreate the list. Record the results.
- Repeat Steps 4 – 8 for each of the subjects.
- Analyse the data collected.

Sun
Mercury
Venus
Earth
Mars
Jupiter
Saturn
Uranus
Neptune

Sam, my very educated monkey, just
served us nachos.

