



# WORKING MEMORY

## What is Working Memory and why is it important?

It can be likened to the brain's post-it-note! it helps us to both store and process information for a short time.

It applies to verbal information (such as remembering and following instructions or keeping words in mind when comprehending a story) and visual spatial information (keeping track of your place in a task, sequencing pictures or carrying over numbers in a maths problem).

Working Memory is a better predictor of academic achievement than IQ. But it has a limited capacity and can be overloaded by distractions or prolonged effort. There are also individual differences in the size of children's post-it-notes.

## What are the signs of Working Memory difficulties?

- Forgetting instructions & incomplete recall of information.
- Place-keeping errors.
- Struggling to both store and process information.
- Distraction and lack of sustained concentration.
- Inconsistent performance in tasks and routines.

## Ideas for Supporting Working Memory

### Reduction & Repetition



- Shorten what you say and speak at a slower pace.
- Repeat instructions and encourage students to ask for reminders.
- Ask the student to repeat back what they were told to do.
- Avoid grammatically complex sentences.
- Break down tasks into small steps and provide prompts.
- Number the steps or display them in a visual checklist.

### Practical & Accessible



- Nearby walls charts & posters.
- Post-it-note reminders of instructions or tricky spellings.
- Concrete resources close to hand - word banks, number lines, multiplication squares.
- Highlight key words or symbols to aid place-keeping.
- Structure writing tasks with bullet points & mind maps.
- Use Reminders or Notes apps.
- Manage breaks in tasks with memory cards.

### Familiar & Meaningful



- Recap recent teaching.
- Link the current task to previous learning.
- Relate new information to pictures, objects or places.
- Use categories & refer to real-world experiences or the student's personal interests.
- Create mnemonics & acronyms.
- Show worked-out examples.
- Encourage verbal rehearsal.
- Allow for notetaking and voice recording.

### Fun & Interactive



- Hide toys in sand or chickpeas.
- Remember & name/draw toys shown for a short time.
- Remove an item from a group and ask "What's missing?".
- Take turns adding & recalling items in a shopping basket.
- Play snap with picture cards.
- Teach concepts through song, tapping & drumming rhythms or silly stories.
- Have peers act as "memory buddies" during a task/routine.