

Memory Retrieval

Retrieving Information from Memory

By Kendra Cherry, About.com Guide

Introduction:

- a) *Identify the topic and main idea that you are reporting on.*

The topic of the article is “Memory Retrieval.” The main idea of this selection is to understand how memories are retrieved from long-term memory by understanding its aspects and its barriers. (Cherry, About.com 2011)

- b) *Identify the organization or writer responsible for the site or article you are reporting on.*

The writer of this article is Kendra Cherry, who works with About.com, Inc., a part of The New York Times Company.

- c) *Identify the purpose of the writer or group and the kind of research done.*

The purpose of the writer is to inform the readers about how people retrieve information from memory, including the different types of memory retrieval and the problems with retrieval.

- d) *Describe the type of article or Web site that you used as your resource including the type of article or site, its academic affiliation, and how if it passes the CRAAP test.*

This article is from the Psychology section of the About.com website, a credible source because of its connection with The New York Times Company. In addition, this article has an academic affiliation because it passes the CRAAP Test by the following factors:

- I. **Currency:** Even though this article was written by referencing two earlier articles from other authors (as can be seen in the reference section of the article), the website itself was updated in 2011. Moreover, all the links in the website are functional.
- II. **Relevance:** The information in the article relates to the topic of “Memory Retrieval,” and the audiences are anyone who is interested in Psychology and the related topics of memory, personality, behavior, etc. In addition, the information in this article is at the appropriate level because the information is neither too elementary nor too advanced for the reader to understand.
- III. **Authority:** The author of this article is Kendra Cherry, and the article is published by New York Times Company on About.com website. This website also contains the writer’s biographical information (Link: <http://psychology.about.com/bio/Kendra-Van-Wagner-17268.htm>). She received her bachelor’s degree in psychology from Idaho State University, and she got her master’s degree in education from Boise State University. She is also the author of a variety of psychology-related articles, on topics such as personality, social behavior, and child therapy. Although About.com is a commercial website, the owner of this site, The New York Times Company, is a well-recognized media company, especially by American audiences.
- IV. **Accuracy:** By providing links to other studies, the article not only gives the reader more information on the topic of memory, but also helps give the article creditability by providing supporting and relevant details about

memory. It also refers to two sources of information in the reference section:

- Brown, A.S. (1991). "A Review of the Tip-of-the-Tongue Experience." *Psychological Bulletin*, 109(2), 204-223.
- Schacter, D.L. (2001). *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

V. **Purpose:** The purpose of the article is to inform its readers about how human beings retrieve information from their memories, which are based on fact, and to provide basic knowledge about this aspect of human psychology.

Body:

a) *Describe the research done or article content, especially the main ideas and major supporting details.*

According to Cherry, this article is about how memories are retrieved from long-term memory, and variables that change how people retrieve long-term memory. The following chart shows the outline of this article:

Memory Retrieval (*Main Topic*)

Memory Retrieval Basic: 4 basic ways

(*Major supporting detail#1*)

- I. Recall
- II. Recollection
- III. Recognition
- IV. Relearning

Problems with retrieval

(*Major supporting detail#2*)

- I. Tip of the tongue

b) *What additional information did you learn that expands upon what we have already read?*

From what we have read in chapter three of our textbook about the nature of memory, we have learned that memory retrieval is the third process of memory processes; the first two are encoding and storage processes. According to Ellis in The Nature of Memory, there are two types of retrieval processes: recall and recognition. In contrast to Ellis, Cherry indicates that there are four types of memory retrieval: Recall, Recollection, Recognition, and Relearning; each type of retrieval works differently (Cherry, About.com 2011):

- **Recall:** Accessing a memory without some clues to jog the memory, such as answering a question in a fill-in-the-blank test;

- **Recollection:** Rebuilding a memory from a partial memory and adding more detail to make it complete, such as writing an essay about a topic you are familiar with;
- **Recognition:** Identifying information after processing it again, such as taking a multiple choice test;
- **Relearning:** Studying a topic you already know to make stored memories stronger.

In addition, Cherry describes the problem she calls the “tip of the tongue,” which is the situation when we know some piece of information, but we cannot retrieve it from our memory.

c) *Did the information come from a college, university, or government institution?*

Although the information does not come from a college, university, or government institution, Kendra Cherry, the author of this article, is a writer and an educator who has been working on psychological issues for a long time. She is also the author of the Everything Psychology Book, and she has written many articles related to the topic of psychology. Moreover, the article references two articles related to the topic.

d) *Give any statistics, data, or research results provided: What have the researchers learned?*

Besides learning more about memory retrieval, ways to retrieve memory, and its barriers, as mentioned above, we learn an interesting figure about the “tip of the tongue” experience which people face on a regular basis. Cherry indicates that young people have this experience at least once a week; additionally, adults come across this experience two to four times per week. She also mentions that when people have this problem, they often

can retrieve just a piece of the memory they are trying to access, such as the first letter that a word starts with.

e) *What does this tell us about the topic?*

From reading the article, it tells us that memory retrieval is not perfect because it can have problem; it depends on a type of memory retrieval as to how we can remember information. For example, people *recall* (a type of memory retrieval) information from their memory without much help or having any clues.

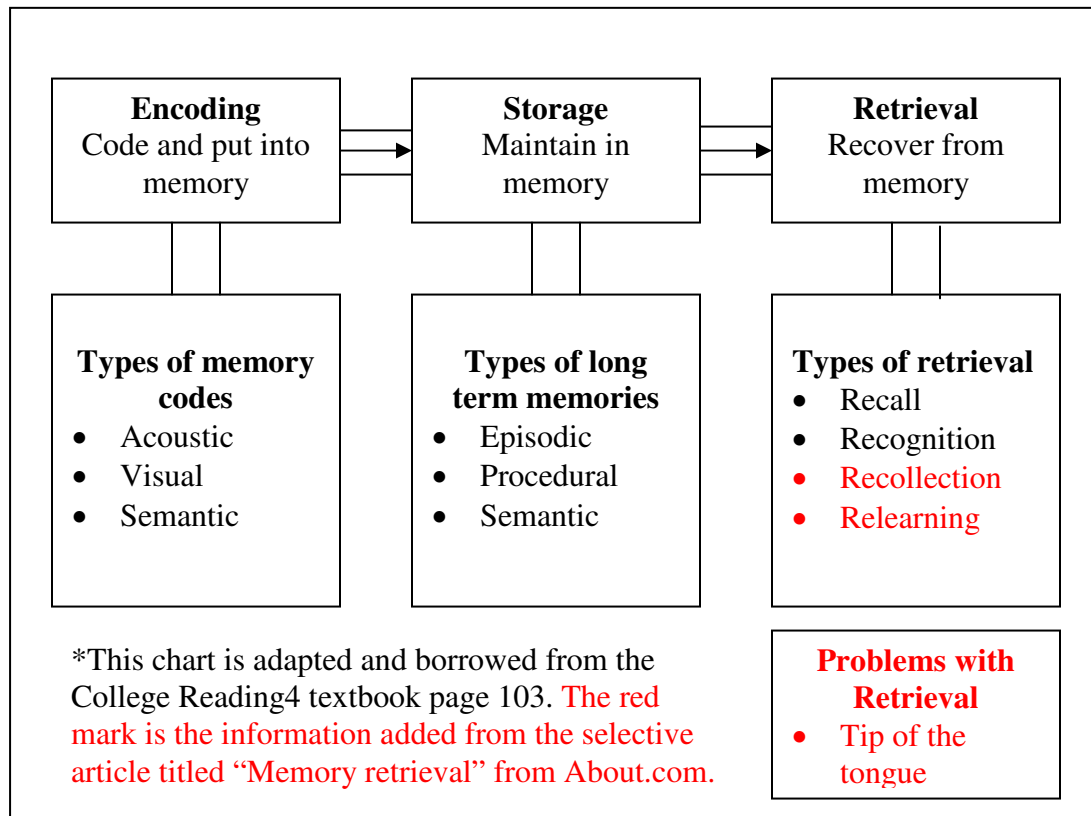
Conclusion:

a) *How does this information relate to what we've already learned? Take specific excerpts from our text (college reading, supplemental articles, and lectures) and give supporting examples from your research.*

As stated previously (part b of the "Body" section above), this article adds two more types of memory retrieval, adding a the third step to the basic memory process that we have learned from our textbook. The two new types are recollection and relearning, besides recall and recognition that are discussed in The College Reading 4.

The article also provides information on a barrier to retrieving memory that is new and interesting to us because we all have had an experience called "tip of the tongue." We now know that this is a basic problem with memory retrieval that occurs regularly to individuals.

To understand how information from the article relates to what we have already learned, the following chart combines information of what we learned about memory from two different sources: *College Reading* textbook and About.com.



b) *What questions or reflections does your group have?*

After reading the article about memory retrieval, we have a question on how to prevent the "tip of the tongue" experience or a similar difficulty to retrieving our memory. Then, we found the link about how to improve our memory in the same website that provided useful information for students. Here are some examples of the tips to improve memory from the website (Cherry, About.com 2011);

- Focus your attention on the materials you are studying
- Avoid cramming by establishing regular study sessions
- Structure and organize the information you are studying
- Relate new information to things you already know

This article provides an example of how useful a website can be when we, college students, work on a research paper because it doesn't just provide information we want to know, but also the link to other sources of related information. However, a website used as a resource for research should pass the CRAAP Test, which tells us whether or not it is an academic affiliation.

References:

Benz, C. and Schurmann, C.M. (2006). *College Reading: English for Academic Success*. The United States: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

Cherry, K. "Memory Retrieval." In About.com. Retrieved October 13, 2011, from http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/a/memory_retrival.htm?p=1.

Cherry, K. "Top 10 Memory Improvement Tips." In About.com. Retrieved October 13, 2011, from http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/tp/memory_tips.htm.