

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY: **BUILDING A MIND PALACE**

Activity nr: 2 / Memory & Imagination

Content	Skills	Competencies
<i>Memory & Imagination</i>	<i>Using imagination Creating mnemonics Information elaboration</i>	<i>Analysing information, Asking questions Creative learning,</i>

BUILDING A MIND PALACE	
General Description	This activity takes you through the 5 essential components of memory training. Every step builds up to the next one, culminating in the final step where participants create their own space for memory training and development.
Materials	Individual pieces for documentation (sheets of paper; virtual desktop) Individual tools for documentation/writing/drawing (physical or virtual pens, markers, brushes)
Duration	55 - 90 minutes
Feasibility	The activity is feasible for group and/or individual implementation. The activity requires individual work, however, it can be performed in a group setting.



Activity

Step 1: Free Association

One at a time, say each of the following 10 words, and immediately write down the first word or thought that pops into your head.

*Sand --- Phone --- Nature --- Brain --- Coal ---
Breeze --- Impulse --- Opportunity --- Dove --- Memory*

There are no rules, so the logic is generated automatically by your imagination. This is merely a way of warming up for step 2 by allowing your mind free range to think whatever it wants to think.

Try not to dwell for too long on any of the words. Your first associations will be the strongest and most significant.

Step 2: Linking

This is a simple and very effective way to memorize any sequence of data, whether a shopping list, a set of concepts, objects, names, and so on. You perform it by creating actions and interactions between the different items that you want to remember. When practicing, imagine the items in the order in which you want to memorize them.

Now, using your powers of imagination and association, link and memorize the following 5 words:

PAPER-WINDOW-SNAIL-CAR-GUITAR

Allow your mind to go into “free flow” – that is, let your imagination work radiantly. You won’t need to fabricate links: just allow them to pop into your head.

When you have made your links, compare them with the example below.

I throw a piece of rolled-up paper at a window. The window opens to reveal a snail. The snail is driving a car. In the back seat of the car is a guitar. This method mixes reality with a little fantasy.

It doesn’t matter how the mind decides on these ideas. The important point is that they are the first thoughts and they have ensured remembering those five objects in the correct order.



Step 3: Locating

Take a look at the following list of 10 words. What **places** are evoked in your mind by each of these words? Perhaps the word “dance” reminds you of a place you used to visit with friends. Catch hold of these places as they pop into your head and jot down as many of them as you can in your notebook.

The aim of this exercise is to extend your powers of association by demonstrating that any word can trigger a specific associated place in your mind:

Walk --- Sixteen --- Monkey --- Kiss --- Coffee

Family --- Time --- December --- Pool --- Storm

Step 4: Imagination

We are often required to remember information that is, by its nature, inherently uninteresting or unremarkable, such as a list of chores for the day. However, if we use our imagination to embellish an image of the particular item we wish to remember, we can make it exciting and thus memorable.

Imagine that you need to remember to post an important letter. First, picture a realistic image of an envelope. Then transform this image to make it more memorable. Picture yourself staggering along the road carrying a gigantic envelope. The envelope is decorated with bright blue stars. Now let’s add a couple more oddities. Imagine that it smells of chocolate and is ticking like a clock. Now you have created a vivid visual image and added the dimensions of smell and sound. Appealing to two more senses, on top of the visual, makes the item even more memorable in your mind.

Step 5: Journey

Start by choosing a familiar location, such as your home, your place of work, your hometown, or a nearby park. The idea is to use this location to prepare a short journey consisting of a series of places or stops along the way. The places are then used to mentally store the items on the list you wish to memorize. The route you take will preserve the original order of the list.

Here are some examples of household items you can use as locations:

- Desk
- Window
- Bed
- Wardrobe



Stove
Oven
Microwave
Fridge
Laundry machine
Couch
Sofa
TV
Closet
Sink
Loo
Clothes Hanger
Front door

Make sure that the order of stops forms a logical route through your own home. You want the route to act as a “guide rope”, leading you effortlessly through all the stops in their correct order.

Here is an example of 10 stops.

*Front door --- Clothes Hanger --- Fridge --- Microwave --- Laundry ---
Oven --- Couch --- TV --- Window*

Once you have prepared your journey and know all the stopping points effortlessly forward and backward, you are ready to start placing items from the list along your route.

- Dog Food
- Light Bulb
- Sunglasses
- Laptop
- Present
- Manager
- Article
- Car
- Swimsuit
- Pizza



Tips/suggestions/best practices for the activity

- At each step (especially 2 and 5) you have the opportunity to do a second round of the exercise with more words. For example, if the first round you did 5 or 10 words, the second round you can do 20. Naturally, you'd need to prepare your word lists in advance. In addition, if you are doing a second round at step 5, you will need to give participants additional time to prepare more locations.
- In step 5, make sure that you practice recalling your locations before you get to use them for storing information. Recall them from first to last; recall them backwards; recall them at random by asking questions like "which location is number 6"
- Once participants have created their mind palace, consider presenting them with the opportunity to practice using it with real-life information or any other information that is relevant to the goals of the training.

SOURCE MATERIAL:

O'Brien D, (2014) Watkins Publishing Ltd.

[How to Develop a Brilliant Memory Week by Week: 50 Proven Ways to Enhance Your Memory Skills](#)