PsychPrep

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Memory at a Glance

A-level Psychology

AQA 7182 Paper 1 · Memory **Sample factfile**

IN A NUTSHELL **How is memory organised, why do we forget, and how reliable are eyewitnesses? Memory is Section B of Paper 1. Here are the models, key studies and evaluation points on one page.**

1 Key terms

Coding
format of stored information

Capacity
how much a store holds

Proactive
old disrupts new

Retroactive
new disrupts old

2 Models of memory

- Multi-store model (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968): sensory register, STM, LTM; rehearsal transfers to LTM.
- STM: acoustic, 7 ± 2 items (Miller, 1956), about 18 to 30 seconds (Peterson and Peterson, 1959). LTM: semantic, unlimited, lifetime (Bahrick et al., 1975).
- Working memory model (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974): central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad, episodic buffer (2000).

3 Types of LTM

- Tulving (1985): episodic (personal, time-stamped), semantic (facts), procedural (skills, automatic).
- Evidence: HM and Clive Wearing kept procedural memory.

4 Forgetting

- Interference: worst when memories are similar (McGeoch and McDonald, 1931); rugby players (Baddeley and Hitch, 1977).
- Retrieval failure: missing cues; divers recalled about 40% less in a different context (Godden and Baddeley, 1975).

5 Eyewitness testimony

- Leading questions: “smashed” 40.5 mph, “contacted” 31.8 mph (Loftus and Palmer, 1974). Post-event discussion: 71% (Gabbert et al., 2003).
- Anxiety: weapon focus 33% vs 49% (Johnson and Scott, 1976); real witnesses accurate (Yuille and Cutshall, 1986).
- Cognitive interview: report everything, reinstate context, reverse order, change perspective.

6 Exam tip

Learn coding, capacity and duration for STM and LTM as a table, each with a study. They appear in short questions and as AO1 in 16-mark essays.

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