

Exercise walk-through

2.7

Forgetting and Other Memory Challenges

AP Psychology

Retrieving and Forgetting

Retrieval takes two forms: **recall** (producing information without cues) and **recognition** (identifying it among options). Recognition is easier, which is why a multiple-choice question feels easier than an essay.

Practising retrieval helps too – the **testing effect** shows that testing yourself beats rereading.

Memory is reconstructed, not replayed

reconstructive

each recall **rebuilds** the memory from fragments, and can alter it

misinformation effect

information encountered *after* the event changes what a person remembers of it

context-dependent

recall is better in the **place** where the learning happened

state-dependent

recall is better in the same **physical or mood** state

source amnesia

remembering the content but not **where it came from** – the root of many false memories

This is why eyewitness testimony is unreliable, and why the wording of a question can change the answer a witness gives.

Later misinformation and memory accuracy

2025 Article Analysis Question: selected results

Participants watched a video, then received summaries with different amounts of misleading detail. Mean response percentages were:

Summary condition	Correct	Misled
Low misinformation	74%	19%
High misinformation	63%	30%

Explain how a specific finding supports or refutes the misinformation effect. Connect the result with information received after the event.

A finding connected to the memory process

Original worked response: Participants in the high-misinformation group chose misleading answers on 30% of responses, compared with 19% in the low-misinformation group. This supports the **misinformation effect** : more later misleading detail was reflected in participants' reports of the earlier video.

The difference is 11 percentage points. The correct-answer comparison, 63% versus 74%, also shows lower accuracy, but the misled category directly identifies answers matching the later false details.

The official Part F criterion requires an accurately interpreted specific result linked to the concept. Neither a definition alone nor an unexplained number earns both points.

Four failures, all called forgetting

ENCODING FAILURE — it never got in, so it was never forgotten

STORAGE DECAY — the trace weakens over time

RETRIEVAL FAILURE — it is there, and the cue is missing

INTERFERENCE — another memory is in the way, from before or after

The tell is what happens with a **cue**. If a prompt recovers it, the memory was stored and the failure was retrieval

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the three main causes of forgetting. [3]

2.2 Explain the difference between proactive and retroactive interference. [2]

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 State the three main causes of forgetting. [3]

2.1

- encoding failure – it never entered memory; storage decay – it faded over time; retrieval failure – it is stored but cannot be accessed
-

2.2 Explain the difference between proactive and retroactive interference. [2]

2.2

- proactive: old learning disrupts new learning; retroactive: new learning disrupts old learning

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 Witnesses are asked how fast cars were going when they “smashed into” each other.

(a) Name the effect this wording may produce.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

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(a) Name the effect this wording may produce. [1]

(a)

- the misinformation effect

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Witnesses are asked how fast cars were going when they “smashed into” each other.

(b) State what it shows about memory.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Witnesses are asked how fast cars were going when they “smashed into” each other.

(b) State what it shows about memory.

[1]

(b)

- memory can be altered by information received after the event

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 The tip-of-the-tongue experience is best evidence for

[1]

☐

- A encoding failure
- B storage decay
- C retrieval failure
- D the misinformation effect

3.2 A student's old locker combination keeps intruding on the new one. This is

[1]

☐

- A proactive interference
- B retroactive interference
- C encoding failure
- D consolidation

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 The tip-of-the-tongue experience is best evidence for

[1]

- ☐ **A** encoding failure
B storage decay
C retrieval failure
D the misinformation effect

3.1 C

- the information is clearly stored, since it arrives later unprompted

3.2 A student's old locker combination keeps intruding on the new one. This is

[1]

- ☐ **A** proactive interference
B retroactive interference
C encoding failure
D consolidation

3.2 A

- earlier learning is interfering with later learning

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 An eyewitness becomes more confident after being told another witness agrees.

(a) State what has changed and what has not.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 An eyewitness becomes more confident after being told another witness agrees.

(a) State what has changed and what has not.

[2]

(a)

- confidence has risen; accuracy has not

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 An eyewitness becomes more confident after being told another witness agrees.

(b) State one procedural safeguard against this.

[1]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 An eyewitness becomes more confident after being told another witness agrees.

(b) State one procedural safeguard against this. [1]

(b)

- avoid giving witnesses feedback about other witnesses, and record confidence before any feedback