

Why we forget - and how to remember more

Anglický text s pracovním listem · Úroveň: Mírně pokročilý (A2-B1) · 4 otázky · Klíč na samostatné straně



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Text

Have you ever walked into a room and then completely forgotten the reason you went there in the first place? Forgetting feels like a failure, but scientists say it is a normal and even useful part of how our memory works. Our brains are not built to store everything, so they keep what seems important and quietly let the rest fade.

In the 1880s, a German psychologist called Hermann Ebbinghaus tested his own memory on nonsense syllables for months. He discovered that we forget most new information within the first few hours, but whatever survives the first day slips away far more slowly. This pattern is now known as the “forgetting curve”, and it explains why cramming the night before an exam rarely works.

We usually forget for one of three main reasons, and each of them is surprisingly common. A weak memory can simply fade away over time if we never use it or return to it. New information can also get in the way of older memories and push out things we already know. And sometimes the memory is still there, but our brain just cannot find it. That feeling, when a word is on the tip of your tongue, is a perfect example.

The good news is that a few simple habits can help you hold on to far more. Instead of reading your notes again and again, try to recall the information from memory before you check it. This effort, which researchers call retrieval practice, makes each memory much stronger and easier to find later. It also helps to spread your learning out over several days rather than doing it all at once. This habit is called spaced repetition, and researchers think it works because each review reminds your brain that the information is worth keeping.

Finally, do not underestimate sleep, because your brain quietly sorts and stores your memories while you rest. So the next time you forget where you put your keys, remember that forgetting is not a sign of a bad memory – it is simply the price we pay for a brain that knows what truly matters.

Slovíčka z článku

Anglicky	Výslovnost	Česky
to slip away	/,slɪp ə'weɪ/	pomalu se vytrácet
to hold on to	/,həʊld 'ɒn tu:/	udržet si, nepustit
to fade	/feɪd/	slábnout, vytrácet se
the forgetting curve	/fə'getɪŋ kɜ:v/	křivka zapomínání
to cram	/kræm/	bífovat se na poslední chvíli
to recall	/rɪ'kɔ:l/	vybavit si
retrieval practice	/rɪ'tri:vəl ,præktɪs/	aktivní vybavování z paměti
spaced repetition	/,speɪst repə'tɪʃən/	rozložené opakování

Anglicky	Výslovnost	Česky
to store	/stɔː/	ukládat
to underestimate	/ˌʌndərˈestɪmeɪt/	podceňovat
on the tip of your tongue	/ɒn ðə ˌtɪp əv jɔː ˈtʌŋ/	(mít) na jazyku
to get in the way	/ˌget ɪn ðə ˈweɪ/	překážet, být v cestě

Otázky k textu (zakroužkujte správnou odpověď)

1. Why do our brains forget, according to the article?

- A) Because most people simply have a bad memory for detail
- B) Because forgetting is a normal part of how memory works
- C) Because almost nobody today gets enough sleep at night
- D) Because we try to store far too many pictures at once

2. What did Hermann Ebbinghaus discover?

- A) Cramming the night before an exam is the best method
- B) Our memory keeps improving steadily as we grow older
- C) We forget most new information in the first few hours
- D) We remember everything that we have read twice over

3. What is “retrieval practice”?

- A) Recalling information from memory before you check it
- B) Reading your own notes again and again until bedtime
- C) Writing absolutely everything down straight away
- D) Studying together with a friend from the same class

4. Why does spaced repetition work?

- A) It saves a lot of time in the week before an exam
- B) It stops new information entering the brain at all
- C) It completely replaces the need for a good night's sleep
- D) Each review marks the information as worth keeping

Klíč - řešení s vysvětlením

1. B) Because forgetting is a normal part of how memory works

První odstavec: zapomínání působí jako selhání, ale je normální a užitečné – mozek si nechá to, co vypadá důležitě, a zbytek nechá vyhasnout.

2. C) We forget most new information in the first few hours

Druhý odstavec: většina nových informací zmizí už během prvních hodin, ale to, co přežije první den, se vytrácí mnohem pomaleji. To je křivka zapomínání.

3. A) Recalling information from memory before you check it

Čtvrtý odstavec: místo opakovaného čtení poznámek se snažíte informaci nejdříve vybavit z paměti. Právě tuhle námahu vědci nazývají retrieval practice.

4. D) Each review marks the information as worth keeping

Konec čtvrtého odstavce: učení rozložené do více dnů funguje, protože každé opakování mozku připomene, že informace stojí za uchování.