



# Auditory Memory

## What is Auditory Memory?

Almost everything we do involves speech, language and communication. The roots in language development, are cognitive skills: **attention, listening** and **memory**. These vital skills help children to understand, process and use language, so they are all important. Auditory memory helps us absorb sound (in particular verbal language). Without auditory memory, we wouldn't be able to process, remember or recall information (Bellis, 2003). So, you can see how crucial it is for language! Just like many other skills, auditory memory develops as children grow, however, some children might find it more difficult than others. Auditory Memory is the ability to recall what is heard after a period of time and includes both **short-term and long-term memory**.

## Why is it so Important?

If a child struggles with auditory memory, they can find it difficult to **follow instructions** and **pay attention**. Auditory memory also plays a crucial role in literacy. Children who have poor auditory memory skills can struggle to recognise sounds and match them to letters (Rowe et al., 2003). So, as you can understand, it can affect their learning. Let's think about the child's emotions and wellbeing for a minute; as children become aware of their difficulties, they may feel frustrated and it may affect their confidence (Tan, 1999).

## Identifying Auditory Memory Difficulties

**Pupils who have difficulties in this area may have:**

- an inability to retain more than one or two items of information from a lesson presented orally
- difficulty recalling information after a period of time, unless given specific support strategies
- difficulty in recalling information in the correct sequence
- visual/spatial strengths (learn better from charts, diagrams, videos, demonstrations and other visual materials)
- a good visual memory (be able to visualise information and present it in the form of mind maps, diagrams, charts, posters, illustrations)
- kinaesthetic strengths (learn better when actively involved in a lesson through movement and touch).

## Activities to Help Develop Auditory Memory

1. **Repeat and use information** – pupils could be asked to repeat a sequence of two or three colours and then thread beads or arrange cubes using that sequence. The pupils could also complete card number sequences in the same way.
2. **Reciting** – action rhymes, songs and jingles. Use the actions to aid the recall of key learning points.
3. **Memory and sequencing songs** – songs like Old Macdonald, Ten Green Bottles, One Man went to Mow.
4. **Story recall 1** – retell the main events of a story, using puppets and background scenery as cues.
5. **Story recall 2** – draw the main events in well-known, patterned stories (e.g. Little Red Hen, The Gingerbread Man).
6. **Kim's Game**-I went to market and I bought... – using real shopping items or pictures. Pupils have to recall the sequence of items bought.
7. **Recall simple sequences** – of personal experiences and events and share with the group or class.
8. **Recall verbal messages 1** – containing one or two elements and requiring a yes or no reply.
9. **Recall verbal messages 2** – containing one or two elements and requiring a simple sentence reply.
10. **Instructions** – recall and repeat task instructions containing one, then two, then three elements.
11. **Drawing 1** – story sequences from memory.
12. **Drawing 2** – the sequence of a simple activity.
13. **Explain** – the sequence of a simple activity.
14. **Recall** – days and events of the week.
15. **Alphabet sequences** – dot to dot, games and puzzles.
16. **Alphabet name game** – recall the sequence of the alphabet using names.
17. **Alphabet word game** – recall the sequence of the alphabet when using simple word banks.
18. **Draw a time sequence** – flow chart of the main events in the story.
19. **Organise sentences** – in the correct sequence, relating to a school event, using words and phrases that signal time as cues (e.g. after that, next).

20. **Mind-maps** – show the pupils how to use mind-maps to aid recall of key information

21. **Odd one Out** -Child identifies odd one out of a list of spoken items. The number of items should fit in with their memory level and might be related by: category dog, cat, orange horse rhyming cake, shoe, make, bake initial phoneme ball, bush, box, toy

22. **Chaining Games** -Child and adult take turns to add an item and/or detail to an increasing list. This might be a simple game of “I went shopping and I bought...”, or you can ask the child to include descriptions. Adult: “We went to the zoo and saw an elephant eating peanuts.” Child: “We went to the zoo and saw an elephant eating peanuts and a zebra with stripes” etc This idea can be adapted to similar games using food, furniture, clothes, vehicles etc.

23. **Expanding Sentences** -Child and adult take turns to increase the sentence length “I watched T.V.” “I watched T.V. on Wednesday” “I watched T.V. on Wednesday and saw Neighbours” “I watched T.V. on Wednesday and saw Neighbours with my mum”.

24. **Recalling Information** Adult produces a sentence and then asks child a question. e.g. “I went to MacDonald’s and ordered a Big Mac, a Coca Cola, some fries and a doughnut ... what did I buy?” Child has to remember in correct sequence.

25. **Recalling Specific Information** As above - but adult asks more complex questions e.g. “what did I order first?” “what did I drink?” etc or “listen to these numbers 9,7,6,4,2 ..... “what is the smallest number I said?”

26. **Making Deductions** “Listen to these words - play, tree, meat, cow, poet ..... which one is a human being?”

27. **Recall of Story Information** Adult reads a paragraph from child’s current reading book or a short story and then asks the child questions about it.

28. **Riddles** Adult describes an object for the child to identify e.g. “I’m thinking of a fruit that has a smooth skin, it has a stone in the middle, it is juicy, it grows on a tree and is purple”. Adult continues giving clues until child guesses correctly.

29. **Recall of Spoken Sequence of digits** e.g. 5, 1, 6, 9 of colours e.g. red, blue, yellow, green of animals e.g. cat, dog, fox, sheep etc.

30. **Chinese Whispers** Adult gathers a small group of children together; a whisper is passed around the circle and the original sentence is compared with the final sentence.

31. **Recall of Item In a group** each child tells his neighbour the name of e.g. an animal, a bird, a fish at the beginning of a session, for them to recall at the end of the session.

32. **Creating Stories** Pick a story theme and come up with a first line. Can you make up a story together making sure that you stick to the theme.

33. **Orienteering Type Activities** Child follows verbal directions from adult e.g. “go to the gate, turn left, take 6 paces and return to me”.

34. **Messages**- Child takes messages of increasing complexity from one adult to another (prearranged if necessary!”)

35. **Drawing to Instruction**- Adult draws a basic outline e.g. a house or a person, and child has to draw details as requested e.g. give the house a white door and 3 green windows”.