

6 year old Darick Buhr names Presidents
NewsDepth, February 18, 2009
Classroom Activities



http://www.kare11.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=539705&catid=2

Overview:

About a month ago, Barack Obama became the 44th President of the United States. Just about everyone, young and old, knows that fact. But how many of us can name the 43 presidents who came before him? And in under a minute? Six year old Darick Buhr from Champlin, Michigan can. Just how did he learn and remember all of their names? "This is how I first learned about Presidents," 6-year-old Darick Buhr said as he dumped a puzzle on the foyer floor of his parent's home. "I learned them from my brain, my brain does it," he added. Today's lessons will focus on memory and how students can learn the key concepts that can help them learn and remember long lists and improve their memory.

Grade Level: 3

Subject: Language Arts

Standards: Students will demonstrate a growing stock of sight words and remember them.

Classroom Activities:

1. Activity #1 Circle Memory Game

- Ask students what they think of Darick's presidential knowledge. Have students give suggestions as to how they think Darick could remember all of those names.
- Have your students form a big circle in the middle of the room. This is a memory game that has been around for a long time. Choose one person to start the game. That student will say "Barack Obama is the 44th President of the United States. The first President of the United States was George Washington." The next person will repeat that and add the next president's name. Each person will continue to add the Presidents until one forgets. That person is eliminated and the next person continues. You may have to prompt the students on the names of the presidents or you have your students prompt the next person (just in case you don't have a six year old around who knows them all!)

- You can repeat this game and try to use something simpler just to get them used to using their memories (you can use middle names, family or pet names, or birthdays etc.)
- This can also be adapted to a game passing a ball of some kind. Give the first person a ball. He will say something to be remembered. He then tosses the ball to another student and that person repeats the first word, number, or phrases and tosses the ball to someone else. Continue until everyone is eliminated.
- Discuss with students their “trade secrets” for being able to remember, or what difficulties they may have remembering things, especially lists.

2. Activity #2 Now I Know My ABC's

- Ask students how they learned their ABC's. Have one or more students join in singing the ABC song. You can ask them to go home and ask their parents (or grandparents) how they learned to spell ENCYCLOPEDIA.
- Music is a catchy way of remembering things. Do you remember learning jingles that were used for TV ads? How about Sesame Street? Do you remember singing songs that would help you remember letters or words? Any volunteers to sing one that you remember? (How about 30 Days has September, April, June, and November. All the rest have 31, except February.)
- As students to choose a partner. Give them a list of the first ten or fifteen Presidents of the United States (or another similar unfamiliar list. Use the states in our USA, etc). Have them work with their partner and ask them to come up with a tune that can help them memorize those names. They can use familiar tunes, like the Farmer in the Dell, or I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a fly. Tell them to go home and practice their lists and come back tomorrow with the lists memorized.

3. Activity #3 Imagination and Visualization

- Put a tray in the middle of your students. Put 12-15 objects on the tray. Have students look at the tray for 1-2 minutes. Have them walk back to their seats, remove the tray, and have the students write down as many objects as they can remember. Ask them what method they used to help them remember what was on the tray. Present them with the creative association and visualization method. When trying to remember a lot of things at one time, have them take each object and associate it with something unusual, colorful, wild or crazy. Then try to tie it together with the next object or any object at all in their mind. Then have them take a mental journey as they tie object 1 to object 2 to object 3. Refer to the references at the end of this activity.
- Try the same thing with a list of words. Ask them to listen as you recite the words. Then have them write down in order as many words as they can remember.

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| 1. Milk | 6. Ball |
| 2. Tree | 7. Car |
| 3. Shoe | 8. Pen |
| 4. Ring | 9. Dog |
| 5. Door | 10. Book |

- Refer to the following website for tips on how to help children memorize long lists of unrelated things. It will explain the importance of visualization and imagination in the memory process. <http://evernerve.com/2008/01/18/how-to-easily-memorize-long-lists/>
 - Another website that can help features an article titled “How to Memorize any long list in 20 minutes” <http://www.excommunicate.net/memorize-any-long-list-in-2-minutes>
 - <http://www.memory-improvement-tips.com/journey-method.html> Memory improvement tips
4. Activity #4 Remember with Mnemonic Devices - Acronym
- An acronym is a word formed by from the first letters or groups of letters in a name or phrase.
To be remembered: The planets, in order of their distance from the sun: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto
Mnemonic Device: MVEMJSUNP = My Very Earnest Mother Just Served Us Nine Pickles.
 - Give students a list of words you would like them to remember and help them form their own acronyms or have students work in pairs to create their own. This could be the Presidents, the States or something history related.
To be remembered: The Great Lakes, from west to east: Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior **Mnemonic Device:** Homes
 - For further reference to mnemonic devices:
<http://library.thinkquest.org/C0110291/tricks/mnemonics/index.php>

Additional Resources

<http://www.kidsmemory.com/>

Kids memory.com –Train your Brain

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/educational/#mem>

Games for children to help improve memory

http://math-and-reading-help-for-kids.org/articles/The_Value_of_Memory_Games--Making_Memories_with_Your_Child.html

The value of memory games

<http://www.thekidzpage.com/freekidsgames/memorygames.htm>

Free kid’s memory games

http://www.learn4good.com/games/card_and_dice/card_pairs_matching.htm

Learn 4 good Memory Games

<http://library.thinkquest.org/C0110291/basic/index.php>

Memory Basics