

Commemoration & Memorials

LESSON 1

In Celebration



ARCHAEOLOGY
time in transition

IT'S ABOUT TIME 2

**Aim(s)**

To enable the student to understand commemoration in the context of their own experience and to appreciate its importance for society in general.

**Objective(s)**

To make a connection between memory, remembering and commemoration.

**Time Period**

Present Day

**KEY INFORMATION****Lesson**

- Practically all human activities require memory.
- Commemoration as a way of remembering—in school and in the community.
- Burial monuments are important memorials.

Context

- Short term memory: information is taken in so it can be used but held only for a short time.
- Long term memory is the goal for most of our learning.
- In order to understand commemoration it is important to understand memory and the act of remembering.

**METHODOLOGY & MEDIUM**

- Instruction
- Discussion
- **Worksheet 1** How the School Remembers
- **Worksheet 2** Class photograph—Where? When? Why?
- **Student Handout** Commemoration and Memorial

**SECTIONS**

Section 1 Memory

Section 2 The Act of Remembering through Commemoration

Section 3 Commemoration in School

Section 4 Commemoration in our Community



Key Question(s) What is memory?
How does memory work?

Practically all human activities require memory.
Life would be very difficult without a properly functioning memory.

Short Term and Long Term Memory

- Short Term Memory—information is taken in but held in memory for only a few seconds.
- Our brains can hold 7 items of information for 20 seconds in short term memory.
- After 20 seconds, if any of the 7 items of information are not transferred into Long Term Memory then they are forgotten completely.



Short Term Memory and Long Term Memory are technical terms for the way our brains work. When somebody says 'I can only remember things for a short time' they are referring to a difficulty they have in retrieving things from their Long Term Memory and not from their Short Term memory. Remember, Short Term Memory empties completely after only 20 seconds. It is a mechanism whereby our brains are not overwhelmed by all the information our senses collect. If we can remember something after 20 seconds then it is in our Long Term Memory. Whether we can ever recall it again, even after a few minutes, is a function of Long Term Memory.



Teacher Instruction

Discuss with the students how memory is used in their everyday lives

- Did you remember to eat breakfast?
- Did you remember to brush your teeth?
- Did you remember to come to school?
- What would life be like if we could not remember to do these things every day?



Teacher Instruction

Exercise 1: Using Memory

Write a six digit telephone number on the board - e.g. 823429

Many of us have to remember pin numbers and most of them have four digits or telephone numbers which have at least six digits.

Give students a few seconds to memorise it and then, after 20 seconds, rub the number off the board. Ask students to write down the number. How many got it right?

If they have remembered the number after 20 seconds then it is in their Long Term Memory. But how many will be able to recall the number thirty minutes later? That is a function of our ability to recall things from Long Term Memory once they are lodged there.

Our minds are constantly being bombarded with information through our sense organs sight; smell; touch; hearing.

Examples: noise of traffic; movement in a room; the smell of food etc.

How do we deal with all this raw information?

- When somebody is talking to you they normally use about 150 words every minute. In order to understand what somebody is saying you need to create a piece of information for about every 5 words they use. That means our minds have to process 10 pieces of information every 20 seconds when we are listening to somebody talking to us.
- This is why we often struggle to understand somebody talking to us about a topic we know little about. If we know something about the topic then we will not need to transfer all the information from Short Term Memory into Long Term Memory. But if it is something new we will struggle to process 10 new pieces of information every 20 seconds (our average is 7) and transfer that much information from Short Term Memory into Long Term Memory.



Long Term Memory

- Short Term Memory empties fairly quickly (20 seconds) to allow new information to be processed. The information is either lost or stored away in the brain for future reference in Long Term Memory.
- Long Term Memory is the goal for our learning. Transfer of information to Long Term Memory, and the subsequent retrieval of it into consciousness, is not necessarily automatic and often needs help.



Teacher Instruction

Exercise 2

Ask students to recall the telephone number. Those that can have committed the number to their Long Term Memory and have been able to retrieve it.

Some students will probably have forgotten the number. They all held it in Short Term Memory when they saw it written on the board. Some did not transfer it into Long Term Memory and have forgotten it completely. Others transferred the information into Long term Memory (if they remembered the number after 20 seconds) but have difficulty recalling the number from their Long Term Memory. This is the way our brains work. A students ability to transfer information from Short Term Memory into Long Term Memory varies but can be greatly improved by special memory techniques.

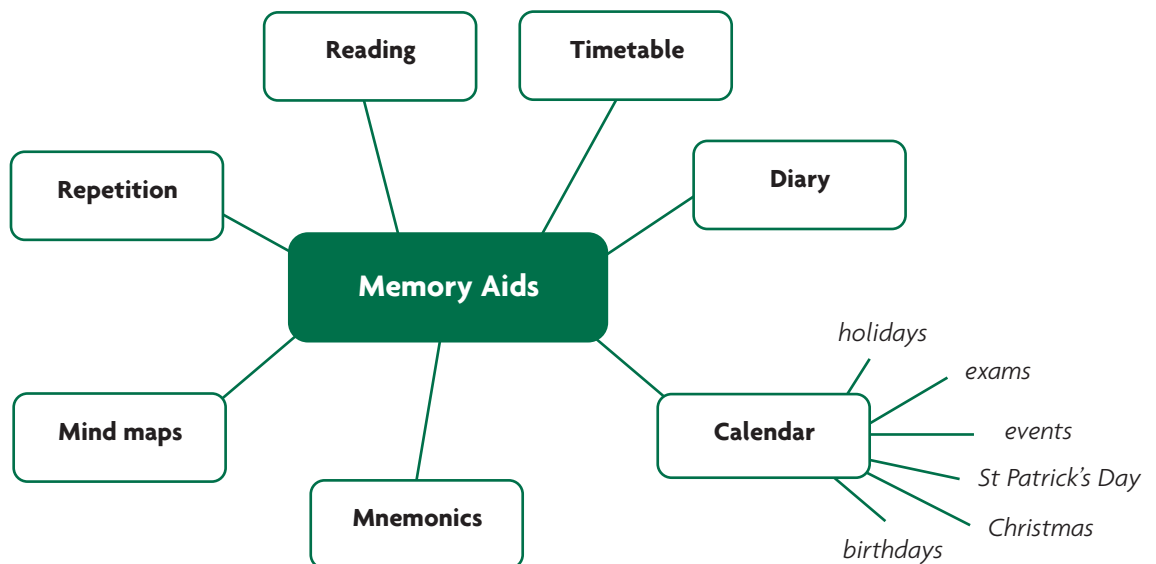


Teacher Instruction

Discuss how memory is used in the students own academic experience, for example, learning a poem, a mathematical hypothesis etc.

Emphasise the use of repetition and special techniques when trying to improve memory. Write the answers on the board leading them from practical memory aids such as repetition and mind maps. Use their own experiences

- Timetable.
- Homework diary—very important to remember all home work.
- Calendar.



Teacher Instruction

Build up this image with students on the board.

Explore through the calendar what days are important to the students, indicating on which of these they come together to celebrate or commemorate.



Background Information

A **mnemonic** device is a memory aid. Mnemonics are often verbal, something such as a very short poem or a special word used to help a person remember something, e.g. Every Good Boy Deserves Favour (the musical notes EGBDF).

SECTION 2 The Act of Remembering through Commemoration



Key Question(s) How do we commemorate?

Celebration and commemoration have been an integral part of human societies for thousands of years. They are part of people's personal and cultural identity. This 'coming together' is often referred to as a 'celebration'; we 'celebrate' our birthdays; we 'celebrate' Christmas. The form of the celebration can vary from a party to a religious ceremony; the celebration may be a joyful or mournful occasion. But what all these events have in common is a coming together of people to remember something. We call these events commemorations. Commemoration means the 'coming together to remember by a form of public expression. Lets now look at the ways we commemorate in our school and the wider community.



Teacher Instruction

Write the word **commemorate** on the board and explore its meaning by breaking it up into three units

COM-MEMO-ORATE

Com – from the Latin word meaning together or jointly (*community*)

Memo – from the Latin word meaning 'remember' (*memorandum*)

Orate – from Latin orator meaning to speak in public (*orator*)

Commemoration means ‘coming together to remember by a form of public expression’.



Great War Memorial, Cahir, Co. Tipperary.

Let us now look at the ways we commemorate in our school and the wider community.

SECTION 3 Commemoration in School



Key Question(s) How Do We Commemorate In Our School?

Commemorations and celebrations in our school



Teacher Instruction

Distribute **Worksheet 1** and explore how the school commemorates.

Discuss the results in terms of how commemorations are used by the school community to reinforce its sense of itself as a place of education. How much do these commemorations make the students feel part of that community?

Every school is different and every school will commemorate in different ways. The following is a list of some common types of commemoration your school may have

- **Events:** a school mass or service probably marks the start of the school year. This may include a specifically commemorative element like prayers for deceased students and members of staff. Many schools also have an annual prize-giving day and this probably contains a commemorative element like special awards or scholarships in memory of a named donor. A prize/award may be called after the schools founder, patron saint etc. Another event, which may have a commemorative element, is the school concert or some other public performance in the school.
- **Memorials:** the school also probably contains a variety of memorials put up to commemorate a wide variety of people or events. These may just be class pictures from past years or pictures of events like school concerts, or of winning teams or individual prize winners.



Teacher Instruction

Discuss the results and write them up on the board.

Prompt the students by giving locations in the school. Finally circle all those that leave a physical memorial. Also make the connection between the physical nature of memorials and archaeological monuments e.g. ancient headstones and tombs, ogham stones, burial monuments.

SECTION 4 Commemoration in our Community



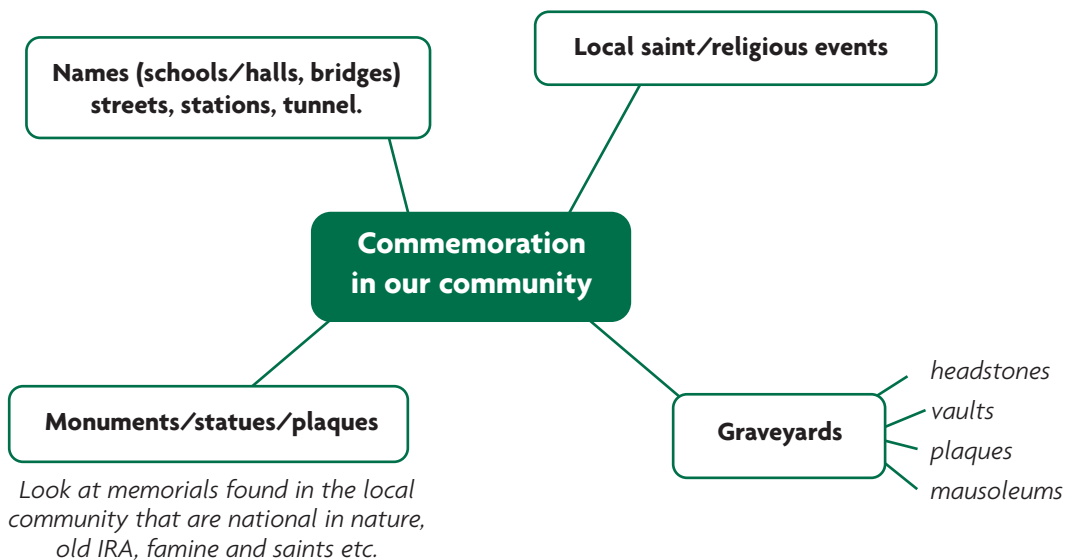
Key Question: How do we commemorate in our community?



Teacher Instruction

Use the blackboard to explore the various ways a community celebrates/commemorates past events and peoples. Lead the students in discussion by looking at monuments/statues/name plaques in the local area which the students will be familiar with. Conclude the discussion by considering headstones in a graveyard.

These are some examples of named places (include your own for your own locality): *Jack Lynch Tunnel, Kent Railway Station, St. Patrick's Bridge.*



Teacher Instruction

Lead the discussion of the headstone by discussing what is on a headstone under the following headings

- Inscription—script type, method.
- Epitaph—name, age, location.
- Religious symbols.

Draw the outline of a headstone on the board and fill in the different elements.



Some interesting inscriptions of headstones:

"I told you I was ill" Spike Milligan

"Where I am you will be" Anon

"Cast a cold eye on life, on death. Horseman pass by." W.B. Yeats



Teacher Instruction

Optional Activity

Distribute **Worksheet 2**. Look at an old school photograph e.g. a past class, and include some of the following questions

- Where was the photograph taken?
- Can you find out the names of the students in the photograph?
- Do any of the teachers remember the class?
- Where are these students now?



Teacher Instruction

Take a formal photo of the class.

Add information about each student in the photograph (name, where they come from). Give each person in TY class a signed copy of the photograph. Put the original photograph in a frame. Place the framed photograph on a wall in the school in an appropriate location. The class is now commemorated by this memorial.

See Projects section: Commemorating the Dead

WEB LINKS

WWW.



Human Memory Tests

<http://humanfactors.arc.nasa.gov/cognition/tutorials/ModelOf/index.html>

Hunger in History:
Monuments to the Great Famine

<http://frontrow.bc.edu/program/kelleher/>

Irish Roadside Memorials

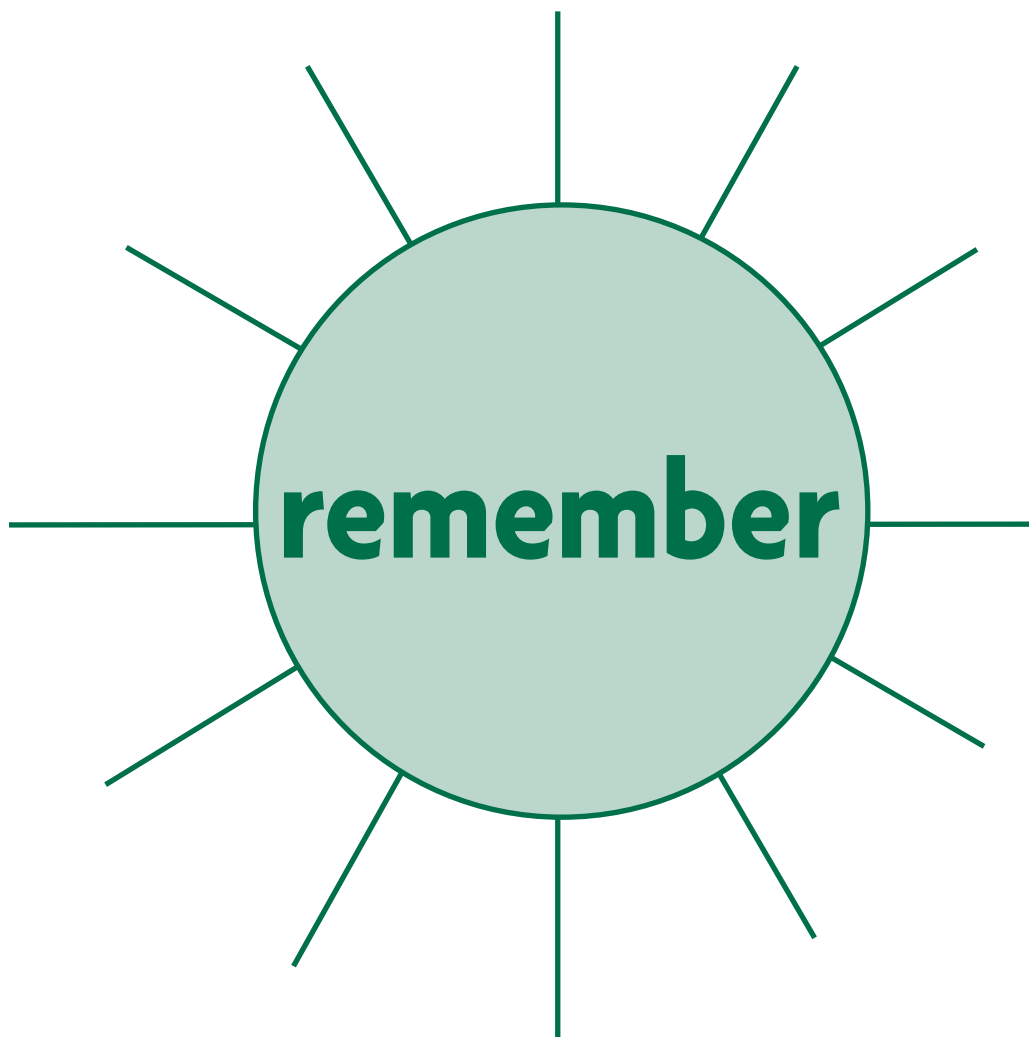
www.irishroadside.com/index.htm

Famous Last Words!

www.famousquotes.me.uk/famouslastwords.htm

Actual Epitaphs

www.blakjak.demon.co.uk/epitfs.htm



Old School Photograph

Place photograph here
Add additional questions if required

1. Can you tell when this photograph was taken?

2. Describe the clothes that they are wearing—style/date.

3. What age are the students?

4. Describe their hair styles?

5. What is the ratio of boys to girls?

6. Is this photograph a suitable memorial to this class?

7. Would you like your class to be commemorated in this way?

Memory Our ability to remember

- Practically all human activities require memory.
- Life would be very difficult without a properly functioning memory.

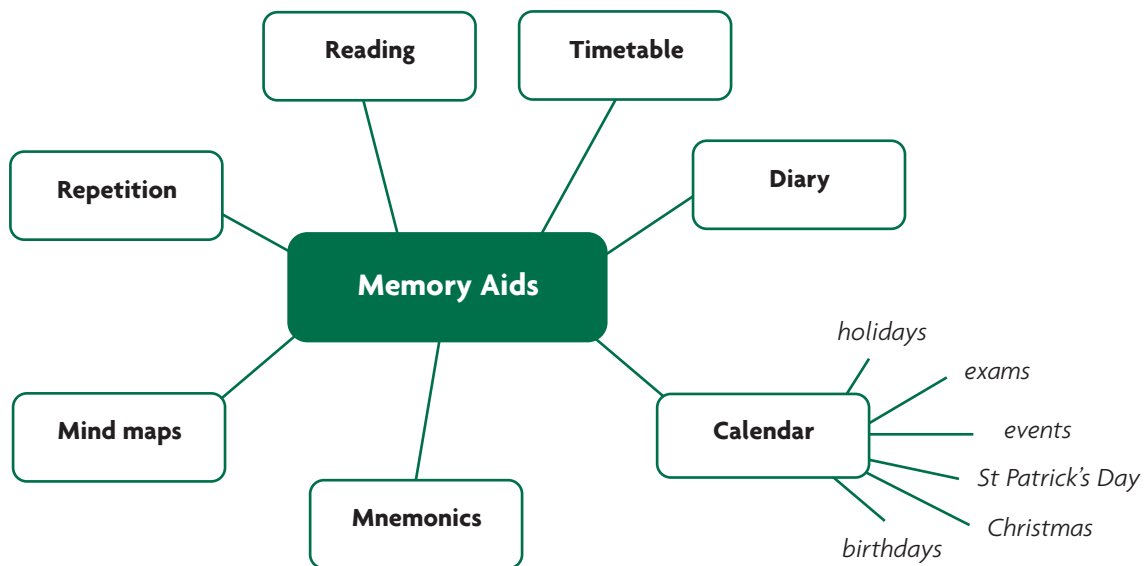


Short Term

Short term—information is taken in and retained for a few seconds e.g. telephone number

Long term memory is the ultimate goal for most of our learning. Transfer of information to long term memory is not necessarily automatic and often needs help.

Memory Aids



Names (schools/halls, bridges)
streets, stations, tunnel.

Local saint/religious events

Commemoration in our community

Monuments/statues/plaques

Graveyards

headstones
vaults
plaques
mausoleums

Commemorations—
'coming together to remember'

- School commemorations
- Community commemorations
- Local dead heroes, famous historical or religious people, etc



People are remembered by inscriptions on headstones

- Name, date of birth and death, address
- Inscription—script type, method
- Epitaph—name, age, location, etc
- Religious symbols

