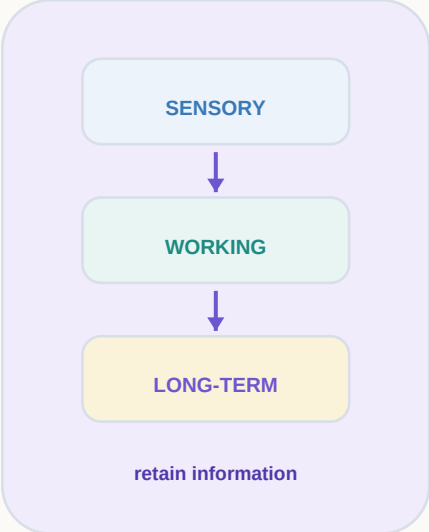
AP PSYCHOLOGY | UNIT 2

TOPIC 2.5

Storing Memories

Storage keeps encoded information available. Duration, capacity, rehearsal, biology, and development shape what remains.



FROM A TRACE TO A LASTING MEMORY

ENCODE — take it in → **REHEARSE** — keep it active → **CONNECT** — add meaning → **STORE** — retain it

BY THE END, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

1. Compare sensory, short-term, working, and long-term storage.
2. Distinguish maintenance rehearsal from elaborative rehearsal.
3. Explain autobiographical memory and major storage impairments.

BIG IDEA

Memory is not one container. Different systems hold different information for different lengths of time.

1 How memories stay available

Storage systems differ in duration, capacity, and what they do with information.

STORAGE SYSTEMS

SENSORY MEMORY

Very brief record of incoming sights, sounds, and other sensory input.

SNAPSHOT

SHORT-TERM MEMORY

Brief, limited holding space when information is not actively manipulated.

HOLD

WORKING MEMORY

Limited mental workspace that actively holds and works with information.

HOLD + USE

LONG-TERM MEMORY

Relatively durable store with a very large capacity for knowledge and experience.

RETAIN

REHEARSAL CHANGES THE TRACE

MAINTENANCE

Repeat information to keep it active: say the number again and again.

ELABORATIVE

Add meaning and connections: explain it, compare it, or link it to an example.

THE SELF AS A MEMORY CUE

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY

Memories connected to your own life and identity can be especially meaningful and memorable.

HSAM

Highly superior autobiographical memory: unusually detailed recall of personal dates and events.

2 When storage is disrupted

The pattern of what is lost helps identify which memory process has been affected.

AMNESIA: USE THE EVENT AS THE DIVIDING LINE

RETROGRADE

Loss of memories formed before an injury, illness, or other event.

PAST ← EVENT

ANTEROGRADE

Difficulty forming new long-term memories after an injury, illness, or other event.

EVENT → FUTURE

OTHER LIMITS ON STORAGE

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

A progressive brain disease that can impair memory and other cognitive abilities. New learning is often affected early, and impairment broadens over time.

DISEASE-RELATED

INFANTILE AMNESIA

Most people have few lasting autobiographical memories from the earliest years of life. Brain, language, and self-development all contribute.

DEVELOPMENT-RELATED

CASE CLUES

PAST LOST	NEW LOST	EARLY LIFE
Cannot recall life before an accident	Cannot store new long-term memories	Few memories from the first years
RETROGRADE	ANTEROGRADE	INFANTILE

QUICK SORT

Before event = retrograde. New memories after event = anterograde. Progressive decline = Alzheimer's disease. Sparse earliest-childhood recall = infantile amnesia.