

Other things to try: 6b

Remembering three and then four items



Why is this important?

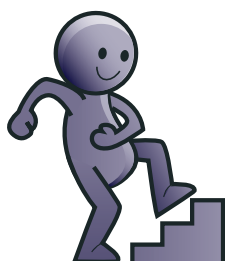
Verbal understanding can be likened to a 'list' of things that need to be remembered in order to carry out a task. If, for example, a three-word instruction is given (e.g. 'wash doll's face'), the child has to remember 'wash', 'doll' *and* 'face'. If he/she can't do this, it may be that auditory memory is not yet sufficiently developed.

What to do

- Gather together a selection of five–six familiar everyday items.
- Give the child a small bag/basket.
- Put the objects on the floor or on a table.
- Ask the child to put three things into the shopping bag at a time.
- Don't let the child pick up the items until you've finished giving the instruction. Gently hold the child's hands until you've finished talking if necessary.
- Make sure the vocabulary is familiar.

Alternative theme

- Try changing the theme of the game to maintain interest or to fit in with the curriculum (e.g. shopping at the supermarket, clothes shop, jewellers, pet shop or shoe shop). You could also try packing for holidays (e.g. to a cold or hot destination) or for a picnic.



Step up

- Ask the child for more items.
- Have a wide range of items from different semantic fields.
- Increase the selection to choose from.
- Put the items a little distance away: the child has to remember the list for longer.
- Ask for the objects in a different order from how they are laid out on the table/floor.

- Try putting the items in a different room – this increases the ‘load’ as the child has to remember for longer and can’t actually see the items as you say the list.
- During everyday routines, ask the child to help bring things from elsewhere in the house.
- Weave in a time delay of increasing length.

Step down

- Reduce the number of items you are asking for – even to the three you are aiming for.
- Use a smaller number of items to choose from.
- Put the things within easy reach.
- Start the game as a matching activity (e.g. by giving the child a picture shopping list of the items they need to collect).
- Encourage the child to repeat back the things to collect (i.e. use verbal rehearsal).
- Ensure the items are from the same semantic group.

