

## Select Readings, Second Edition Upper-Intermediate, Chapter 4 Test

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

### Earliest Memories

How far back can you remember? Really think about it. What is your earliest memory? Perhaps images of a birthday party come to mind, or maybe glimpses of a long-ago family vacation. Now think about how old you were when the event occurred. Chances are that those early memories extend no further back than your third birthday. And although conversations with family members or photo albums may trigger more, the fact is that you can probably only come up with a handful of memories from between the ages of three and seven.

Anything earlier than about 3.5 years is, for most people, a blank slate<sup>1</sup>. Most of us have what the psychologist Sigmund Freud first called *childhood amnesia* – an inability to remember our earliest childhood experiences. Or do we?

As science continues to reveal more and more about the mysteries of the brain, the question of just how far back we truly can remember and how those memories affect us as adults is coming into the spotlight. Every emotionally meaningful experience—whether joyous or painful—is stored in memory and seems to have a lasting impact. The way our world feels to us as babies influences our developing personality, emotions, and relationships for the long term.

Aside from the childhood stories we can remember, there are many different kinds of ‘memory.’ And we probably ‘remember’ a lot more than we realize. For example, we all know the terms *short-term memory* and *long-term memory*. But have you heard the terms *explicit memory* and *implicit memory*?

Explicit memory is the kind of memory that is conscious and gives us the ability to tell a story that makes sense of what happened. This type of memory only develops fully in most people around the age of three.

Implicit memory is available in our brain from birth, or possibly even earlier. Implicit memory is unconscious. So, while we may not remember the events of those earliest memories, they have left a lasting impression on our thinking, feeling, and behavior.

Because of the ability our brain has to store and hold information from an extremely early age, psychologists today are stressing<sup>2</sup> more and more the importance of creating positive early childhood memories. While a child may not ‘remember’ images from infancy<sup>3</sup>, psychologists agree that the images stick with us and form the basis of many of our future feelings and opinions.

Just as we might not remember learning to walk, even though our legs and feet seemed to do this perfectly now, some of our most important lessons in human relations were learned at a time that our bodies, but not our minds, can remember.

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<sup>1</sup> **a blank slate** empty

<sup>2</sup> **are stressing** think (something) is more important

<sup>3</sup> **infancy** usually the first 6–12 months of life

1. *Childhood amnesia* is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. an inability to remember one's earliest childhood experiences
  - B. an inability to remember one's memories from between the ages of 3 and 7
  - C. an inability to remember any of your childhood memories
  - D. an inability to remember unhappy childhood experiences
2. True or false? According to Sigmund Freud, most people have childhood amnesia.
  - A. True
  - B. False
3. Which of the following is not true? Explicit memory \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. helps us make sense of past experiences
  - B. is unconscious
  - C. usually develops at about three years of age
  - D. is conscious
4. Implicit memory \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. is conscious
  - B. does not effect our emotions
  - C. is not available in our brain before birth
  - D. can affect our behavior later in life
5. In the first paragraph, the word 'trigger' means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. to stop
  - B. to cause
  - C. to use a gun
  - D. to decrease
6. The main idea of the article is that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. even experiences you can't remember affect your life
  - B. only the events you remember affect your life
  - C. experiences after the age of three have the most impact on your life
  - D. starting school is important
7. In the last paragraph, the author uses learning to walk as an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. a past experience we may not remember but that affects us now
  - B. a past experience that we probably remember
  - C. a past positive experience
  - D. something that had to be consciously learned
8. The experiences that are most likely stored in our memory are \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. positive ones
  - B. negative ones
  - C. emotionally meaningful ones
  - D. the most recent ones
9. We can infer that the author thinks that trying to remember the emotions you had before the age of three \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. is not possible for most people
  - B. is impossible because you could not speak yet
  - C. is important to understand how you feel today
  - D. should be avoided because it could be dangerous
10. In paragraph 1, 'Chances are' means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. there's a 50% chance
  - B. regrettably
  - C. probably
  - D. definitely