

Hold and Do

I say 3 words: cat, tree, spoon. Say
them back in reverse order.

Brain note: holding a list and re-ordering it
are two jobs at once.

Hold and Do

Now try 4 words backward: hat,
cloud, drum, apple. Harder than
three.

Brain note: most people hold only about four
things at a time.

Hold and Do

I put 5 objects on a tray. Look,
then I cover it. Name them all.

Brain note: looking with a plan to remember
beats just looking.

Hold and Do

Same tray, now with 8 objects.

Which ones can you still name?

Brain note: going past your limit is where
forgetting begins.

Hold and Do

Two step direction: touch your
nose, then hop twice. Do both in
order.

Brain note: the brain holds the steps and their
order at the same time.

Hold and Do

Three step direction: clap, spin,
then sit down. No reminders.

Brain note: each extra step takes more room
on your mental desk.

Hold and Do

I went to the store and bought
bread. Add one item, repeat the
list.

Brain note: repeating from the start keeps the
list alive.

Hold and Do

Store game again, but each new item must start with the next letter.

Brain note: a rule to follow costs extra mental space.

Hold and Do

I clap a pattern of three. Clap it
back exactly the same.

Brain note: rhythm is held in a sound loop,
like a short echo.

Hold and Do

Longer pattern: five claps with one
pause in the middle. Copy it.

Brain note: a pause is information, so it must
be held too.

Hold and Do

Look at 6 things. Close your eyes. I

take one away. Which one?

Brain note: spotting a gap means comparing
now with what you held.

Hold and Do

I move one object to a new spot.

Eyes open. What changed?

Brain note: your brain stores where things
are, not just what.

Hold and Do

Number string: 4, 9, 2. Say it back.

Then try 4, 9, 2, 7.

Brain note: digits are quick to say, so they
test your span well.

Hold and Do

Say these numbers backward: 3, 8,

1. Now try four numbers.

Brain note: flipping numbers is harder than repeating them.

Hold and Do

Color sequence: red, blue, blue,
green. Say it back in order.

Brain note: colors have no natural order, so
you must rehearse.

Hold and Do

I name three colors. Point to them
around the room in that order.

Brain note: holding a list while your body
moves is two jobs.

Hold and Do

I tell a short story. Then one
question: who had the umbrella?

Brain note: details fade unless you decide
they matter.

Hold and Do

Retell my story in your own words,
with every step in order.

Brain note: retelling in order means holding
the whole shape.

Hold and Do

Name chain: I say a name, you add
one. Keep the whole list going.

Brain note: each new name joins a list you are
already holding.

Hold and Do

I tap three spots on the table. Tap
the same spots in order.

Brain note: the brain can hold a short
movement sequence.

Hold and Do

Harder taps: four spots, and one of them is a double tap.

Brain note: repeats inside a sequence are easy to lose track of.

Hold and Do

Shopping list of 4. Walk to the
next room, then say the list.

Brain note: distraction is what knocks items
off the desk.

Hold and Do

Shopping list of 6. Try grouping
them in pairs to hold more.

Brain note: grouping into chunks lets you hold
more at once.

Hold and Do

I say 5 words. Say back only the
animals.

Brain note: sorting while holding is harder
than holding alone.

Hold and Do

I say six words. Say them back in
alphabetical order.

Brain note: re-sorting a held list is one of the
hardest jobs.

Hold and Do

Count backward from 20 while I
clap. Do not lose your place.

Brain note: keeping your place through noise
is working memory.

Hold and Do

I say a phone number. Wait ten
seconds, then say it back.

Brain note: unrehearsed lists fade in about
twenty seconds.

Hold and Do

Same number, but hum a tune
while you wait. Then say it.

Brain note: humming blocks the quiet
repeating you were using.

Hold and Do

Copy this pattern: two claps, one
stomp, two claps.

Brain note: patterns are easier to hold than
random lists.

Hold and Do

I say four words. Which does not belong, and what were the rest?

Brain note: you hold all four words while comparing them.

Hold and Do

I set out 4 cards, then turn one over. What was on it?

Brain note: a short picture stays in mind after the eyes move away.

Hold and Do

Give someone a three step
direction. Check they did it in
order.

Brain note: you hold the plan and watch at
the same time.

Hold and Do

Say the days of the week
backward, starting from Sunday.

Brain note: known lists still take effort to run
backward.

Hold and Do

I say three words. Do 5 jumping
jacks. Now say the words.

Brain note: a busy body makes words much
harder to hold.

Hold and Do

Word chain: each word starts with
the last letter of the one before.

Brain note: you hold a letter while searching
for a word.

Hold and Do

I read four instructions. Do only the
second and the fourth.

Brain note: choosing steps means holding all
of them first.

Hold and Do

Look at a picture for 15 seconds.

Then answer three questions.

Brain note: you only keep the parts you
actually looked at.

Hold and Do

Add in your head: 3 plus 4, then
add 5, then take away 2.

Brain note: mental math means holding a
running total.

Hold and Do

Spell a short word out loud, then
spell it backward.

Brain note: you keep the letters while walking
through them again.

Hold and Do

I hide 3 objects around the room.

Later, tell me where each one is.

Brain note: holding places over time links to
longer memory.

Hold and Do

Repeat this sentence, then repeat
it without the last word.

Brain note: dropping a word means editing
what you still hold.

Hold and Do

Two lists at once: my three fruits
and your three animals. Say both.

Brain note: two lists compete for the same
small space.

Hold and Do

Make up your own memory game
and teach it to someone else.

Brain note: teaching means holding the rules
and explaining them.

Hold and Do

Also try: Sustained Focus Printables,
Divergent Thinking Games, and Task
Breakdown Templates.

Brain note: Find every set at
NextGenLearners.com.