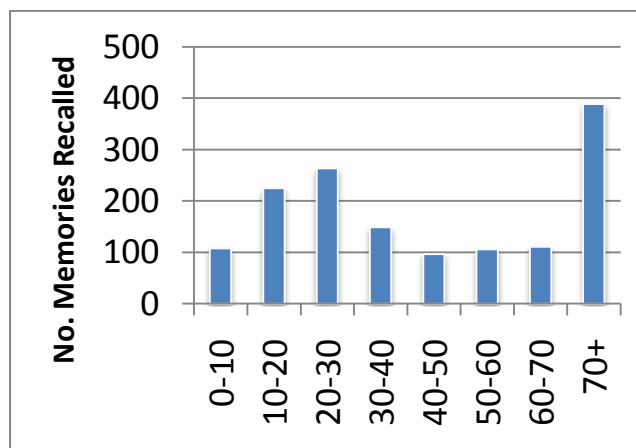


Autobiographical memory - evidence

You are learning how to...	In the context of...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand psychological evidence • Draw conclusions from psychological evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Autobiographical memory

Rubin et al (1986)

Rubin et al asked elderly participants to recall as many memories about their lives as they could. They counted how many memories were retrieved from each decade of life. There was a distinctive pattern to the times in life that memories were retrieved from. There was enhanced retrieval of events from the past few years (a **recency effect**), increased retrieval of events from the late teens and early twenties (a **remembrance bump**) and very low recall of events from early childhood, with none from the first couple of years (**infantile amnesia**).



Bahrnick et al (1975)

Bahrnick tested elderly participants on recall of the people they had been to high school with. A number of different tests were used. Accuracy was assessed by checking against high school year books.

Test	After 34yrs	After 48yrs
Free recall of names	60%	30%
Photo recognition	90%	40%
Name recognition	90%	80%

Linton (1986)

Linton aimed to investigate the accuracy of autobiographical memories. She kept a diary for six years in which she noted down the details of two or three events daily. At the end of each month she chose two events at random and attempted to recall them in as much detail as possible. She found that recall was enhanced when: (1) the events were pleasant ones; and (2) they had been recalled on more than one occasion.

Waagenar (1986)

Waagenar took a similar approach to Linton, but used more structure when recording 2400 events in his life over a six year period. For each event he recorded information about *who* the memory centred on, *what* happened, *where* it happened and *when* it happened. Each event was also rated for *salience* (how often it would be expected to occur), pleasantness and emotional involvement and a 'critical detail' about the event was also recorded. Recall was tested by supplying cues from his records. First, the *who* cue was given and he tried to recall *what*, *where* and *when*. Over a four year period, accurate recall dropped from 70% to 30%. *What* was the most effective recall cue and *where* was very poor at provoking accurate recall. Pleasant events were easier to recall, as were salient ones and ones that had higher levels of emotional involvement.