

How can I improve my memory?

Tricks of the trade

Alex Jones: Let's have a look then.

Ed Cooke: OK, we're going to use a story technique but I'm going to need you to find the first association for each of the first 10 elements and I want you to find the association – literally the first thing which pops into your mind – before we do anything else. Hydrogen.

Alex: Swimming pool.

Ed: Helium.

Alex: A balloon.

Ed: Lithium.

Alex: A glass of milk!

Ed: Beryllium.

Now we're going to try and string these images which stand for those elements as fast as we can, into a narrative. See if you can tell a story. Why is there water over there?

Alex: I'm in the swimming pool. I come out because somebody's holding a balloon. I take the balloon on the way over to the table, I grab a glass of milk because I'm thirsty from swimming. And then we've got the Beryllium. That has to be a man with Brylcreem in his hair.

Ed: Brylcreem, good.

Alex: So I'm taking the milk to the man with Brylcreem in his hair, or any other hair product. Boron – would be Sasha 'Boron' Cohen so he's come to join us at the table. We all disappear in a puff of smoke, puff of carbon.

Ed: Carbon smoke. And then it's Nitrogen.

Alex: We're in a nightclub. We dance all night. Oxygen is a gulp of air so maybe we come out of the nightclub and take a big breath.

Ed: Perfect. And Fluorine...

Alex: We brush our teeth because that's what you want to do after being in a nightclub.

Ed: And it's morning time.

Alex: And we're still wearing our neon t-shirts!

Ed: Amazing. OK, do you think you've got that story in your mind?

Alex: I hope so.

Ed: This time see if you can just say the elements themselves and not the images.

Alex: Hydrogen. Helium. Lithium. Beryllium. Boron. Carbon. Nitrogen. Oxygen. Fluorine and Neon.

Ed: Unbelievable. Very very well done.

Alex: 10!

Ed: Amazing and just for superhero-dome, can you try doing it backwards?

Alex: OK maybe. Neon. Fluorine. Oxygen. Nitrogen. Carbon. Boron. Beryllium. Lithium. Helium. Hydrogen.

Ed: Very impressive. Backwards and forwards.

Alex: I'm so pleased!