

Memory Quotations

Your Tasks

1. *Read through each quotation about memory.*
2. *Create a list of the three quotations that you think do the best at describing the nature of memory. Explain why you made each selection.*
3. *Write your own quotation about your understanding of the nature of memory.*

1. Memory is the mother of all wisdom. ~**Aeschylus**

2. Memory is deceptive because it is colored by today's events. ~**Albert Einstein**

3. Memory narrativises itself. ~**Aleksandar Hemon**

4. Memory is a complicated thing, a relative to truth, but not its twin.

Barbara Kingsolver

5. It's surprising how much memory is built around things unnoticed at the time.

Barbara Kingsolver

6. No memory is ever alone; it's at the end of a trail of memories, a dozen trails that each have their own associations. ~**Louis L'Amour**

7. Human memory is a marvelous but fallacious instrument. The memories which lie within us are not carved in stone; not only do they tend to become erased as the years go by, but often they change, or even increase by incorporating extraneous features.

Primo Levi

8. Memory is the personal journalism of the soul. ~**Richard Schickel**

9. Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quickly you hardly catch it going. ~**Tennessee Williams**

10. Man is the only creature whose emotions are entangled with his memory.

Marjorie Holmes

11. Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.

Albert Schweitzer

12. For memory, we use our imagination. We take a few strands of real time and carry them with us, then like an oyster we create a pearl around them. ~**John Banville**

13. It is all very well to copy what one sees, but it is far better to draw what one now only sees in one's memory. That is a transformation in which imagination collaborates with memory. ~**Edgar Degas**

14. Intelligence is the wife, imagination is the mistress, memory is the servant.

Victor Hugo

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15. Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory; nothing can come of nothing. ~**Joshua Reynolds**

16. Anyone who conducts an argument by appealing to authority is not using his intelligence; he is just using his memory. ~**Leonardo da Vinci**

17. Memory is not wisdom; idiots can by rote repeat volumes. Yet what is wisdom without memory? ~**Martin Farquhar Tupper**

18. The secret of food lies in memory – of thinking and then knowing what the taste of cinnamon or steak is. ~**Jerry Saltz**

19. Everybody knows how fallible memory can sometimes be. You remember certain fragments precisely, but as soon as you try to join the fragments together, for a story, there is a certain – not falsification, but a shifting. ~**Gunter Grass**

20. I'm interested in memory because it's a filter through which we see our lives, and because it's foggy and obscure, the opportunities for self-deception are there. In the end, as a writer, I'm more interested in what people tell themselves happened rather than what actually happened. ~**Kazuo Ishiguro**

21. We're all just a bundle of habits shaped by our memories. And to the extent that we control our lives, we do so by gradually altering those habits, which is to say the networks of our memory. No lasting joke, or invention, or insight, or work of art was ever produced by an external memory. Not yet, at least. ~**Joshua Foer**

22. Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future. ~**Elie Wiesel**

Possible Discussion Questions

- 1. To what extent can we trust our memories?**
- 2. Are some memories more reliable than others?**
- 3. How is our understanding of the world shaped by our memories? Are these understandings true?**
- 4. What does the nature of memory reveal about the study of history? Science? Literature? Art? Other subjects?**