

# eslactive

## Memory Tray

Tags: [beginner](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [vocabulary](#), [warmer](#)

In the Memory Tray ESL game, students have to try and remember a set of items previously shown to them.

 1+  5-15 mins  Projector and Prepared Images **or** Random Objects

### Setup

Prepare some sets of items to show to your students. If you have a projector, you can project them as images (just search 'memory tray' in [Google Images](#)). Alternatively, you could add a touch of realia and use the actual items on a table, then cover them with a coat/jacket.

These could be sets of random items for a warmer, or items from a specific vocabulary category. Either way, use vocabulary appropriate to your level. A good strategy is to gradually increase the difficulty of the game by showing fewer items at first then moving up to larger sets.

Students can play this game individually or in pairs (useful for larger classes and larger sets). Each student/pair will need a piece of paper.

### Game

1. Present a set of items to the students for a limited amount of time. Thirty seconds works well with relatively small sets, but you can increase the time slightly for more items. Students must not write anything down during this time.
2. Remove the items from view. The students now have one or two minutes (depending on the number of items) to try and write down all the items they saw.
3. The students/pairs swap papers. Elicit the items from the students (writing them on the board if necessary), then show the set again for any remaining items.
4. The students award one point for each correct item, but only half if the item is spelled incorrectly (optional, but good when practising specific vocabulary).

5. The students total the points and swap the papers back. Repeat the process for future sets of items. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

### Target Language

The Memory Tray ESL Activity works really well as a warmer. You can adapt it to beginner or intermediate students, simply by selecting appropriate vocabulary items.

You can also use it to review a particular vocabulary topic, by limiting the items to specific categories. Note however that it may be difficult to find images that only include one type of vocabulary. Some categories that work well with realia are [food](#), [classroom objects](#) and [household objects](#).