

# NOT BORING MEDIA

## THE GIRL WHO REMEMBERS EVERY DAY

High-Interest Nonfiction Reading Passage

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Reading Passage ✓ Comprehension Questions
- ✓ Answer Key ✓ Teacher Guide

GRADES 4-6 • LEXILE ~750L • DOK LEVELS 1-4

*Reading they'll actually do.*

## NOT BORING MEDIA — TERMS OF USE

### TERMS OF USE

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### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ High-interest nonfiction reading passage (300-400 words)
- ✓ 6 comprehension questions spanning DOK levels 1-4
- ✓ Complete answer key with explanations
- ✓ Teacher guide with standards, pacing, and extensions

Questions or feedback? Leave a review or message us through TPT!

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Reading they'll actually do.

# THE GIRL WHO REMEMBERS EVERY DAY

Most people forget what they had for lunch last Tuesday. Jill Price remembers every single day of her life since she was 14 years old—what she ate, what she wore, what was on the news, and how she felt.

Price has a condition called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory, or HSAM. Fewer than 100 people in the world have been confirmed to have it. When given any date from the past several decades, Price can immediately recall exactly what happened to her that day, often including obscure details like the weather or what song was playing on the radio.

Scientists at the University of California tested Price extensively and found her memory to be genuine. They would give her random dates, and she could describe them perfectly. They checked her answers against old calendars, news archives, and her own diaries. She was almost never wrong.

But HSAM isn't the superpower it might seem. Price has described her condition as 'a burden.' She can't forget anything—not embarrassing moments, not painful breakups, not every mistake she's ever made. While most people's bad memories fade with time, hers stay vivid and immediate. The past is never truly past for her.

'I remember everything,' Price said in an interview. 'The good, the bad, and the ugly. I can't turn it off.' She experiences memory not as something she can choose to access, but as an endless stream that runs through her mind constantly.

People with HSAM don't have perfect memory for everything. Price can't memorize phone numbers better than anyone else, and she didn't ace tests in school by remembering textbooks. The enhanced memory only applies to autobiographical events—the story of their own lives.

Scientists are still studying what makes HSAM brains different. Brain scans show some structural differences, but the exact mechanism remains mysterious. For now, people like Price live with memories the rest of us can barely imagine—the blessing and curse of never forgetting.

Word Count: 326 | Lexile: ~750L | Grades 4-6 | Source: Scientific American

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1 What does HSAM stand for?**

- A) High Speed Automatic Memory
- B) Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory
- C) Human Standard Attention Mechanism
- D) Historical Storage and Memory

**2 How many people in the world have confirmed HSAM?**

- A) Fewer than 10
- B) Fewer than 100
- C) About 1,000
- D) Millions

**3 Why does Jill Price describe her condition as 'a burden'?**

- A) It makes her forget important things
- B) She can never forget painful or embarrassing memories
- C) It prevents her from sleeping
- D) She has to take medication daily

**4 What is one limitation of HSAM mentioned in the passage?**

- A) People with HSAM can't remember faces
- B) The enhanced memory only applies to personal life events, not things like memorizing textbooks
- C) HSAM only works for happy memories
- D) People with HSAM can't remember dates

**5 What does the phrase 'the past is never truly past for her' mean in the context of Price's condition?**

- A) She lives in the past and ignores the present
- B) Her memories remain vivid and present rather than fading like normal memories
- C) She can predict the future
- D) She doesn't understand the concept of time

**6 Based on the passage, why might scientists be interested in studying HSAM beyond just understanding memory?**

- A) To create memory-enhancing drugs for everyone
- B) To understand brain differences that might help treat memory disorders like Alzheimer's
- C) To prove that memory doesn't exist
- D) To show that all memories are false

## ANSWER KEY

### The Girl Who Remembers Every Day

**1. B) Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory**

DOK 1 — Recall. *The passage states: 'a condition called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory, or HSAM.'*

**2. B) Fewer than 100**

DOK 1 — Recall. *The passage states: 'Fewer than 100 people in the world have been confirmed to have it.'*

**3. B) She can never forget painful or embarrassing memories**

DOK 2 — Inference. *The passage explains: 'She can't forget anything—not embarrassing moments, not painful breakups, not every mistake she's ever made.'*

**4. B) The enhanced memory only applies to personal life events, not things like memorizing textbooks**

DOK 2 — Inference. *The passage states: 'The enhanced memory only applies to autobiographical events—the story of their own lives,' not academic information or phone numbers.*

**5. B) Her memories remain vivid and present rather than fading like normal memories**

DOK 3 — Analysis. *Unlike most people whose 'bad memories fade with time, hers stay vivid and immediate.' The past remains as real and present as recent events.*

**6. B) To understand brain differences that might help treat memory disorders like Alzheimer's**

DOK 4 — Extended Thinking. *Understanding why some brains retain memories perfectly while others lose them could provide insights into memory loss conditions. If scientists discover what makes HSAM brains different, it might lead to treatments for memory problems.*

## TEACHER GUIDE

The Girl Who Remembers Every Day

### STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1 — Refer to details and examples in a text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4 — Determine meaning of words and phrases
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8 — Explain how author uses evidence
- NGSS — Connections to scientific practices

### PACING OPTIONS

- Quick Read (10-15 min): Passage + questions 1-4
- Standard (20-25 min): Full passage + all questions
- Deep Dive (35-40 min): Add discussion + extension

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Jill Price calls her perfect memory 'a burden.' Would you want to remember everything? What would be the hardest part?
- Most people's painful memories fade over time. How might this natural forgetting actually help us emotionally?
- If scientists could give anyone HSAM, should they? What might be the benefits and drawbacks of making perfect memory available?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Keep a detailed diary for one week, recording everything you can remember from each day. At the end, test yourself on random details. How much did you naturally forget?
- Research how memory works in the brain and create a diagram showing the difference between short-term and long-term memory.
- Write a short story from the perspective of someone with HSAM experiencing a difficult life event—how would perfect recall change how they process it?

### DIFFERENTIATION

- Struggling: Pre-teach vocabulary, partner reading
- Advanced: Add research, compare to related events
- ELL: Visual supports, pre-teach context

### SOURCE

- Scientific American / University of California Irvine research