# Explanations for forgetting: interference – guided reading/questions

Use pages 54-55 of the textbook (1st edition). The material in the digital book for A03 is slightly different.

## A01 (description)

### Reading and questions

Work through the reading and questions below. Do this outside of your notes first so that if you need to add / remove / reduce the material you can do so later. The questions go a little beyond the textbook material and ask you to think about what the explanations/evidence might mean e.g., in the real world!

1. **Introduction to Interference**  
   **Task:** Read the section defining interference and its impact on LTM. Focus on why interference happens and how it affects memory retrieval.  
   **Questions:**
   * What is interference, and how does it affect long-term memory?
   * Why is interference considered a form of forgetting?
2. **Types of Interference**  
   **Task:** Read about proactive + retroactive interference. Focus on the definitions + examples. **Questions:**
   * What is proactive interference (PI)? Provide an example based on the text.
   * What is retroactive interference (RI)? Provide an example based on the text.
   * How can you distinguish between PI and RI in practical situations?
3. **Research on Similarity**  
   **Task:** Read the description of McGeoch and McDonald’s (1931) study on retroactive interference, including procedure + findings. Focus on how similarity of materials affects memory interference.  
   **Questions:**
   * What was the aim of McGeoch and McDonald’s (1931) study?
   * Describe the six groups of participants in the study.
   * Which group had the worst recall, and why?
   * How does the study demonstrate the effect of similarity on interference?
4. **Explanation of Findings**  
   **Task:** Read the explanation of why similar materials cause greater interference + the link between proactive and retroactive interference.  
   **Questions:**
   * Explain why materials that are like each other lead to greater interference.
   * How does the concept of proactive + retroactive interference apply to studying for exams?
   * Suggest strategies to reduce interference when learning new information.

## A03 (evaluation)

1. **Evidence from Lab Studies**

**Questions:**

* 1. Why are lab studies considered a reliable source of evidence for interference theory?
  2. How do controlled conditions in lab experiments strengthen the validity of the findings?
  3. How does the research by McGeoch and McDonald support the idea of interference?

1. **Artificial Materials**

**Questions:**

* 1. Why might using artificial materials limit the generalisability of interference theory to real-life situations?
  2. What is an example of an artificial task that might not reflect everyday memory processes?
  3. How do artificial tasks differ from real-life memory challenges, such as remembering personal details or daily activities?

1. **Real-Life Studies**

**Questions:**

* 1. How did Baddeley and Hitch (1977) study interference in a real-life setting?
  2. What did the rugby players’ recall reveal about the effects of interference?
  3. Why might interference be less common in everyday memory tasks compared to those in lab studies?

1. **Time Between Learning**

**Questions:**

* 1. How does the time between learning tasks affect interference?
  2. Why might interference be more likely in experiments with short intervals between learning and recall?
  3. How does this limit the relevance of lab-based findings to real-life memory situations?

1. **Interference Effects May Be Overcome Using Cues**

**Questions:**

* 1. How did Tulving and Psotka (1971) demonstrate the role of cues in reducing interference?
  2. What does their study suggest about the accessibility of information in long-term memory?
  3. Why might cues challenge the idea that interference causes permanent forgetting?

1. **Application and Critical Thinking**

**Questions:**

* 1. What are the key strengths of interference theory based on evidence from lab and real-life studies?
  2. How do artificial materials and short time intervals between tasks limit the applicability of the theory?
  3. How might strategies like the use of cues or spaced learning help to reduce interference in practical situations?