

Read the text below. For questions 22—26 choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D). Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.

HOW TO LEARN LIKE A MEMORY CHAMPION

For most of his 20s, Ed Cooke had been participating in the top 10 of the World Memory Championships. His achievements included memorizing 2,265 binary digits in 30 minutes and the order of 16 packs of playing cards in just an hour. But at the age of 26, he was getting restless, and wanted to help others to learn like him. “The memory techniques take a certain discipline,” he says. “I wanted a tool that would just allow you to relax into learning”.

The resulting brainchild was *Memrise*. Launched in 2010, the website and application are now helping more than 1.4 million users to learn foreign languages, history and science with the ease of Cooke’s memory powers. It has been followed by similar apps that also take the pain out of learning — both for individuals, and in schools, with some teachers finding benefits that even Cooke couldn’t have predicted. “It’s very powerful”, says Dominic Traynor, who teaches Spanish at a primary school in London, UK. “I would say we’ve covered a year’s worth of work in the first six months”.

As Cooke first set out developing his idea, he turned to his former classmate at Oxford University, Princeton neuroscientist Greg Detre, to help update his tried-and-tested techniques with the latest understanding of memory. Together, they came up with some basic principles that would guide *Memrise*’s progress over the following years. The first is the idea of “elaborative” learning — in which you try to give extra meaning to a fact to try to get it to stick in the mind. These “mems”, as Cooke and Detre call them, are particularly effective if they tickle the funny bone — and so for each fact that you want to learn, you are encouraged to find an amusing image or phrase that helps plant the memory in your mind. It’s often silly, but that’s the point — an absurd image is memorable.

Although you can find other apps designed for learning and drilling in this way, *Memrise* makes use of another trick. Detre had found that the most effective time to reactivate a memory is when you feel that it is half-remembered, half-forgotten — when you feel it’s on the “tip of your tongue” but you can’t quite reach it. So the *Memrise* developers have designed an algorithm that predicts the arrival of that agonising state,

and then springs a test on you. Self-testing turned out to be more effective than creative techniques like drawing diagrams and mind maps.

22 Which of the following is TRUE about Ed Cooke in his 20s?

- A** He was a ten-time World Champion in memorizing.
- B** He was good at combining hard work and relaxation.
- C** He was an expert in playing sixteen card games.
- D** He was eager to make people's studies easier.

23 What is the main benefit of *Memrise*?

- A** It is available in several languages.
- B** It is accompanied by ten applications.
- C** It helps teachers to schedule their work.
- D** It accelerates the academic process.

24 What does "elaborative" learning involve?

- A** Building funny links between ideas.
- B** Tickling people to make them laugh.
- C** Creating silly images for amusement.
- D** Memorising absurd facts and phrases.

25 What "trick" does *Memrise* employ?

- A** It offers students funny tests.
- B** It helps to draw mind maps.
- C** It holds well-timed check-ups.
- D** It teaches memory algorithms.

26. Which of the following is NOT mentioned in the text?

- A** Humoristic approach facilitates memorizing.
- B** Cooke is able to remember thousands of figures.
- C** *Memrise* has become more efficient than expected.
- D** Teachers use *Memrise* to develop students' creativity.