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Experiment 3 Instructions

GERNSBACHER, M. A., VARNER, K. R., & FAUST, M. (1990). Investigating differences in general comprehension skill. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 16, 430-445. [[Link to PDF](#)]

INSTRUCTIONS: This experiment is very similar to the one you did for us most recently. Again we are going to show you six short stories. Two of these have been written out and will be presented on the television screen in front of you; two have been recorded on an audio tape and you will listen to them over your headphones; and two are picture stories so you will see them on the projection screen in front of the window. Again, for each story, we want you to comprehend it as well as you can. And, again to make sure you are comprehending these stories, at the end of each one, you will write a brief summary of it. Understanding what the story is about and writing a good summary of it should be your primary goal. As a secondary task, we will again be testing you over the verbatim aspects of these stories: the exact wording of the pictures in the stories that you read or listen to and the exact way a picture was turned around in the picture stories. But trying to remember this verbatim information should be your secondary goal.

There are, however, two minor differences between the experiment you did before and present one. The first difference concerns when we will test verbatim memory and when you will write your summary. Here's the way the present experiment will go. We will begin by presenting a story. Halfway into the story you will see or hear the word TEST. At that point we will test the verbatim aspects of the sentences or pictures that you've comprehended so far. There will be four sentences or pictures tested. After these four sentences or pictures have been tested, the actual story will continue. (To clue you that the story is continuing, you will see or hear the words, "The Story Continues ..."). After you've comprehended the last sentence or picture in the story, you will take a second verbatim memory test. (Again, you'll see or hear the word TEST.) The first four sentences or pictures in this second test will be those you've just comprehended (i.e., from the last half of the story); the last eight sentences or pictures in this second test will be from throughout the whole story. At the end of this second test, you will write your summary. You will have two minutes to do this. At the end of these two minutes, you'll hear or read the word READY and this will be your clue that the next story is ready to begin.

SO: you'll see or hear the first half of a story, take a verbatim test over that, see or hear the second half of a story, take a verbatim test over that; continue with a verbatim test over the entire story, and then write your summary.

The second difference between the present experiment and the one you did before is that half the stories you'll see or hear today have been purposely scrambled up. To scramble these stories, we took sentences or pictures that should normally occur at the end of the story and put them in the beginning or the middle, and vice-versa. However, for these scrambled stories, just like for the normal stories, we want you to try to comprehend what the story is about. That is, for the scrambled stories, you should try to mentally un-scramble them as you go along. And when you write a summary for one of these scrambled stories, it should be a summary of what the story would be like when it's unscrambled.