

Source Amnesia/Misattribution

Have you ever discussed a childhood memory with a family member only to find that the memory was:

- from a movie you saw, or book you read?
- from a story someone told you about your childhood, but they were kidding?
- from a dream you used to have?
- from a sibling's experience?

If so, your memory for the event may have been accurate, but you experienced **misattribution** and **source amnesia**.

Misattribution

- Source Amnesia

- the inability to remember where, when or how previously learned information has been acquired, while retaining the factual knowledge..

- Example: Where did you learn that a wrench is a tool?

What is this?



- Sleeper Effect

A piece of information from an unreliable source is initially discounted, but is recalled after the source has been forgotten.

Mike Braun.
He's NOT for you.



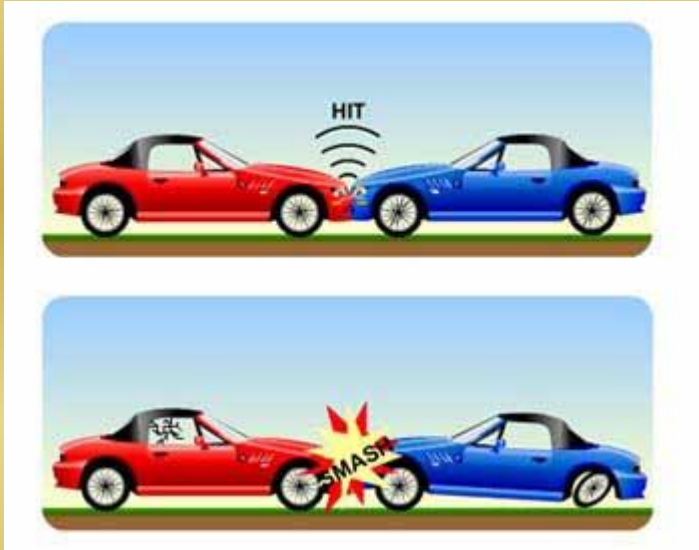
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Misinformation Effect

- Misinformation effect: incorporating misleading information into one's memory of an event.

As memory fades with time following an event, the injection of misinformation becomes easier.

Misinformation effect



Loftus and Palmer - *Car Crash Experiment*

- Students were shown 7 film clips of traffic accidents.
- Eyewitnesses then reconstructed memories when questioned about the clips.

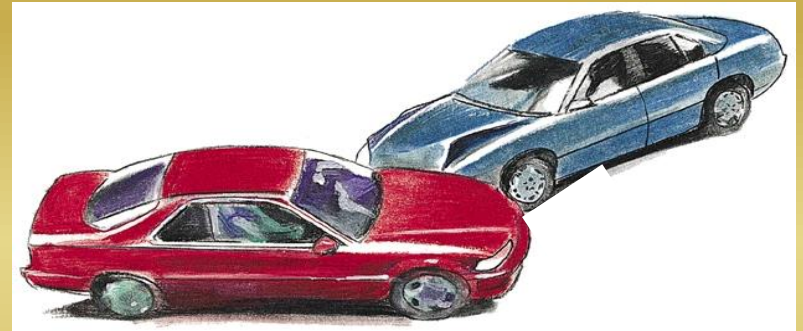
Group A: "How fast were the cars going when they *hit* each other?"

Group B: "How fast were the cars going when they *smashed into* each other?"

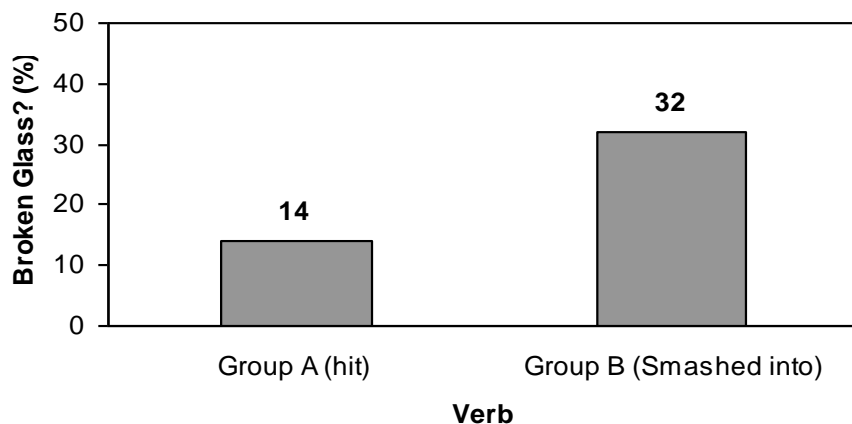
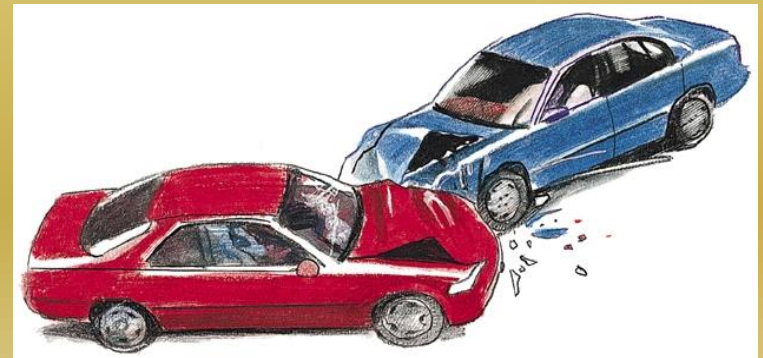
Misinformation effect

A week later they were asked: Was there any broken glass? **Group B** (*smashed into*) reported more broken glass than **Group A** (*hit*).

Depiction of actual accident



Memory construction



Memory and the Criminal Justice System

- Two memory problems with profound legal implications:
- Repressed memories
- Eyewitness Testimony--very persuasive but can be flawed.





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Children's Eyewitness Recall

- Children's eyewitness recall can be unreliable if leading questions are posed.
- However, if cognitive interviews are neutrally worded, the accuracy of their recall increases.
- In cases of sexual abuse, this usually suggests a lower percentage of abuse.



Children's Eyewitness Recall



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Memories of Abuse

Are memories of abuse repressed or constructed?

- Many psychotherapists believe that early childhood sexual abuse results in repressed memories.

- However, other psychologists question such beliefs and think that such memories may be constructed.



Consensus on Childhood Abuse

Leading psychological associations of the world agree on the following concerning childhood sexual abuse:

1. Injustice happens.
2. Incest and other sexual abuse happens.
3. People may forget.
4. Recovered memories are commonplace.
5. Recovered memories under hypnosis or drugs are unreliable.
6. Memories of things happening before 3 years of age are unreliable.
7. Memories, whether real or false, are emotionally upsetting.

Applying what we've learned about memory

Improving Memory to Improve Grades

Ways to save overall studying time, and build more reliable memory.

Learn the material in more than one way, not just by rote, but by creating many **retrieval cues**.

- Think of examples and connections (**semantic encoding**).
- Create **mnemonics**: songs, images, and lists.

Minimize interference with related material or fun activities;
Study right before sleep or other mindless activity.

Have **multiple study sessions, spaced further and further apart** after first learning the material.

Spend your study sessions **activating your retrieval cues**, both mnemonics and context.

Test yourself in study sessions: 1) to practice doing retrieval as if taking a test, and 2) to overcome the overconfidence error: *the material seems familiar, but can you explain it in your own words?*

