

Explicit and Implicit Memory

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will cover two different kinds of long-term memory by discussing:

1. Types of Long-Term Memory
 - a. Explicit Memory
 - b. Implicit Memory

1. Types of Long-Term Memory

There are two different types of long-term memory:

- Explicit memory
- Implicit memory

1a. Explicit Memory

Explicit memory, or declarative memory, includes information like words, numbers, or symbols; information that a person is usually conscious of. When they are thinking of these memories, people are able to verbalize them.

These memories use recall or recognition to test whether the memory has been effectively remembered or learned:

- Recall is any retrieval of information where a person directly reproduces that information.
- Recognition is when we recognize the information being presented to us from our memory.



TERM TO KNOW

Explicit Memory

Long-term memory of factual information, like words, numbers, and symbols; a.k.a. declarative memory

1b. Implicit Memory

Implicit memory, or procedural memory, refers to unconscious memories, ones that a person can't necessarily verbalize. These include things such as how to ride a bike or how to tie a shoe.



THINK ABOUT IT

How do you know what is inside your implicit memory if it is unconscious and you're not able to verbalize it? If we can test explicit memory, how do we test implicit memories?

Psychologists have found that a person can show what is stored in their implicit memories through the use of a technique called **priming**. Priming means giving some limited clues, which activate unconscious memories and bring them up to the forefront, so we can see what they are.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** Suppose you're shown a list of words that includes the word "chair"--so, words like table, pen, desk and chair. Later, when you're asked to provide a word from the list that starts with the letters "ch," then you're very likely to say the word "chair," because it's been primed in your mind as a word to remember.

This process seems relatively simple, but psychologists have found that this can have significant real-world applications.

IN CONTEXT

Experiments conducted by psychologist John Bargh found that stereotype priming can have major effects on our behavior, without us even realizing it.

In one experiment, Bargh gave a group of people a test, where they were unconsciously exposed to words that had to do with the elderly. After the people completed the test, they were then asked to deliver the test to a room at the very end of a hallway.

The people that were exposed to those words related to the elderly were found to move much more slowly as they walked down that hallway. Those words were primed in them, and as a result, they acted in a more elderly way.

Bargh and other psychologists have found that this concept applies to other things as well. For instance, personality characteristics, like rudeness, can be primed in someone and cause them to be more rude. They found that this sort of stereotyping can also apply to our unconscious feelings of people of different races as well.



TERMS TO KNOW

Implicit Memory

Long-term memory of actions and skills, or how to do certain things; a.k.a. procedural memory

Priming

Giving limited clues to activate unconscious memories and test implicit memory



SUMMARY

There are two different **types of long-term memory**. **Explicit memory**, or declarative memory, is the long-term memory of factual information like words, number, and symbols. This memory is conscious, and is tested by recall or recognition. **Implicit memory**, or procedural memory, is the long-term

memory of actions and skills. These memories are unconscious and can be retrieved through the use of a technique called priming, which means providing limited clues which activate unconscious memories and bring them up to the forefront of consciousness.

Good luck!

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Erick Taggart.



TERMS TO KNOW

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Long-term memory of actions and skills, or how to do certain things; a.k.a. procedural memory.

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Giving limited clues to activate unconscious memories and test implicit memory.