

Course Sharing: Explaining the Psychology of Memory with the Movie Memento

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Website with all Instructional Materials



Start by accessing this website (includes links to videos)
Don't have a "QR Code Reader" app in your phone?
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The Movie

- Critically acclaimed film noir (rotten tomatoes > 90) of an amnesic man searching for his wife's murderer
- Plot runs backwards, mimicking in viewers a feeling of long-term memory deficit (see example below).

The Handout





- Developed for *Cognition* course
- Suitable for *Introduction to Psychology*
- Modular format allows instructors to pick and choose which facts to emphasize.
- Materials are also applicable to online courses.
- Highlights 15 memory facts present in the movie (+ scene information & brief description of science)
- Videos of relevant scenes posted also in youtube (search: memento nitop memory)

The Science Highlighted

- Memory is subjective and unreliable
- Memory is an active process of reconstruction
- Memories are distorted by cognitive and motivational biases
- Source memory is particularly vulnerable
- False memories can sometimes be implanted
- Metacognition is an important aspect of memory
- 'Knowing' and 'remembering' are different aspects of memory
- Implicit and explicit memory are dissociable systems
- Short-term memory and long-term memory are separate systems
- Long-term memory is enhanced by understanding of the story line
- Working memory is affected by distraction
- Memory is not only in the head but also in our surroundings
- Confidence is not a good way to judge memory accuracy
- Memory encoding depends on perceptual attention
- Strategies exist to enhance memory abilities

Chronological Order






(Not represented in the movie)

EVENT 1		EVENT 2	
			
Leonard exits hotel room	talks to manager	Teddy arrives	and they leave in car

Phenomenology

A forward moving script allows easy integration of sequenced information in healthy adults.

Movie Sequence

EVENT 2		EVENT 1		LINK to 1
				
Teddy arrives	and they leave in car	Leonard exits hotel room	talks to manager	Teddy arrives

In a backward moving script, effort and confusion ensue, as viewers attempt to reconstruct sequenced information across a time delay, without narrative support.