

From Glenberg, A. M., Meyer, M., & Lindem, K. (1987). Mental models contribute to foregrounding during text comprehension. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 26(1), 69-83.

Practice Stories

Joe went over to the Xerox machine. He wanted to make several copies of his tax return forms. When the copies came out badly, he kicked the machine violently.

The gardener walked to the gazebo with the maid. He asked her if she liked the garden. He was hurt when she replied that the hedges needed pruning.

Jean was driving along a tortuous road. She took one corner too quickly, and skidded onto the shoulder. Her quick reflexes prevented her from going into the ditch.

The camper searched in his pocket and found a match. He needed to build a campfire to cook a good hot meal. It had taken him a long time to find dry wood and kindling. He searched for a spot sheltered from the wind. Then he bent down to light the kindling.

The specialist was preparing to operate on a little girl with acute appendicitis. He scrubbed up, then walked into the operating room. He took the scalpel from the nurse and looked down at his young patient. Silently, he waited for the anesthetic to take effect. When the girl was unconscious, he cut the abdomen.

Probes

Was Joe making copies of his tax forms? (P)

Did the maid think that the hedges needed watering? (N)

Did a slick spot on the road cause the car to skid? (N)

Did the camper have a hard time finding wood for the fire? (P)

Did the specialist chat with the nurse as he waited for the anesthetic to take effect? (N)

Experimental Stories

The businessman was seated at a table in an expensive restaurant. He **took/handed** the lengthy menu to the waitress, who smiled and said she would return shortly. He did not want to spend much. He was upset because it did not list the prices of the entrees.

John was getting ready to go jogging. He **picked up/laid aside** a clean jersey, put on his tennies, then went outside. He was not planning to run very far. He decided to leave it at home and wear a tee-shirt instead.

Jim walked down to the dock and stepped into his rowboat. He **set down/tossed out** a foam lifejacket, then he sat, stretched his arms, and began to row. He intended to be out for a long while. He sometimes took it along as a safety precaution.

Bob wanted to be dressed appropriately for the party. He **put on/took off** his striped tie and then looked around for his wife. He just couldn't decide what to wear. He wondered if it would look nice with his blue jacket. He took off his striped tie and then looked around for his wife.

Sara was in the basement, trying her hand at plumbing. She walked **up to/away from** the rusty water heater, carrying her tools with her. She squinted, trying to see more clearly. She felt it might have a broken thermostat.

Dan was waiting at the airport when his flight arrived. He **took/handed** his leather briefcase **from/to** his wife and said goodbye. He was in a hurry to leave. He really didn't need it as he was bringing his portfolio.

Charlie was sitting in his little boat, fishing. He **found/lost** his favorite lure and so decided to row out past the weeds. He wasn't having much luck. He often used it when fishing for trout or bass.

Jack was upstairs in his bedroom, getting ready to leave for work. He **strapped on/took off** his sports watch and then walked down the stairs. He wasn't in a hurry today. He only wore it when he needed to keep track of the time.

Becky was busy writing at her desk when she realized she was late for the symposium. She **snatched up/laid aside** her green notebook and grabbed the questions she had prepared. She usually remembered what she heard. She really didn't need it as she never wrote anything down.

The clerk asked the customer for some proof of purchase. He **took/gave** a verified receipt from her, refunded her ten dollars, and apologized as she left. He wanted to be organized. He needed it copied for his records.

The professor was sitting in the nightclub, drinking and feeling lonely. He finally **picked up/set down** his watery martini and looked around for someone he knew. He was beginning to feel ill. He recalled that it was his third drink that evening.

George had to drive through Iowa on his vacation. He drove **into/out of** a large city and headed down roads that were badly paved. He had never been here before. He had heard it was a terrible place to live.

The soldier had to travel a long way to get home for the holidays. He got **on/off** a southbound train and was happy to bump into a friend. He was feeling a little jumpy. He cringed as it started up and headed down the track.

The doctor decided to spend the evening at home listening to music. He walked **into/out of** his private den to get some record albums. He needed to relax. He thought it was the most comfortable room in the house.

The artist was in the basement, washing out his brushes. He **picked up/set down** a finished painting, then walked upstairs to relax for a few hours. He was talented but unknown. He wondered if it would be accepted in the museum's art show.

Maggie put on her gloves and went outside to work in her garden. She watered her withered rosebush, then **bent down/moved on** to pull up some weeds. She loved being outdoors. She hoped it would bloom in time for her garden party.

The toddler was having fun at the children's park. He waddled **to/past** the large slide, with his parents following close behind him. He wanted to play some more. He knew it was meant for older children.

The cab driver pulled up to the café to get some coffee. Picking up/Setting aside his tattered map, he got out and stretched his legs. He wanted to rest for a while. He needed to find his way around the big city.

Warren spent the afternoon shopping at the store. He **picked up/set down** his torn bag and went over to look at some scarves. He had been shopping all day. He thought it was getting too heavy to carry.

A girl was enjoying herself at the park. She headed **towards/past** the weedy pond to see the ducks. She had nothing to do today. She thought it would be a horrible place to swim.

Louise was doing some spring cleaning. She **put on/took off** her wrinkled apron and began cleaning out the cupboards. She had been cleaning all by herself. She had ripped it while moving the furniture.

Gary had lunch at an Italian restaurant. He was escorted **to/from** the smoky lounge by an attractive waitress. He was getting hungry. He thought it was an uncomfortable place to wait for his meal.

A lawyer had to go to the store after work. She **picked up/glanced at** her crumpled shopping list and then left to buy groceries. She hated to stop after working. She didn't need it as she was only going to buy milk and bread.

A businessman was waiting for his brother in his library. He **sat down in/got up from** his antique chair and looked at the disorganized bookshelves. He was getting tired of waiting. He noted that it needed some upholstery.

Filler stories

The groom was growing increasingly nervous. He poured himself a cocktail and paced the room as he drank. Waiting all day with nothing to do was driving him crazy. He had three more hours to kill before the wedding ceremony. He wished that the wedding had been scheduled for morning instead of evening.

The cowboy tied his horse outside the saloon. Then he ambled into the bar and ordered a glass of milk. He noticed that a poker game was going on over in the corner.

Melissa and Karen both bought new outfits. It had taken them weeks to save up to buy the clothes. Excited, they put on their new clothes and went to the dance to show them off.

The violinist wanted to be a member of the orchestra. She had been told that the conductor accepted only the finest and most experienced musicians. Trying to remain calm, she picked up her violin and ran off to audition.

Alex was hosting a backyard picnic for his friends. First, he prepared some tempting hors d'oeuvres and set them out on the picnic table. Then he put some lawn chairs under the willow tree.

The student was inspired by the view of the Alps. He just couldn't wait to get his impressions on canvas. He picked up his palette and mixed the paints with a brush. Then he began to paint the scenery. First, he painted the sky with a light blue watercolor wash.

The girl pulled a frying pan out of the cabinet. Breakfast was her favorite meal of the day. She usually spent an hour sipping coffee and reading the paper. This morning, however, she had gotten up late and had to hurry. So, she made herself an omelet and wolfed it down quickly.

The bank lent the coed some money. She had applied at all the best universities. They had all accepted her, and she finally had chosen Harvard. She had just gone to the bursar's office and paid her tuition. Now she headed for the bookstore to buy her texts.

The carpenter slipped a ruler in his pocket. A professor wanted bookshelves, so the carpenter went across campus to the professor's office. Trying to decide where to start, he looked around the office. He noted the placement of the windows. Then he measured the wall by the door.

The terrorist held the gun firmly in his hand. He had planned the attack perfectly. He had crossed the stormy sea, landed his small boat, and eluded the border patrol. Then he had hijacked the bus and searched the terrified passengers. Now the terrorist gagged the driver.

The assistant teacher drew the youngster's attention to the brightly colored map. The assistant was describing his exciting experiences in the Middle-East. He had worked in Iran as a member of the Peace Corps. He wanted to describe the people and the life to the youngsters. He was flattered by the interest the youngsters were showing.

The scout tucked his telescope under his arm. He had always loved to study the heavens. He had left the house, hiked through the meadow, and climbed the hill. He spread out his map of the galaxy and examined it carefully. Then the scout focused the lens on a constellation.

The young father hurriedly telephoned the ambulance. He wanted his daughter to receive medical treatment immediately. He had been playing with her when she fell and twisted her ankle. Tenderly, he picked her up and carried her in his arms. He paced the floor as he waited for the ambulance.

The waiter sharpened the knife on the whetstone. He gathered the ingredients for the salad. Then he mixed the salad dressing and put it in the refrigerator. Next, he rubbed a bowl with garlic. Then he started washing the vegetables.

The superintendent pocketed his pick-lock. A tenant in the penthouse had complained about a leaky faucet. So, the superintendent grabbed his tools and climbed the stairs.

Sidney drove his car up to the gas tank. His tank registered empty, so he wanted to buy some gas. But, when he looked in his wallet, he saw that he had no money.

Timmy loved to play in mud puddles. He would often spend hours building mud castles and baking mud pies in the sun. His mother was tolerant of Timmy's messy playing.

The homemaker needed to buy clothes for the kids. She took some money from her husband's wallet and put in her purse. Then she drove her little Volvo to the shopping mall.

The insurance agent phoned the new business owner. He explained how vital insurance was for a business. But, the agent had a hard time convincing the businessman.

Janet was physically and emotionally exhausted. She took curlers out of her hair and crawled into bed. Unable to sleep, she propped her head up onto a pillow and read for a while. When she finally fell asleep, she had a horrible nightmare about her new job.

The manager had been sitting at his desk and fretting over his accounts all morning. Disgusted, he put his pen in his pocket and went to the counter to service a customer. This was only the third customer that the manager had seen all day. He shook his head, convinced that the store would soon go bankrupt.

Alice was planning a romantic evening with her boyfriend. She slipped into a sexy dress and pinned a flower in her hair. Then she drove to the nearest liquor store to pick up some wine. She carefully inspected several bottles of wine, at last choosing a dry Chablis.

John was preparing for a marathon in August. After doing a few warm-up exercises, he took off his sweatshirt and went jogging. He jogged halfway around the lake without too much difficulty. Further along his route, however, John's muscles began to ache.

The secretary looked at the hand she hurt falling from her bicycle yesterday. Sighing, she wrapped a bandage around her finger and then walked out of the restroom. She returned to her office and cleared off her desk. Then she slumped down behind the typewriter and typed out a short memo.

Probes

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "table"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "jersey"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "rowboat"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "tie"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "tools"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "briefcase"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "fish"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "stairs"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "notebook"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "receipt"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "nightclub"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "city"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "track"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "den"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "brushes"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "rosebush"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "toddler"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "map"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "scarves"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "pond"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "furniture"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "lounge"? (P)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "groceries"? (N)

In the previous sentence, did the word "it" refer to the "chair"? (P)

Did the groom have many things to do before the ceremony? (N)

Did the cowboy go to a bar and order a glass of milk? (P)

Did both Melissa and Karen buy new outfits? (P)

Was the violinist going to audition for a jazz band? (N)

Did Alex get the hors d'oeuvres from a caterer? (N)

Was the student painting a Chinese landscape? (N)

Did the girl usually enjoy eating breakfast in the morning? (P)

Did the coed apply to several universities? (P)

Was the carpenter building shelves for a professor? (P)

Did the terrorist hijack a bus? (P)

Were the youngsters bored with the assistant teacher's experiences? (N)

Did the scout view the heavens from his house? (N)

Did the girl hurt her ankle? (P)

Did the waiter mix the salad dressing before he washed the vegetables? (P)

Did the tenant complain about a leaky faucet? (P)

Did Sidney have half a tank of gas? (N)

Did Timmy's mother punish him for playing in the mud? (N)

Did the homemaker take money so she could buy herself a dress? (N)

Was the insurance agent talking on the phone with the business owner? (P)

Was Janet tired even when she was unable to sleep? (P)

Was the store in danger of bankruptcy because of excessive shoplifting? (N)

Was Alice rash in her choice of wine? (N)

Was the marathon scheduled to be held in the summer? (P)

Did the secretary type a long business letter? (N)