

This Week's Citation Classic®

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Baddeley A D. *The psychology of memory.* New York: Basic, 1976. 430 p.
[Applied Psychology Unit, Medical Research Council, Cambridge, England]

The Psychology of Memory was written as an advanced undergraduate text. It concentrated principally on normal human memory but referred where appropriate to animal research and to both memory impairment and supernormal memory. I hoped that it would be sufficiently detailed to provide a useful reference source for research colleagues but at the same time be sufficiently clearly written to serve as a text. [The *SCI*® and *SSCI*® indicate that this book has been cited in over 270 publications.]

Alan D. Baddeley
Applied Psychology Unit
Medical Research Council
Cambridge CB2 2EF
England

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The Psychology of Memory began life in a London pub called The Friend at Hand. The friend in question was on sabbatical from Princeton University and was interested in setting up a series of advanced texts in cognitive psychology for Basic Books. I was about to go on sabbatical to the University of California, San Diego, intending to write a monograph on short-term memory. I needed enough money to buy a secondhand car on arrival. My monograph publisher was not prepared to provide this, but Basic Books was. I therefore signed up to write what I expected to be a relatively simple expansion of notes for the memory course I regularly taught. I thought this would take a few months, leaving the rest of the year for my book on short-term memory. In fact it came out some 5 years later, and the descendant of the original short-term memory book was published as *Working Memory*¹ some 10 years after that.

What went wrong? I began to reread some of the classic work that I covered in my lectures and became fascinated by aspects that I had forgotten or perhaps not even noticed before. The book began to expand and turned into a much more ambitious and enjoyable enterprise. Instead of a brief but useful basic text, I decided to try to produce something that

would be written in a sufficiently clear and interesting way to be an effective undergraduate text, while at the same time being an up-to-date and critical overview of the whole field of human memory. Consequently, I spent time learning about areas with which I had little previous contact, such as the role of auditory memory in speech perception or memory and emotion.

Consequently, at the end of my sabbatical year, although I had the bulk of a first draft, there were still a number of chapters to be written. In the next four years I changed jobs twice, making it difficult to find time to finish the book, and of course by that time it was no longer up-to-date. By the time I had revised and updated the original, five years had passed since the initial meeting in The Friend at Hand; the rest of the series had failed to materialise and the editor had left. Consequently, it came out as a single book rather than as part of a series. Its publication coincided with the appearance of an excellent book covering the same field in a similar depth² and was followed by what seemed like an avalanche of memory texts. However, despite this, over the next decade it sold steadily, and as its selection as a *Citation Classic* suggests, it seems to have fulfilled its secondary function of providing an overview of the field. It still sells a modest number of copies but is by now becoming distinctly dated. I have resisted the temptation to revise it but am in fact just completing a new book with a related but slightly different aim.

One of my interests is in the psychology of everyday life and in the mapping of the results of the laboratory onto real-world problems. In 1982 I brought out a book entitled *Your Memory: A User's Guide*,³ in which I attempted to present my area in a way that would interest the general reader. I was fortunate in the designer and publisher of the book. It has been very successful, encouraging me to attempt a text that will blend the basic scientific literature necessary for any undergraduate course with the wealth of intriguing practical implications that have emerged from the study of memory in recent years. I now write by dictation and managed to produce *A User's Guide* in one summer vacation. Attempts to write the ecological memory⁴ text equally rapidly proved overambitious. It should be completed this summer and will, I hope, reflect some of the exciting new theoretical developments, as well as the increasing applicability of the results of the memory laboratory to the problems of the world outside. It will be rather less detailed than its predecessor of 1976, but I hope my colleagues will find it as useful and cite it as much!

1. Baddeley A. *Working memory.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. 289 p.

2. Crowder R G. *Principles of learning and memory.* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1976. 523 p. (Cited 205 times.)

3. Baddeley A D. *Your memory: a user's guide.* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1982. 222 p.

4. ———. *Human memory: an ecological approach.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (In press.)