

group. In one notable study, John Bargh, Mark Chen, and Lara Burrows had participants complete a scrambled-sentence task, rearranging the order of words to form sentences (we discussed this type of task in Chapter 4). For some of the participants, the task was based on words such as *aggressive*, *rude*, *annoying*, and *intrude*. For others, the task was based on words such as *honor*, *considerate*, *polite*, and *sensitive*. The goal of these two lists was to prime the participants to think about politeness or rudeness as a result of constructing sentences from these words (this is a very common technique in social psychology, and it works amazingly well).

After the participants completed the scrambled-sentence task, they went to another laboratory to participate in what was purportedly a second task. When they arrived at the second laboratory, they found the experimenter apparently in the midst of trying to explain the task to an uncomprehending participant who was just not getting it (this supposed participant was in fact not a real participant but a confederate working for the experimenter). How long do you think it took the real participants to interrupt the conversation and ask what they should do next?

The amount of waiting depended on what type of words had been involved in the scrambled-sentence task. Those who had worked with the set of polite words patiently waited for about 9.3 minutes before they interrupted, whereas those who had worked with the set of rude words waited only about 5.5 minutes before interrupting.

A second experiment tested the same general idea by priming the concept of the elderly, using words such as *Florida*, *bingo*, and *ancient*. After the participants in this experiment completed the scrambled-sentence task, they left the room, thinking that they had finished the experiment—but in fact