This week, we’ll be doing a memory exercise. Since explaining it will produce different results, you’ll do the exercise first, and then read the background.

In the first part of the exercise, you’ll be watching a series of words flash on the screen. They won’t be on long enough for you to write them down, so you’ll have to remember them! These are the “testing” blocks, and there are five of them.

Between each testing block, you’ll be asked to do some math equations, to “clear your palate,” so to speak. Try to get them right, but don’t agonize over getting them wrong. One thing to pay attention to: the equations should be solved left to right, not in order of operations. That is, if you were to get an equation that says

1+2\*3

instead of solving the 2\*3 first and then adding 1, you add the 1 and 2, and then multiply that answer by 3. (The first method gives the answer 7, the second gives the answer 9).

It’s more important, though, to try to remember the words! After the 5 testing sessions, you’ll test your memory. Specifically, you’ll be shown a series of words. For each one, you’ll be asked to push one key if the word was previously displayed, and a different key if the word is new to the exercise.

There are instructions in the exercise also, so you don’t need to remember this: it’s just an introduction.

As with all exercises, create a new folder for this one – if you need a name, you can call it “cognitiveMemory” – and download the necessary files: wordList2.psyexp, trialList1.xlsx, trialList2.xlsx, trialList3.xlsx, trialList4.xlsx, testingList.xlsx, and eqnTest.xlsx. Enjoy the experiment!