

I was particularly impressed by Kanzi. It was very cool to see him respond to certain commands. However, I have to wonder, particularly in the first video, whether he was responding what the woman was saying, or just simple commands like a dog would. I'm sure if I spent enough time with a dog and a whole bunch of treats I could get him to recognize the difference between pine needles, soap, soda, and water. He wouldn't necessarily be able to do anything with them because he physically can't, but like Kanzi he could recognize the difference. I think the second video of Kanzi would be a little more difficult but could be accomplished with enough time and patience. While at first I was impressed, I don't think that either of these performances were all that spectacular. It seems to me to be a typical conditioning exercise rather than training Kanzi what the difference is between the things, and things like context. It would be far more fascinating if Kanzi could recognize sequences or be able to recognize context and deliver a response without hearing the word first. This may be too much to ask of Kanzi, but as of now it just seems like a conditioning exercise rather than real language acquisition.