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Primacy Effect

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Definition

The primacy effect is the tendency for individuals without neurological impairment to show enhanced memory for items presented at the beginning of a list relative to items presented in the middle of the list. At test, items presented at the beginning of a list are retrieved from long-term or secondary memory stores. The primacy effect, therefore, is affected by factors influencing long-term memory ability, such

as attentional resources, opportunities for rehearsal, and neurodegenerative processes including Alzheimer's disease. The primacy effect is part of the larger serial position effect.

Cross-References

- [Recency Effect](#)
- [Serial Position Effect](#)

References and Readings

Tulving, E., & Craik, F. I. M. (Eds.). (2000). *The Oxford handbook of memory*. New York: Oxford University Press.