

# New Research From Psychological Science

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Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

## [Reading Your Mind While You Are Reading—Evidence for Spontaneous Visuospatial Perspective Taking During a Semantic Categorization Task](#)

*Martin Freundlieb, Ágnes M. Kovács, and Natalie Sebanz*

Whether we're passing a basketball or describing a scene, we automatically take others' visuospatial perspectives (VSPs). Does this tendency extend to mental activities? To find out, the authors had each participant sit at a 90° angle to a confederate and asked the pair to respond whenever a word displayed on screen fell into a specified category. For participants, the words always appeared to be written vertically; for the confederate, the words appeared right side up if he sat to the participant's left or upside down if he sat to the participant's right. Participants categorized words faster when they appeared right side up to the confederate than when they were upside down. This effect emerged on a smaller scale when the confederate passively viewed the screen, and it disappeared when the confederate's vision was obscured by goggles. These findings suggest that people are sensitive to others' VSP when engaging in mental activities, such as joint reading.

## [Childhood Origins of Young Adult Environmental Behavior](#)

*Gary W. Evans, Siegmund Otto, and Florian G. Kaiser*

To determine potential origins of proenvironmental behavior in adulthood, the authors conducted a prospective study that surveyed children at age 6 and followed up with them 12 years later at age 18. In the first survey, the authors collected data on the mother's political ideology, educational attainment, and environmental attitudes and behaviors; they also collected data on the child's environmental attitudes and behavior using adapted versions of the adult scales. At age 18, the children completed the adult versions of the scales that their mothers had completed 12 years earlier. The data showed that mothers' educational attainment and proenvironmental attitudes were positively associated with children's proenvironmental behavior at age 18. Children who spent more time outdoors in early childhood also engaged in more proenvironmental behavior as young adults. Given its prospective design, the study sheds new light on early predictors of environmental behavior; future research should

examine these relationships using a larger, more diverse sample, the authors note.

[After Aylan Kurdi: How Tweeting About Death, Threat, and Harm Predict Increased Expressions of Solidarity With Refugees Over Time](#)

*Laura G. E. Smith, Craig McGarty, and Emma F. Thomas*

What are the psychological mechanisms that promote engagement in social issues via social media? The authors used novel methods to investigate how Twitter users responded to images of Aylan Kurdi, a child refugee who died en route to the European Union. Analyses included a total of 41,253 tweets posted 1 week before the images emerged, the week they emerged, and 10 weeks afterward. Tweeting about Aylan Kurdi was associated with prorefugee sentiment 10 weeks later, a link that was mediated by discussions of potential harm to refugees. The association was also mediated by discussions of threat, which were framed more in terms of threat to refugees than threat posed by refugees, contrary to the researchers' hypothesis. Tweeting about death before the images emerged was associated with tweeting about Aylan Kurdi, an intriguing association deserving of additional research, the authors note. These results highlight how social media communications about normative conflict can promote support for social change over time.