

# Color It Relevant

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When searching for a book, the color of the cover matters a lot. Sure, you might know the title, but locating “that book with the red cover and white letters on the shelf” is easier than locating *The Betty Crocker Cookbook*. Once you find the book and start reading it, though, the cover color no longer matters.

Or does it?

Recent research in [\*Psychological Science\*](#) has demonstrated that drawing attention to a color can prime people to notice objects related to that color, no matter what task they do afterward. Study volunteers completed a Stroop task to encourage them to focus on colors, and then they did a semantic-judgment task in which they were presented with two words and asked to determine if the second word named an animal.

Volunteers who completed the Stroop task responded faster and more accurately to color-related word pairs (e.g., emerald and cucumber) than did volunteers who completed the semantic judgment task first. The results suggest that color can remain salient even when focusing on color is no longer relevant to the task at hand.

So if you pick up that red *Betty Crocker Cookbook*, don’t be surprised if the first recipe that appeals to you is for cherry pie.

Yee, E., Ahmed, S., & Thompson-Schill, S. (2012). Colorless Green Ideas (Can) Prime Furiously  
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