

Colors, Colors? Lesson

John Ridley Stroop first reviewed this phenomenon in a Ph.D. thesis published in 1935, and over 700 articles have been written about it since. Current theories on the Stroop effect emphasize the interference that *automatic processing of words has on the more "effortful" task of just naming the colors*. The task of selecting an appropriate response—when given two conflicting conditions—has tentatively been located in a part of the brain called the **anterior cingulate**. This region lies between the right and left halves of the frontal portion of the brain, and is involved in a wide range of thought processes and emotional responses.

Do the Stroop Test!

Questions:

How do words influence what we see?
How does the brain handle "mixed messages"?

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Procedure and Materials

- First, choose one of the above questions to address and make a prediction/hypothesis based on what you currently know about "mixed messages".
- Second, attempt the activity five separate times.
- Using the data chart, keep track where you mix up the words and colors or have trouble reading the colors.
- Next, analyze your data by answering the following questions or make up one to four of your own questions. Which words tend to trip you up? Was it the same word every time? Did the color of the word make a difference? Did it get easier or harder each time?
- Finally, write a statement of conclusion that is based on the analysis of your data. This is where you will attempt to answer the original question and discuss your prediction.

Prediction
