inconsistency with their overall impressions (e.g., why would a smart person fail his driving test three times?). This increased attention leads to increased memory.

This analysis assumes that schema-incongruent information will be especially memorable only when participants were instructed to form an impression of what the person is like. These findings suggest that the greater memorability of schema-incongruent information derives from people’s attempts to reconcile the inconsistency with their overall impression.

Figure 3.16 shows that schema-incongruent behaviors were especially memorable only when participants had been instructed to form an impression of what the person is like. These findings suggest that the greater memorability of schema-incongruent information derives from people’s attempts to reconcile the inconsistency with their overall impression.


In some cases, schematic effects on memory are so strong that they lead people to “remember” things that never happened. To illustrate, imagine that you see a blue-collar worker ordering a drink at a bar. When later asked to recall what the man ordered, you might recall that he ordered a beer, even though he really ordered a glass of wine. These sorts of memory errors (or intrusions, as they are called) occur when...