

Incidental memory in dogs (*Canis familiaris*): adaptive behavioral solution at an unexpected memory test.

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1 Abstract

2 Memory processing in nonhuman animals has been typically tested in situations where the  
3 animals are repeatedly trained to retrieve their memory trace, such as delayed matching to  
4 sample, serial probe recognition, etc. In contrast, how they utilize incidentally formed  
5 memory traces is not well investigated except in rodents. We examined whether domestic  
6 dogs could solve an unexpected test based on a single past experience. In Experiment 1,  
7 leashed dogs were led to 4 open, baited containers and allowed to eat from 2 of them  
8 (Exposure phase). After a walk outside for more than 10 min, during which time the  
9 containers were replaced with new identical ones, the dogs were unexpectedly returned to the  
10 site and unleashed for free exploration (Test phase). Eleven out of 12 dogs first visited one of  
11 the containers from which they had not eaten. In Experiment 2, two containers had food in  
12 them, one had a nonedible object, and the last one was empty. Dogs visited all 4 containers  
13 and were allowed to eat one of the food rewards in the Exposure phase. In the Test phase,  
14 unleashed dogs first visited the previously baited container from which they had not eaten  
15 significantly more often than chance. These results demonstrate that in an unexpected test  
16 dogs may retrieve “what” and “where” information about seen (now invisible) items from  
17 incidental memory formed during a single past experience.

18  
19 Keywords: incidental memory, dogs, memory retrieval, episodic memory

21

## Introduction

22 Memory has been one focus of comparative cognitive research and large amount of data  
23 have accumulated. Topics of behavioral studies include short-term retention, list memory and  
24 serial position effect, prospective and retrospective coding, directed forgetting, and memory  
25 capacity, mostly in rats, pigeons, and nonhuman primates (see Shettleworth, 2010, for review).  
26 More recent developments include episodic memory in food-caching birds (e.g., Clayton &  
27 Dickinson, 1998) and rodents (e.g., Babb & Crystal, 2005; Eacott, Easton, Zinkivskay, 2005)  
28 and metamemory in nonhuman primates (e.g., Fujita, 2009; Hampton, 2001). These studies  
29 have shown that multiple functions of memory systems are shared between humans and  
30 nonhuman animals.

31 To test functions of memory systems we need subjects to utilize their memory trace in  
32 tests. We can easily verbally instruct humans to do this. But with nonhumans, we typically  
33 train them repeatedly to base their responses on their memory trace. Thus the animals are  
34 “told” to encode study items for subsequent use through repeated training.

35 However, humans not only use memory traces of actively encoded study items, they also  
36 rely on memory traces formed without active encoding. One such instance is implicit memory,  
37 often identified using a priming paradigm in which, for an example, a very brief, even  
38 subliminal, presentation of a stimulus leads to better recognition of an item that is  
39 phonetically or semantically related (e.g., Schacter, 1987 for review). In this case, the  
40 particular memory-based behavior is not a consequence of active retrieval of previous  
41 information but of a rather automatic and uncontrollable function inherent to the memory  
42 system.

43 Another example is retrieval of previous episodes by various methods. For instance, we  
44 often try to recall the directions to a specific destination when we have a vague memory that

45 we have visited a place before. Ultimately we might recall all of the events we experienced  
46 there previously.

47 In both cases above, there is no active attempt to encode what happens at a given time and  
48 place. This incidental nature is one of the key properties of the human episodic memory  
49 system. The other key property of episodic memory is that it contains the “what, where, and  
50 when” of the event in an integrated fashion (Tulving, 2002; 2005).

51 The nature of the memory system that handles incidental memory is important, when  
52 comparing humans and nonhumans, in particular for elucidating to what extent memory  
53 functions depend on language and are unique to the human brain. Unfortunately, however,  
54 how nonhumans utilize incidentally formed memory traces has not received much attention  
55 except in rodents tested in the classic “object-in-place” paradigm (Ennaceur & Delacour,  
56 1988).

57 In this paradigm, after being exposed to several objects in the enclosure, animals are  
58 tested in a novel situation where they find novel objects or familiar objects in novel locations.  
59 Rodents would more often explore novel objects or moved objects than familiar ones. Various  
60 application of this procedure has been conducted for the effects of brain lesion (e.g., Eacott &  
61 Norman, 2004; Easton, Zinkivskay & Eacott, 2009; Li & Chao, 2008), drug administration  
62 (e.g., Kart-Teke, et al., 2006), and genetic modification (e.g., Good, Hale, & Staal, 2007) on  
63 this memory performance. Because no active encoding is forcibly required in the exposure  
64 phase, this procedure may be viewed as testing incidental memory. However, as the  
65 exploration in the test phase is induced by stimulus change, this procedure could be also  
66 viewed as testing detection of such change in stimulation, not as active retrieval of the  
67 incidentally formed memory of previous episodes.

68 Eacott, Easton, and Zinkivskay (2005) nicely eliminated this possibility. Rats explored

69 objects placed in an E-shaped maze. The middle arm of E was the start arm and two  
70 distinctive objects (A and B) were placed at the end of side arms. The placement of the  
71 objects A and B was reversed depending on the color and the texture of the floor of the maze.  
72 After exploration in both conditions, the rats were exposed to one of the objects, A or B, in  
73 their home cage. Then the rats explored the maze again. They tended to go into the arm where  
74 they could find the relatively more novel object that they had not seen in the home cage.  
75 Because the animals were unable to see the object at the end of side arms from the position  
76 where they made their first turn, the rodents had to retrieve their memory trace formed at the  
77 first exploration.

78 Investigation into such incidental memory process in other groups of animals has been  
79 scarce. Among the few relevant literatures, Zentall, Clement, Bhatt, & Allen (2001) trained  
80 pigeons to choose color A after pecking at stripe A and to choose color B after no pecking at  
81 stripe B. Next they learned to peck at a novel color C and not to peck at color D. In the test  
82 that followed, the pigeons were suddenly asked to choose color A or B after being exposed to  
83 either color C or D. They tended to choose color A after pecking at color C and to choose  
84 color B after not pecking at color D. This suggests that the pigeons recalled their pecking  
85 episodes, at least for memory traces within working memory formed in the immediate past.

86 Using an artificial sign system, Mercado, III, Murray, Uyeyama, Pack, & Herman (1998)  
87 tested whether bottlenosed dolphins could repeat a previously performed action sequence  
88 such as “swim-circle-with\_mouth\_open.” Dolphins had been taught two special commands:  
89 “repeat” and “creative.” To be creative, they had to perform a sequence of actions not  
90 previously performed in the last several trials. When “repeat” followed “creative,” the  
91 dolphins had to recall the action sequence that they had just ”created” in order to be correct.  
92 One dolphin, Elele, was correct in 3 out of 4 test trials. Elele may have episodically recalled

93 her own experience. However, it is also possible that Elele had learned to memorize her  
94 performance through intensive past training of “repeat” sign.

95 More species, particularly non-rodents, should be tested for their ability to retrieve  
96 incidentally formed memory trace in order to answer such questions as how widespread this  
97 ability is in the animal kingdom, how it has evolved, whether it is limited to exploration of  
98 environments, what is the nature of this ability in nonhumans, and how it is related to human  
99 episodic memory. In this report, we present a new and simpler method to test incidental  
100 memory in nonhuman animals and provide first data on this capacity in domestic dogs. Dogs  
101 have been trained and tested for various memory tasks involving spatial memory and word  
102 learning (e.g., Fiset 2007; Fiset et al. 2003; 2007; MacPherson & Roberts 2010; Pilley & Reid,  
103 2011). Here we test retrieval of the memory incidentally formed in a single past experience,  
104 without change in external stimulation; that is, we test behavior by dogs supposedly driven by  
105 their internal memory.

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## Experiment 1

108

### *Participants*

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Twelve domestic dogs (*Canis familiaris*) (3 males and 9 females) and their owners participated voluntarily. Participant dogs were of various breeds and ranged in age from 8 months to 7 years (see Table 1). All of the dogs and owners were unfamiliar with the test room and were naive to this memory test.

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Table 1 about here

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### *Apparatus*

117 For each dog, 2 identical sets of 4 open containers, different in various dimensions such as  
118 shape, size, color, etc., were prepared. The appearance of each container varied but all were  
119 about 25 - 30 cm in diameter, width and length. The depth was between about 10 - 15 cm. The  
120 bottom shape was either round or rectangular and the color was either white, pink, red, blue,  
121 brown, or yellow. The material was either plastic or cardboard. Four small pieces of each  
122 dog's favorite food such as dog biscuits, jerky, and chicken meat were used as rewards. The  
123 rewards were small enough for the dogs to consume instantly just by one pick. The test room  
124 was a ca. 6 x 7 m office space in a building located in the city of Kyoto.

#### 125 *Procedure*

126 *Exposure Phase:* The 4 containers were arranged so that they made a fan shape with a  
127 radius of ca. 1.5 m (Fig. 1a) from a mark on the floor (X in Fig. 1a). The experimenter (E)  
128 placed one piece of food in each container. Then E asked the owner (O) to take the dog by the  
129 leash to the mark. Once the dog was there and stationary, E asked O to lead the dog to each  
130 container one by one in clockwise or counterclockwise order and to allow the dog to eat two  
131 rewards specified in advance (Fig. 1b). E also asked O to prohibit the dog from eating the  
132 remaining rewards. Thus the dog checked (and often tried to collect) all the rewards but was  
133 allowed to eat only two of them. The containers the dog was allowed to eat from will be  
134 hereafter referred to as "baited-eaten" containers and those not allowed to eat from will be  
135 referred to as "baited-uneaten" containers. The combinations of the location of permitted food  
136 (6: 2 combinations out of 4) and the visiting order (2: clockwise or counterclockwise) made  
137 for 12 types of exposure trials. Each participant received one trial type without repetition.

138 *Delay Phase:* Immediately after the Exposure Phase, E asked O to take the dog out of the  
139 room for a walk of at least 10 min on the street. E also asked O to take all of his/her personal  
140 belongings as if going back home; E also said "Bye-bye" to the dog (Fig. 1c). This procedure

141 was followed to minimize the possibility that the dogs would expect to come back to the test  
142 site. During this delay period, E replaced the containers with the identical set in exactly the  
143 same layout, but no food was placed in any container, to control for olfactory clues. The  
144 actual delay ranged from 12 to 18 min, which is thought to be beyond the human working  
145 memory capacity for retaining such an episode.

146 *Test Phase:* Immediately after being brought back to the room, the dog was unleashed at  
147 the mark on the floor and encouraged by O to go (Fig. 1d). The dog was thus free to visit the  
148 containers, which were now replaced and empty, in any order. E asked the owner not to look  
149 at the dog or the containers during the test but to look at the wall ahead or else to turn around  
150 and face away. The trial ended when the dog either a) visited all of the containers, b) spent at  
151 least 3 sec 2 meters or more from the test area, or c) returned to O.

152 -----  
153 Fig. 1 about here  
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155 Each dog's behavior was recorded using a portable digital camcorder (Victor GZ-MG40  
156 or GZ-MG275) for later analyses by a second experimenter. The order of visits by each dog  
157 was recorded. A visit was defined as looking into a container, which was apparent by the  
158 dog's poking its muzzle toward the container. This behavior was obvious; two coders  
159 analyzed all the videos and the reliability was 100%.

#### 160 *Predictions*

161 Two different predictions about the dogs' behavior in the Test Phase may be made. First, if  
162 the dogs' search behavior is determined through operant learning in the Exposure Phase, they  
163 should visit the containers where they obtained rewards (i.e., baited-eaten containers) before  
164 those where they did not (i.e., baited-uneaten containers). Second, conversely, if the dogs



165 retrieve and adaptively utilize specific experiences in the Exposure Phase, they should first  
166 visit the containers where they received no reward (i.e., baited-uneaten containers), because  
167 this is the only way to collect more rewards.

## 168 Results and discussion

169 Eleven out of 12 dogs visited one of the baited-uneaten containers as their first choice in  
170 the Test Phase. This was well above chance, which was 0.5 ( $p = 0.006$ , binomial test,  
171 two-tailed). Among the 9 dogs that visited more than one container, 4 dogs visited 2  
172 baited-uneaten containers in sequence. This was also above chance, which was 0.167 ( $p =$   
173 0.048) by a one-tailed test, which is validated by the significant visit to baited-uneaten  
174 containers in their 1st visit). Second-visit performances were slightly worse than the first  
175 probably due to extinction of their first visit of the container, meaning their first visit in  
176 anticipation of food resulted in no reward.

177 Thus the dogs' behavior in the Test Phase was consistent with our second prediction,  
178 supporting the view that dogs can spontaneously retrieve and utilize specific past experiences  
179 to succeed in this simple food-searching task. Operant learning in the Exposure Phase does  
180 not account for the results; that is, the dogs' Test Phase selections were not determined by  
181 simple association learning. Note also that they solved this unexpected challenge without  
182 change in external stimulation; that is, the dogs' exploration appears to have been driven  
183 purely by their memory retrieval.

184 The behavior of our dogs may look like radial-arm maze performances by rats (e.g., Olton  
185 & Samuelson, 1976). However, there are two important differences. First, rats in the  
186 radial-arm maze are typically familiarized with the maze in the absence of food prior to being  
187 trained on the maze. This gives a good opportunity for latent learning (Tolman & Honzik,  
188 1930) and the rats may establish a strategy for navigating in this space. In our experiment,

189 dogs were tested with a completely novel setup in a completely novel place. Thus, latent  
190 learning appears unlikely. Second, rats learn to collect most of the food available without  
191 revisiting arms after repeated training trials. This enables use of semantic memory (or a  
192 memorized set of visited places) rather than retrieving a previously experienced single  
193 episode. As our dogs, being naïve to this memory test, performed almost perfectly on the very  
194 first occasion, their performances are different from those of rats in the radial-arm maze,  
195 though the difference in the number of options might have to be considered.

196 One potential cue that might have guided the dogs' behavior is odors. However, the odors  
197 left on the containers, which the dogs had interacted with in the Exposure Phase, were  
198 completely eliminated because in the Test Phase the containers were replaced with identical  
199 counterparts but with no food present. It might be possible that the dogs utilized the odors left  
200 on the floor instead. We admit that failure to clean up the floor was our fault, though we did  
201 not notice that the dogs dropped their saliva either on the floor or the containers (note that the  
202 food was very small), nor actively marked the floor with odors. However, we suppose that the  
203 dogs had not relied on this cue because their typical response in the Test Phase was to go  
204 straight to one of the containers (see the Supplementary Video) without observable sniffing  
205 behavior. Further even if they used this olfactory clue, it does not necessarily lead to a specific  
206 prediction that the dogs would visit baited-uneaten containers first.

207 A second potential cue might come from how the owners controlled their dogs. However,  
208 physical control was impossible because the dogs were unleashed in the Test Phase, and no  
209 specific verbal commands were given other than "Go".

210 A third possibility might be that inadvertent cueing by the owner occurred, such as by eye  
211 gaze or postures might be possible, despite our request to the owners not to look at the dogs.  
212 Dogs may readily choose items indicated by human-given cues including variations of

213 pointing gestures and head orientation (e.g., Hare et al. 1998; Lakatos et al. 2007; Miklósi &  
214 Soproni 2006; Soproni et al. 2002. See Miklósi 2007, for a review), though they may not use  
215 very subtle cues such as eye-gaze without repeated training (Hare et al. 1998; Miklósi et al.  
216 1998). In fact, as noted above however, our dogs typically went straight to the containers  
217 either after being unleashed or hearing the command “Go”, without obviously checking the  
218 owners’ behavior.

219 As the owners were not informed of the purpose of the study beforehand, it seems  
220 unlikely that they had clear-cut expectations about their dogs’ behavior in the Test Phase.  
221 There are at least two possible predictions, as indicated above. In informal conversation with  
222 owners after the test it was clear that their expectations varied; some predicted visits to  
223 baited-uneaten containers, whereas others predicted returning to baited-eaten containers, and  
224 others had no specific expectations. Another possible objection might be on the grounds of a  
225 Clever-Hans effect, with the dogs responding to inadvertent cues from the experimenter. We  
226 suppose that this is also unlikely because when the dogs were tested for the very first time  
227 there was no opportunity to learn to identify possible cues. However, we eliminated this  
228 potential cue in the following Experiment.

229 Yet others might argue that the dogs showed a simple win-shift strategy. For such a  
230 strategy to work, however, dogs would have to remember where they visited (and ate) in the  
231 past anyway, because there was no change in the object arrangement. Thus this does not  
232 negate retrieval of the memory of a specific past experience. Finally, it might be argued that  
233 the dogs’ behavior reflects simple novelty-seeking. However, this can be also discounted  
234 because there was no physical change in the visual layout from the Exposure Phase to the Test  
235 Phase.

236 Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that the dogs solved the unexpected problem

237 by spontaneously retrieving their prior experience. Note that this behavior was an untrained,  
238 adaptive performance in a novel situation that the dogs encountered for the first time.

239

240

## Experiment 2

241 Experiment 1 demonstrated that dogs are able to retrieve and utilize memories for a single  
242 past experience or episode, in an unexpected situation where such memory retrieval is  
243 advantageous. A question that arises is what aspects of memory they are able to retrieve as a  
244 unitary episode.

245 Experiment 1 showed that, at least, the “where” of an item can be retrieved. It is possible  
246 that the dogs might have also retrieved “what” of the item, but this may not be warranted  
247 because the contents of the containers were homogeneous in the Exposure Phase.

248 In primates including humans, visual information processing goes through “where” and  
249 “what” pathways in the central nervous system (Ungerleider & Mishkin, 1982). “Where,” that  
250 is the location or motion of objects, is typically processed through the dorsal stream from  
251 primary visual cortex (V1) to parietal cortex through middle temporal cortex (MT), whereas  
252 “what,” that is identification of shape and object, goes through the ventral stream, from  
253 primary visual cortex (V1) to temporal extreme cortex (TE). Thus the two types of  
254 information may be fundamentally different from the early stage of information processing  
255 (Milner & Goodale, 1995).

256 Although dogs are generally considered to be more dependent upon olfaction and audition  
257 rather than vision, recent studies have shown that they are capable of visual concept formation  
258 (Range, Aust, Steurer, & Huber, 2008), recognizing human attentional states (Call, Bräuer,  
259 Kaminski, & Tomasello, 2003), understanding pointing (Hare, Brown, Williamson, &  
260 Tomasello, 2002; Szeteci, Miklósi, Topál, & Csányi, 2003), and possible understanding of

261 human perspective (Kaminski, Bräuer, Call, & Tomasello, 2009). Thus it is evident that dogs  
262 recognize both what and where of items of interest using vision. It may thus be asked whether  
263 these two types of information in the same sensory modality are somehow integrated.  
264 Integration of information from two separate modalities is within dogs' capacity; they may  
265 recall their owners' faces upon hearing their voices (Adachi, Kuwahata, & Fujita, 2007). The  
266 question whether and how "what" and "where" information are integrated in canids is worthy  
267 of investigation.

## 268 Method

### 269 *Participants*

270 Thirty-nine new domestic dogs (18 males and 21 females) and their owners participated  
271 voluntarily. Participant dogs were of various breeds and ranged in age from 8 months to 10  
272 years old (see Table 2). Some of the dogs and owners were familiar with the test room but all  
273 were naive to this memory test. Eighteen dogs were recruited and tested in Kyoto, Japan, and  
274 the remaining 21 in Berlin, Germany.

275 -----

276 Table 2 about here

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### 278 *Apparatus*

279 As in Experiment 1, 2 identical sets of 4 open containers, different in shape, size, color,  
280 etc., were prepared for each dog. Two pieces of each dog's favorite food suggested by the  
281 owner were used as rewards. Another object that would not capture special attention or  
282 interest by dogs such as a natural stone or a small plastic anchor was also used. The test in  
283 Kyoto was conducted in the same room used in Experiment 1, and the test in Berlin was  
284 conducted in a ca. 5 x 6 m office space in the Free University of Berlin.

285 *Procedure*

286 *Exposure Phase:* This phase was run in almost exactly the same way as in Experiment 1  
287 but with two important modifications. First, E deposited two (not four) pieces of food in two  
288 containers and the neutral object in another container; the fourth container remained empty.  
289 Second, E asked O to allow the dog to eat one of the two food rewards. The combination of  
290 the location of allowed and prohibited pieces of food, object, empty container (24) and  
291 visiting order (2: clockwise or counterclockwise) made for 48 types of exposure trials. Each  
292 participant received one randomly chosen type without repetition.

293 *Test Phase:* This phase was conducted in exactly the same way as in Experiment 1 with  
294 one improvement; that is, to avoid possible inadvertent cues from E, each dog's behavior was  
295 filmed by an assistant who did not witness the Exposure Phase, while E faced away from or  
296 left the test area until the trial ended.

297 *Predictions*

298 Based on the results of Experiment 1, two different predictions about the dogs' behavior in  
299 the Test Phase may be made. First, if the dogs are able to retrieve only "where" information,  
300 they should simply avoid visiting the sole baited-eaten container; that is they should visit the  
301 three remaining containers (baited-uneaten, neutral, and empty) randomly. Second, if they  
302 retrieve and adaptively utilize "what" and "where" information in integrated fashion, they  
303 should visit the baited-uneaten container more often than chance to collect food.

304 *Results and discussion*

305 The left panel of Fig. 2 shows the proportion of dogs that visited each container, on their  
306 first visit. Twenty dogs out of 39 visited the baited-uneaten container first; this was well  
307 above chance on a binomial test with the chance level .25 ( $p=0.001$ , two-tailed). The overall  
308 proportion of dogs visiting the baited-uneaten container was also above chance if we take a

309 more conservative chance level of .333 ( $p=0.03$ , two-tailed), assuming that the dogs would  
310 never return to the empty container, which they might have simply ignored in the Exposure  
311 Phase.

312 -----  
313 Fig. 2 about here  
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315 Interestingly, separate analyses of Japanese and German dogs revealed an unpredicted  
316 difference; 10 out of 18 Japanese dogs visited the baited-uneaten container in the test, which  
317 was significantly above chance ( $p=0.011$ , two-tailed), whereas only 1 dog visited the  
318 baited-eaten container, which was significantly below chance ( $p=0.039$ , two-tailed). In other  
319 words, among 11 Japanese dogs who returned to the container where they had seen food  
320 inside, 10 went to the container from which they had not eaten. This suggests that Japanese  
321 dogs were not simply attracted to the containers previously associated with food but showed a  
322 clearly differentiated behavior toward the two containers depending upon their previous  
323 experience ( $p=0.012$ , two-tailed, chance 0.5). In contrast, whereas a comparable proportion of  
324 German dogs (10 out of 21) visited the baited-uneaten container, which was also statistically  
325 above chance ( $p=0.041$ , two-tailed), 9 out of 21 German dogs visited the baited-eaten  
326 container though this did not reach a statistical significance ( $p=0.112$ , ns, two-tailed). Thus it  
327 is possible that German dogs might have been simply returned to the containers associated  
328 with food. In fact, the difference in the proportion of the dogs visiting the baited-eaten  
329 containers between the two countries (1 out of 18 vs. 9 out of 21) was statistically significant  
330 (Fisher exact test,  $p=0.011$ ). This might be due to subtle differences such as the breeds used,  
331 the test room, or, possibly, how people train dogs in Japan and Germany. This difference  
332 should be revisited in the future.

333 The right panel of Fig. 2 shows the dogs' second visit. Two of the dogs did not make a  
334 second visit and were not analyzed. Among the 17 dogs who failed to visit the baited-uneaten  
335 container in their first visit, 11 now did so. This proportion was also well above chance level  
336 of .33 ( $p=0.016$ , two-tailed). Separate analyses of Japanese and German dogs revealed a  
337 significant effect in the latter ( $p=0.039$ , two-tailed)

338 These results support our second prediction: dogs, particularly those kept in Japan, appear  
339 to have retrieved and utilized "what" and "where" information from their past experience in  
340 this novel test situation. The results suggest that dogs possess an ability to store and integrate  
341 the "what" and "where" of experienced episodes.

342 As in Experiment 1, potential explanations of the dogs' behavior other than retrieved  
343 memory appear unlikely, though the odor left on the floor might have affected their choice.  
344 However, we controlled inadvertent cuing by having the experimenter leave the test area.  
345 Therefore this experiment provided even stronger evidence for dogs' spontaneous retrieval of  
346 their memory of previous episodes.

347

#### 348 General discussion

349 In Experiment 1 we showed that dogs can spontaneously retrieve and utilize memories of  
350 a previous experience. Specifically, considerably later after eating two of four pieces of food  
351 in separate containers, dogs preferentially visited the containers they had not been allowed to  
352 eat from in a novel, unexpected test. This shows that dogs are at least able to retrieve  
353 incidentally encoded "where" information. This exploration by dogs appears to have been  
354 driven by their internal processes rather than the change in external stimulation. Such  
355 behavior seems impossible without active attempt to retrieve their incidentally formed  
356 memory trace. In a recent report, MacPherson & Roberts (2010) demonstrated a similar



357 win-shift strategy by dogs in a radial-arm maze after training. Our result shows that, at an  
358 unexpected situation where retrieval of their episodic experience could provide a sole clue to  
359 finding more food, dogs can readily go to collect food left uneaten in their preceding  
360 exploration without training.

361 In Experiment 2 we showed that dogs' utilization of incidental memory involves "what"  
362 as well as "where" information about previous episodes. In other words, dogs selectively  
363 visited the "uneaten" containers according to what they had seen their previous contents to be.  
364 Containers that should hold food were preferred over those that should have a neutral item in  
365 them. This suggests that dogs are able to retrieve and utilize incidentally encoded "what" and  
366 "where" information in an integrated fashion.

367 Potentially contaminating factors such as physical control and odor left on the containers  
368 were carefully excluded in the procedure, and the possibility of inadvertent cuing either by the  
369 owner or by the experimenter were eliminated. The only uncontrolled cue might have been  
370 odor left on the floor but, as discussed above, this does not necessarily predict that the dogs  
371 would visit baited-uneaten containers first. Therefore, our results demonstrate that dogs may  
372 possess an exercising incidental memory system similar to that of humans.

373 A methodological merit of the present procedure is that it requires no training. A wide  
374 variety of species may be tested in the same way, with slight modifications to suit particular  
375 species; this would be a valuable extension to comparative memory studies. One outcome of  
376 such comparative studies would be a better picture of how widespread such voluntary  
377 retrieval of incidentally-encoded memory is in the animal kingdom.

378 One question for future study is how long the incidental memory system can maintain  
379 information about a particular experience. The delay in the present study was less than 20  
380 minutes. Although long-term memory capacity by dogs has not been well documented, this

381 species is believed to remember familiar people for years, and, they are able to learn ca. 1000  
382 labels for individual items (Pilley & Reid, 2011). Whether dogs are able to retrieve  
383 information about specific experiences days later remains an interesting question.

384 Another question may be related to the incidental finding of the difference in the behavior  
385 of Japanese and German dogs in Experiment 2; Japanese dogs more reliably returned to the  
386 baited-uneaten container than German dogs. We suspect that this difference may be most  
387 likely to be due to a difference in how people train dogs; our casual impression is that German  
388 owners tend to train their dogs to follow their command more strictly than Japanese owners  
389 do. A consequence could be that German dogs may have learned that taking food from the  
390 baited-uneaten container is prohibited in the Exposure Phase. This possibility may be  
391 investigated further.

392 A final question is whether dogs integrate “when” information in their retrieval of  
393 incidental memory of previous experiences. As briefly described in the Introduction,  
394 integration of “what,” “where,” and “when” is a key property of episodic memory system in  
395 humans. Although such integration has been demonstrated in food-caching birds, apes, and  
396 rodents (e.g., Babb & Crystal 2005; Clayton & Dickinson 1998; Martin-Ordas et al. 2010),  
397 many of these performances may result from training on how to retrieve the information; i.e.,  
398 the performance could rely at least in part on the semantic memory system. This procedure, if  
399 combined with “when” information, could be a perfect easy test of episodic memory in  
400 nonhuman animals. For instance, it may be tested in the future how dogs and other animals  
401 respond to two types of food different in degradation as time.

402 In conclusion, we have demonstrated that dogs may retrieve and utilize “what” and  
403 “where” of specific past experiences encoded incidentally. How widespread this ability is in  
404 the animal kingdom and whether “when” information may be also retrieved are questions that

405 remain to be answered.

406

407

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## Tables

Table 1. Dogs used in Experiment 1.

Breed	Sex	Age (yy:mm)
Border Collie	F	5:00
Cavalier King Charles Spaniel	M	4:06
Chihuahua	F	2:10
Miniature Dachshund	F	7:07
Miniature Dachshund	F	6:02
Mongrel	F	5:00
Mongrel	F	3:01
Mongrel	M	3:00
Pomeranian	F	2:09
Shetland Sheepdog	F	0:09
Toy Poodle	F	3:00
Toy Poodle	M	4:09



Table 2. Dogs used in Experiment 2.

Breed	Sex	Age (yy:mm)	Location
-----			
Japanese dogs			
American Pit Bull Terrier	M	1:10	Kyoto
Border Collie	M	2:01	Kyoto
Chuhuhua	F	5:04	Kyoto
Chuhuhua	F	7:01	Kyoto
Chuhuhua	F	9:02	Kyoto
Golden Retriever X Labrador Retriever	F	4:10	Kyoto
Labrador Retriever	M	1:09	Kyoto
Labrador Retriever	M	3:09	Kyoto
Lakeland Terrier	F	6:09	Kyoto
Miniature Dachshund	F	7:10	Kyoto
Miniature Dachshund	F	7:10	Kyoto
Miniature Dachshund	M	7:10	Kyoto
Mongrel	F	2:02	Kyoto
Mongrel	M	10:04	Kyoto
Shepherd	M	0:11	Kyoto
Shiba	M	2:05	Kyoto
Toy Poodle	F	1:00	Kyoto
Toy Poodle	F	4:04	Kyoto
-----			

German dogs

American Pit Bull Terrier	M	5:03	Berlin
Baset Hound	M	2:01	Berlin
Border Terrier	F	2:04	Berlin
English Cocker Spaniel	M	1:40	Berlin
Golden Retriever	F	7:08	Berlin
Hungarian Vizsla	F	2:00	Berlin
Hungarian Vizsla	F	7:03	Berlin
Huski X unidentified	M	>4:00	Berlin
Jack Russel Terrier	F	4:06	Berlin
Labrador Retriever	M	4:00	Berlin
Labrador Retriever	M	8:11	Berlin
Miniature Pinscher X Jack Russel Terrier	M	4:06	Berlin
Mongrel	F	0:08	Berlin
Mongrel	F	4:11	Berlin
Mongrel	F	1:08	Berlin
Mongrel	M	>6:00	Berlin
Pomeranian X unidentified	F	7:01	Berlin
Saluki	M	9:05	Berlin
Scottish Deer Hound	M	>7:00	Berlin
Whippet	F	3:06	Berlin
Whippet	F	9:02	Berlin

### Figure legends

Figure 1. a: A schematic top view of the arrangements of the apparatus. b-d: A schematic drawing of the testing procedure.

Figure 2. The results of Experiment 2. a: The first choice by the dogs in the Test Phase. b: The second choice by the dogs in the Test Phase that failed to visit the baited-uneaten container in their first attempt.

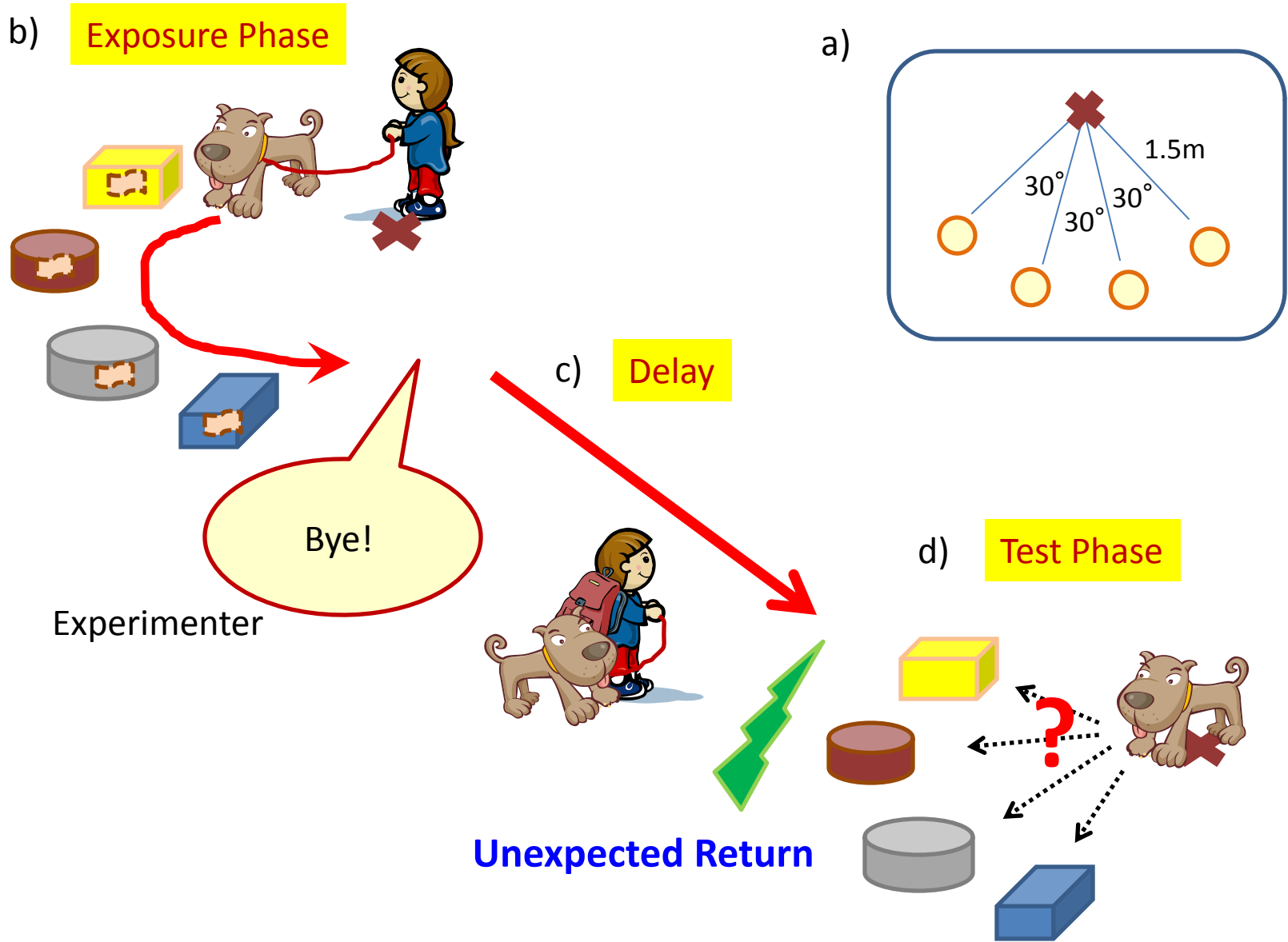


Figure 1

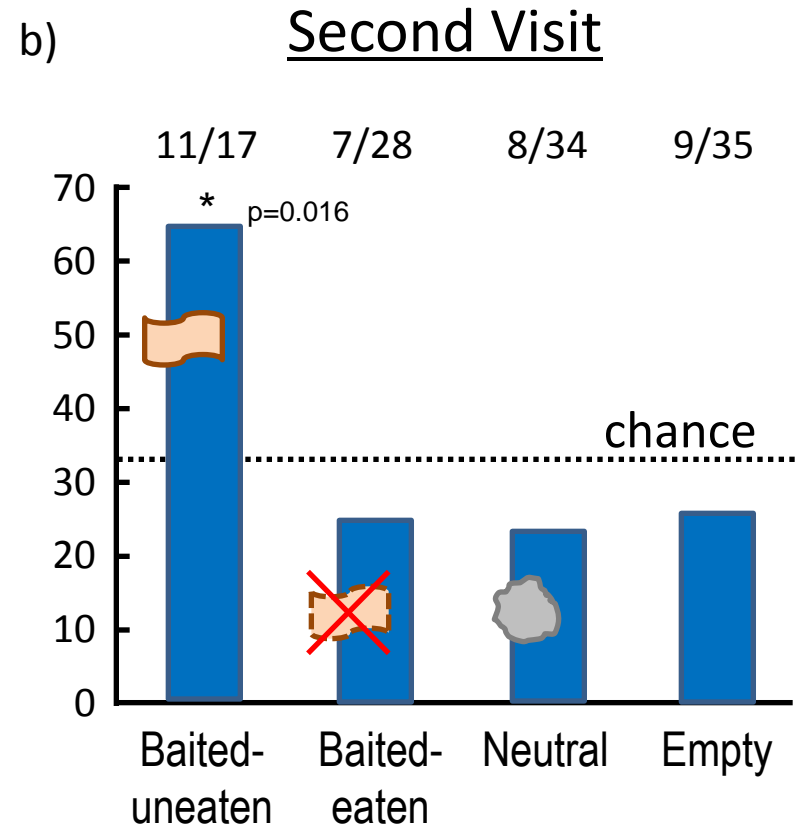
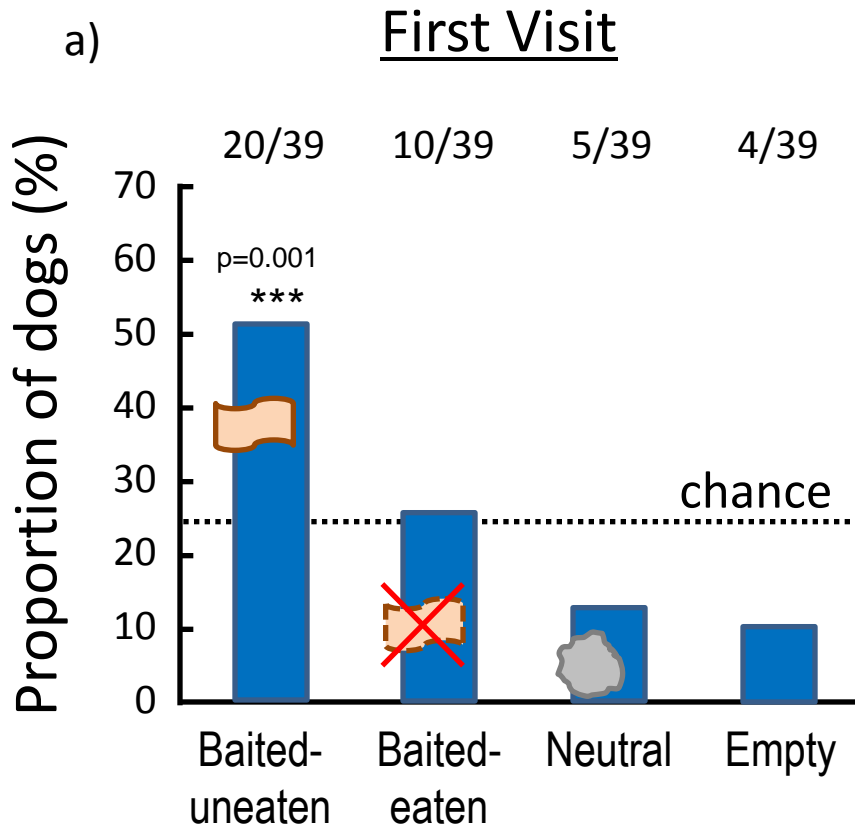


Figure 2