Name(s)	Project Number
Michael J. Landau	**J0320**

Project Title

Are Eyewitness Testimonies Accurate?

Abstract

Objectives/Goals
This project was conducted to determine the effects of suggestions on eyewitness reports.

Methods/Materials
Sixty subjects were used, twenty in each of three conditions (N=60). Thirty-one boys and 29 girls participated, ranging from grades K-5. Subjects viewed a 15 second video created by the investigator. The video showed two people playing catch with a football. A third person came into view of the camera, knocked down one of the original two, caught the ball, and ran off with it. All subjects were shown the same scene. In the Playing Catch Condition, subjects were told that, #some friends were going to be playing catch.# In the Theft Condition, the subjects were told that #something bad is going to happen.# In the Control Condition, subjects were not told anything specific about what was in the video; they were not given any suggestions. Subjects were given a set of questions created by the investigator, to assess the impact of the video.

Results
It was found that those in the Theft Condition were most likely to perceive that a crime had occurred in the scene. They also reported that the person who fell down did so as a result of being intentionally knocked down. Those in the Playing Catch Condition perceived it more as friends playing together and that nothing #bad# happened.

Conclusions/Discussion
This supports the hypothesis that suggestions do affect eyewitness reports. Subjects were able to accurately identify specifically observed events, such as the number of actors playing catch and the type of ball that was used. The results of the #playing catch# situation however were influenced by the suggestions that were given.

Summary Statement

I INVESTIGATED HOW SUGGESTIONS CAN EFFECT AN EYEWITNESS REPORT

Help Received

MRS. ARMOUR REVIEWED THE PROJECT; MY FATHER READ OVER MY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS; AND MY MOTHER HELPED ME TO PUT TOGETHER MY BOARD.