

## Forgetting due to Retrieval failure

Forgetting can occur not only because the memory traces have decayed over time or because independent sets of stored associations compete at the time of recall but also because at the time of recall, either the retrieval cues are absent or they are inappropriate. Retrieval cues are aids which help us in recovering information stored in the memory. This view was advanced by Tulving and his associates who carried out several experiments to show that contents of memory may become ~~more~~ inaccessible either due to absence or inappropriateness of retrieval cues that are available employed at the time of recall. Let us understand this with the help of an example.

Suppose you have memorised a list of meaningful words like nut, wasp, cottage, gold, bronze, ant, etc. in which words belonged to six categories (like places of living, names of insects, types of metal, etc.). If after a while you are asked to recall those you may recall a couple of them but if during the second recall attempt, you are also provided with category names, then you may find that your recall is near total. Category names in this example act as retrieval cues. Besides category names, the physical context in which you learn also provides effective retrieval cues.