

# Bad mood, better recall, researchers find

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People grumbling their way through the grimness of winter have better recall than those enjoying a carefree, sunny day, Australian researchers have found.

The University of New South Wales team used a Sydney news agency to test whether people's moods had an impact on their ability to remember small details.

Researchers placed 10 small items on the shop counter, including a toy cannon, red bus and a piggy bank, and quizzed shoppers about what they remembered seeing upon their exit.

Lead researcher Joseph Forgas said subjects were able to remember three times as many items on cold, windy, rainy days when there was sombre classical music playing as they were when conditions were sunny and bright.

Rainy-day shoppers were also less likely to have [false memories](#) of objects that weren't there, said Forgas.

"We predicted and found that weather-induced negative [mood](#) improved memory accuracy," he wrote in the study, which was published in the latest edition of the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

"Shoppers in a negative mood showed better memory and higher discrimination ability."

Forgas said a worse mood helped to focus people's attention on their surroundings and led to a more thorough and careful thinking style, while happiness tended to reduce focus and increase both confidence and forgetfulness.

"This finding suggests that some allowance for such mood effects could be incorporated in applied domains such as legal, forensic, counselling and clinical practice," he said.

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