

The role of narrative construction in future events simulation

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In the present study, we aimed at investigating the role of narrative construction in past and future thinking by assessing whether hindering this ability may affect the content of retrieved past and simulated future events. We either promoted or hindered narrative construction by asking participants to describe or list the content of retrieved past episodes, envisioned future episode and visually presented pictures. Results showed that participants took an equivalent amount of time to describe and list the content of past events; however, they included significantly more details in their descriptions than in their lists. A mirror pattern of results was obtained for future events, i.e., participants included the same amount of details in their descriptions and in their lists but they took significantly longer to list than to describe the content of the events. There were no differences between describing and listing the content of visually presented pictures. Overall, these findings suggest that narrative construction supports the retrieval and imagination of richly detailed past and future events by providing a framework that facilitates online binding of related details that may otherwise be forgotten.