

Worksheet

Bloom, P., & German, T. (2000). Two reasons to abandon the false belief task as a test of theory of mind. *Cognition*, 77(1), B25-B31.

Instructions: Fill out this worksheet as you are reading the Bloom & German (2000) article. The purpose of the worksheet is to help you focus on the most important parts of the paper, as well as to pay attention to how a good argument is built. We will discuss your responses in class. You will have to incorporate Bloom & German's argument in your Paper 1.

Who is the target audience for this article?

Introduction:

Does the article have a good introduction? Why?

Does it provide enough background information to the readers? How do we determine how much background information is enough?

Does the introduction convince the readers that the topic is of significance to the field of psychology? How? (provide an example)

Is the description of the Sally-Anne task clear?

What is the CLAIM of this article?

Reason 1: There is more to passing the false belief task than theory of mind:

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According to the authors, what skills does a child need to pass the false belief task, besides an understanding that beliefs can be false?

When the false belief task is modified and thus made easier (poses fewer processing demands), do 3-year-old children pass it?

Bloom & German (2000) acknowledge an alternative point of view in the paragraph starting with 'Advocates of the developmental change view are not convinced...' (p.27). In this paragraph, they describe how Gopnik and other supporters of the task interpret the fact that 3-year-olds pass the task, when it is simplified, not as evidence that the original task is too difficult, but rather as evidence that some 3-year-olds might have a half-formed understanding of others' minds. Based on this paragraph, do you think that Bloom & German (2000) acknowledge this alternative interpretation? Do you think they respond to it? If yes/no, why? How?

Next, the authors go over the false photograph task, which is essentially the same as the false-belief task in terms of difficulty (e.g., memory, attention demands) but it does not involve false-belief understanding. Are 3-year-olds able to pass the task? What is this evidence of?

Reason 2: There is more to theory of mind than passing the false belief task:

What other methods can be used to test whether younger kids attribute mental states?

What is some other evidence that children younger than 2 years have and understanding of others' minds?

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There is evidence that older children with autism fail the false belief task. According to the authors, is the reason they fail the task the same as the reason why typically developing 3-year-olds fail the task? What is the reason?

The proper role of the false belief task:

If not for testing theory of mind, what can the false belief task be used for?

Is this a good conclusion of the article?

After you are done reading:

Does the article have an informative title?

What is Bloom & German's main claim? What are the two reasons they provide? Are these reasons supported by evidence/Have Bloom & German (2000) built a convincing argument to support their claim?

Are you convinced by the evidence? And do you agree with their main claim?

Now that you have read the whole article, reflect on the style of writing and use of terminology. Are they tailored to the target audience?