

A Tale of Two Tasks: Why Results from the Lexical Decision and  
Same-different Matching Tasks Differ.

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In the development and testing of models of visual word recognition, one of the most frequently-used paradigms is masked priming. One way to investigate the complex processes underlying the standard form of this task and its variants is to examine differences obtained when the same stimuli are used in different masked-priming tasks. We obtained interference using the lexical decision task with —reversed anagram nonword primes and word targets (e.g., rulb-BLUR); however, when a —reference word was added to the display (e.g., blur-rulb-BLUR) and the task was to decide whether or not the reference matched the target (the same-different matching task), robust facilitation was obtained. We hypothesized that the reversal in the direction of the effect occurs because in the same-different task, processing of the target is influenced by both the prime and the reference. Results using a modified version of the same-different task were consistent with this hypothesis.