Story Completion Task (Projective Priming)

We have used this task in:

Dill, K.E., Anderson, C.A., Anderson, K.B., & Deuser, W.E. (1997). Effects of aggressive personality on social expectations and social perceptions. *Journal of Research in Personality, 31,* 272-292.

Bushman, B.J., & Anderson, C.A. (2002). Violent video games and hostile expectations: A test of the general aggression model. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28,* 1679-1686.

Projective priming coding scheme (drastically modified from Rule, Taylor, and Dobbs)

We coded several categories subdivided into aggressive and nonaggressive:
Physical and verbal behaviors, thoughts, and feelings.
In the nonaggressive feeling category, we added a negative and a positive or neutral feelings category. In the articles, only the aggressive-nonaggressive distinction was used.
We coded each response in the category in which it was written by the participant (do or say = physical or verbal; think=thought; feel=feel).

A description (and examples) of the type of phrases that were recorded in each category are as follows:

Physical = any behavior that does not explicitly involve a verbalization (e.g. "He called his wife" - this is not considered a verbal behavior because one can call without ever speaking to anyone).
nonaggressive - any nonverbal behavior that cannot be interpreted as an attempt to hurt another person.
aggressive - any nonverbal behavior for which the goal is most likely to hurt the target person.

Verbal = any verbalization (e.g., "Why did you hit my car") or reference to a verbalization (e.g. "he asked for a pizza).
nonaggressive - any verbalization that cannot be interpreted as an attempt to hurt another person.
aggressive - any verbalization for which the goal is most likely to hurt the target of the verbalization perhaps in order to achieve another goal [threats, cursing, verbal expressions of anger] (e.g. "I won't be your best friend if you don't go with me", "this really makes me angry, or "No tip for you")

Thoughts = any thought (even if phrased as a verbalization) entered in the thought column.
nonaggressive - (e.g. “I hope she goes with me" or "If she were my best friend, she would go with me)
aggressive - (e.g. "This waiter is not getting a tip from me” or "What an idiot")

Feelings = any feeling entered in the feeling column.
Negative, nonaggressive = any negative state which includes uncomfortable body states (e.g. bored, tired, anxious, hungry, thirsty)
Positive or Neutral, nonaggressive (e.g. relieved, persuasive)
Aggressive = (e.g. angry, perturbed, irritated, frustrated, mad)

Coding of the Story Completions (from Dill et al., 1997, article):

"Story completions were coded for aggressive content by two graduate students. The coders discussed the responses of 10 of the 201 participants in order to resolve inconsistencies before coding the remainder of the data independently. The thought completions were coded into two categories: aggressive and non-aggressive thoughts. Using these two categories, we then calculated the proportion of aggressive thoughts in the story completions. The ratings of the two coders on this proportion variable were positively correlated ($r = .70$) and were therefore averaged; this average proportion of aggressive thought completions is our main dependent measure."

From Bushman & Anderson, 2002:

"Two independent raters, blind to experimental conditions, tabulated the number of aggressive behaviors, thoughts, and feelings participants listed when completing the story stems. The intraclass correlation coefficients were .87, .74, and .85 for aggressive behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, respectively (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Because the intraclass correlation coefficients were high, the scores from the two raters were averaged."

Instructions-Story Task

Please read each of the following three brief stories. After reading each story, please take a moment to imagine what the person in the story might do, say , think or feel next, if the story were to continue. Then, write down about 20 words or phrases, in the columns provided, that you think describe what would happen next in the story. It is not important which columns you complete, as long as you write in about 20 items for each story.

Here is an example of what we would like you to do:

Example Story:

"Going to the Doctor"

John woke up one morning feeling a bit under the weather. He had a sore throat, a throbbing headache, and a stiff neck. Feeling that this might be more than just a cold, John decided to make an appointment with his doctor. Fortunately, the receptionist said they could fit him in at 10:00 that morning. John bundled up and drove over to the clinic. After checking in with the nurse at the desk, he sat down in one of the waiting room chairs and began to read a magazine.

What happens next? List 20 things that John will do, say, think or feel as the story continues.

Do or Say:	Think:	Feel:

Please complete the three following stories like the example you just read.

Story 1-The Car Accident

Todd was on his way home from work one evening when he had to brake quickly for a yellow light. The person in the car behind him must have thought Todd was going to run the light because he crashed into the back of Todd's car, causing a lot of damage to both vehicles. Fortunately, there were no injuries. Todd got out of his car and surveyed the damage. He then walked over to the other car.

What happens next? List 20 things that Todd will do, say, think or feel as the story continues.

Do or Say:	Think:	Feel:

Story 2-Persuading a Friend

Janet had worked all summer long, and now, a couple of weeks before school started, she felt she deserved a holiday. After a bit of thought, she decided a vacation to the coast would be ideal. After all, what could be better than suntanning or swimming in the ocean? The problem was that she did not want to go alone. She knew her best friend Shannon would go if she could, but Shannon had been saving her money to buy a new stereo. Janet decided to go over to Shannon's place and try to convince her to come to the coast.

What happens next? List 20 things that Janet will do, say, think or feel as the story continues.

Do or Say:	Think:	Feel:

Story 3-Going to a Restaurant

Jane had worked hard all day long, cleaning her apartment. She was tired but decided to reward herself with a meal in one of the restaurants down the street. Upon entering the restaurant, she was seated in a comfortable chair and given a menu. After reading it over, Jane decided upon a Caesar salad, French onion soup, and filet mignon. Some 15 minutes later, a waiter came around to take her order. Time slowly passed and Jane was getting hungrier and hungrier. Finally, about 45 minutes after her order had been taken, Jane was about to leave when she saw the waiter approaching with her food.

What happens next? List 20 things that Jane will do, say, think or feel as the story continues.

Do or Say:	Think:	Feel: