

# What Is Psychology?



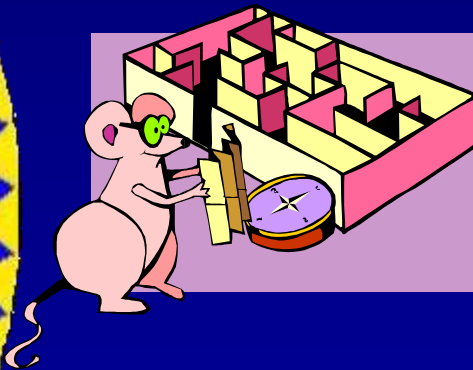
Definition: The Science of behavior and Mental processes

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# I. How Accurate Is the Image of Psychology?



- Many psychologists do not conduct psychotherapy



- Many psychologists use humans as research participants, and study more than just learning



- Psychology is not just common sense



# Defining Psychology

- The science of human behavior and mental processes
  - Behavior: Overt actions and reactions
  - Mental Processes: Thoughts, ideas, reasoning processes
  - Science: Rigorous, systematic observations
    - Tries to develop comprehensive theories and reliable knowledge

# II. How did Psychology Begin?

## Structuralism

- **Wilhelm Wundt**
  - Created 1st Psychology lab in Leipzig, Ger. in 1879
  - Taught his students to use scientific method to study Psychology
- **E.B. Titchener**
  - Popularized Wundt's ideas
  - Structuralism
    - School of thought that considered the structure & elements of immediate, conscious thought to be the proper subject matter for psychology
    - Used introspection or self-examination
    - Describe & analyze one's thoughts as they occur
    - School was eventually seen as too limiting in scope



# II. How did Psychology Begin?

## Functionalism

- William James
  - 1<sup>st</sup> American attempt to research the mind
  - Build from structuralism
  - Wrote “Principles of Psychology in 1890.”
    - » School of thought that was concerned with how the mind functions and how this functioning is related to consciousness (how thoughts guided behavior)
    - » Strongly influenced by Darwin’s theory trying to figure out how people adapted to their environment



## II. How did Psychology Begin?

### Gestalt Psychology

- Max Wertheimer
- Kurt Koffka
- School of thought that argued that it is necessary to study a person's total experience, not just parts of the mind or behavior
- “Total is greater than the sum of it's parts”

[Click here for Gestalt Psychology with examples](#)



## II. How did Psychology Begin?

### Freud & Psychoanalysis

- Sigmund Freud
  - Conscious is only part of the mind
  - **Unconscious** part is much bigger
    - » Provokes “Freudian slips” of the tongue
    - » sends symbolic messages in dreams
- Freud Created **psychoanalysis**
  - » Therapy for people with mental problems
  - » Many had problems with this part because you cannot scientifically study it

[Click here for short video clip on Freud & Psychoanalysis](#)



## II. How did Psychology Begin?

### B. The Behaviorist Revolution

- **John Watson (1878 – 1958)**
  - Focused on measuring only what is observable
  - This made psychology more scientific
- **Behaviorism**
  - School of thought that focuses on describing and measuring only what is observable either directly or through assessment instruments





## II. How did Psychology Begin?

### B. The Behaviorist Revolution

- B. F. Skinner (1904 – 1990)
  - Most influential American psychologist
  - Extreme views
    - Our environment completely determines our behavior
    - Focus is on rewards and consequences

[Click here for Skinner working with Pigeons](#)



# II. How did Psychology Begin?

## C. Challenges to Behaviorism

- Humanistic Psychology
  - Perspective that emphasizes positive human values and people's inherent tendency toward personal growth
  - Criticized behaviorists for rigid definition of psychology
- Abraham Maslow [click here for short video](#)
  - Maslow's hierarchy of human needs
    - Needs were listed in a pyramid with basic ones like food and water at the bottom and Self-actualization at the top
    - Criticized for lack of scientific research



## II. How did Psychology Begin?

- Humanism

Carl Rogers

- Had more influence over therapy than research
- Popularized Client - centered therapy
  - Emphasized the empathetic role of the therapist
  - And people's inherent tendency towards personal growth



## II. How did Psychology Begin?

- Challenges to Behaviorism
  - Cognitive Psychology
    - Behaviorists were too restrictive only focusing on overt behavior
      - But still in some ways measured behavior
    - Thought & mental processes are the essence of psychology
    - It enlarged the definition of psychology
      - “and mental processes”



# III. What Trends Currently Shape Psychology?

## A. The Changing Face of Psychology

### 1. Women in Psychology

- Between 1920 and 1975
  - women received < 25% of Ph.D.'s
  - Big Impact but little chance to develop or get credit
  - Some early female leaders in psychology included:
    - Mary Whiton Calkins
    - Margaret Washburn
    - Leta Stetter Hollingworth



# 1. Women in Psychology

- Today, women earn:
  - 73 % of bachelor's degrees in psychology
  - Nearly 70 % of new doctorates
- Still underrepresented in experimental psychology and academia
- Research by and about women is prominent



# A. The Changing Face of Psychology

- Ethnic Diversity in Psychology  
Situation changing more slowly  
Only 23 % of membership of American Psychological Association (APA) is non-white  
Receive 19% of doctoral degrees in psychology
  - African Americans 6%
  - Asians 4%
  - Latinos 7%
  - Native Americans 2%



## 2. Ethnic Diversity in Psychology

- Diversity strengthens psychology
  - Helping professions are more effective for more people
  - Diversity brings a variety of research interests to the field





# III. What Trends Currently Shape Psychology?

## B. Major Perspectives in Psychology

- The psychoanalytic Perspective
- The Behaviorist Perspective
- The humanistic Perspective
- The Cognitive Perspective
- The biopsychology Perspective
  - The **neuroscience** perspective
- The Social and Cultural Perspective
  - Recognizes that behavior occurs in a social and cultural context

# III. What Trends Currently Shape Psychology?

## C. Current Trends

### 1. **Positive** Psychology

- Emphasizes positive human values, strengths, and virtues
- Started with humanistic movement
- Reappeared in 1990s





## C. Current Trends

2. Industrial / Organizational (I/O) Psychology
  - Studies behavior in the work environment
  - Dramatic growth since the 1990s
  - These psychologists tend to work for companies in human resources management and personnel



## C. Current Trends

### 3. Evolutionary Psychology

- Based on the work of Charles Darwin
- Argues that humans have evolved both physically and psychologically
- Assumes that adaptive behaviors will be passed on to future generations



# IV. Who Are Psychologists?

## A. Types of Mental Health Practitioners

- Clinical Psychologists
  - Provide diagnosis & treatment of emotional & behavioral problems (mostly those suffering from a clinically diagnosed mental disorder)
- **Counseling** Psychologists
  - Also work with people who have emotional or behavioral problems Provide diagnosis & treatment of emotional & behavioral problems (mostly treat those NOT suffering from a diagnosed mental disorder, but rather those suffering from general life problems which can be helped through discussion)
- Psychiatrists are medical doctors, not psychologists
  - Most psychoanalysts (including Freud) are psychiatrists, not psychologists



# IV. Who Are Psychologists?

## B. What Psychologists Do

- Psychologists don't just help people with problems
- Provide career counseling and assist with community projects
  - School and community psychologists
- Provide services to well - adjusted people
  - Improving performance of professional athletes, musicians
- Conduct research
  - Experimental Psychologists