What is psychology?

Psychology is...
The discipline concerned with behavior and mental processes and how they are affected by an organism's physical state, mental state, and external environment.

Symbolized with a \( \Psi \)

Empirical
Relying on evidence gathered by careful observation, experimentation, or measurement

Thinking critically about Psychology

Can you distinguish between psychobabble and empirical psychology?

Critical thinking
The ability and willingness to assess claims and make objective judgments on the basis of well-supported reasons rather than emotion and anecdote

Critical thinking guidelines
Ask questions
Define your terms
Examine the evidence
Analyze assumptions and biases
Avoid emotional reasoning
Don't oversimplify
Consider other interpretations
Tolerate uncertainty
History of Psychology

Three early psychologies
Structuralism
Functionalism
Psychoanalysis

Structuralism
Early approach that emphasized the analysis of immediate experience into basic elements
Interested in what happens
Trained introspection
Volunteers taught to observe, analyze, and describe their own sensations, mental images, and emotional reactions

Functionalism
Early approach that emphasized the function or purpose of behavior and consciousness
Interested in how and why something happens
Functionalist broadened field of psychology to include the study of children, animals, religious experiences, and stream of consciousness

Psychoanalysis
A theory of personality and a method of psychotherapy, originally formulated by Sigmund Freud
Emphasizes unconscious motives and conflicts
Your turn

The first field of psychology to ask why people have consciousness was:
1. Behaviorism
2. Structuralism
3. Psychoanalysis
4. Functionalism
5. Gestalt psychology

Major Psychological perspectives

Biological perspective
Learning perspective
Cognitive perspective
Sociocultural perspective
Psychodynamic perspective

The biological perspective

Psychological approach that focuses on how bodily events affect behavior, feelings, and thoughts

This perspective involves
Hormones
Brain chemistry
Heredity
Evolutionary influences
The learning perspective
Psychological approach that is concerned with how the environment and experience affect a person’s (or nonhuman animal’s) actions
This perspective involves
Behaviorism
Social-cognitive learning theories

The cognitive perspective
Psychological approach that emphasizes what goes on in people’s heads
This perspective involves
Behaviorism
Social-cognitive learning theories

The sociocultural perspective
Psychological approach that emphasizes social and cultural forces outside the individual
This perspective involves
Social psychology or the study of rules, roles, groups, and relationships
Cultural psychology or the study of cultural norms, values, and expectations

The psychodynamic perspective
Psychological approach that emphasizes unconscious dynamics within the individual, such as inner forces, conflicts, or the movement of instinctual energy
This perspective involves
Unconscious thoughts, desires, conflicts
Humanist psychology

Psychological approach that emphasizes personal growth and the achievement of human potential, rather than the scientific understanding of behavior

This approach
Rejected behaviorism and psychoanalysis
Emphasized creativity and achieving potential

Feminist psychology

Psychological approach analyzing the influence of social inequities on gender relations and on the behavior of the two sexes

This approach
Recognized years of male bias in data collection and psychotherapy
Questions the use of research in justifying women’s lower status or elevating women’s status (female bias)

Your turn

The psychological perspective that emphasizes the deep, internal causes of people’s behavior is:
1. Biological perspective
2. Learning perspective
3. Cognitive perspective
4. Psychodynamic perspective
5. Sociocultural perspective

Your turn

The psychological perspective that emphasizes the “deep,” psychological causes of people’s behavior is:
1. Biological perspective
2. Learning perspective
3. Cognitive perspective
4. Psychodynamic perspective
5. Sociocultural perspective
Academic/research psychologists

Research in areas of basic or applied psychology

Examples:
- Experimental psychologists
- Educational psychologists
- Developmental psychologists
- Industrial/organizational psychologists
- Psychometric psychologists

Psychological practitioners

Counseling psychologists help people deal with problems associated with everyday life.

School psychologists work with parents, teachers, and students to enhance student performance.

Clinical psychologists diagnose, treat, and study mental or emotional problems.

Clinical psychologists are not...

Psychotherapists
Anyone who does any type of psychotherapy

Psychoanalysts
Individuals who receive training in psychoanalysis

Psychiatrists
Medical doctors who diagnose and treat mental disorders

Psychologists in other settings

Sports
Consumer issues
Advertising
Organizational problems
Environmental issues
Public policy
Opinion polls
Military training
Animal behavior
Legal issues
What areas do Psychology undergraduates pursue?

Psychology
Counseling
Education
Social work
Medicine
Law
Health sciences
Business
Sociology