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*What is Psychology?*

## **Approaches to Psychology**

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## Introduction

This PowerPoint® presentation is designed to offer your students an overview of key events, personalities, and concepts. Created by a classroom teacher, the slide show places a premium on ease of use and succinctness. We developed this title to:

- Engage students with visual elements
- Outline key historical issues
- Make learning clear and relevant
- Provide a customizable template for differentiated instruction

On the slides themselves, bullet points highlight central elements, and numerous images help to provide a visual context for the presentation. Extensive notes for each slide offer detailed information to help elaborate bullet points. Handouts provide a convenient way for students to make connections between the ideas presented, and the culminating quiz provides a convenient way to assess student comprehension.

It is not necessary to cover every bullet point on every slide. One of the real benefits of this medium is the flexibility it affords you. We realize that each class and each student has different needs that require different approaches to teaching. Use this presentation to help customize your teaching. Use the “View” menu in PowerPoint® to sort through the slides visually, to view the presentation as a table of contents, or to see the larger groupings of sections and chapters.

If you want to focus on certain images or make a more detailed exploration of a particular area, you can easily add or delete slides. Simply copy the presentation to your own computer and modify it to create the exact messages that you want to convey. You may also wish to search the Web for additional images, sounds, graphs, timelines, or even video clips to incorporate into the presentation.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others’ experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we’re also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. We look forward to hearing from you.

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# Approaches to Psychology



Slide # 1

Today's psychologists are linked together by their dedication to their specific fields and approaches to the subject matter. They owe a tremendous debt to all of the psychologists who came before them. In this presentation, we will examine the various approaches to the field of psychology and look briefly at the contributions of major psychologists in each of these areas.

## The Different Approaches

- The problems you wish to investigate are tied to a number of theoretical approaches to psychology
- There are six basic approaches to the study of psychology (some psychologists also include a seventh approach)

Slide # 2

Bullet # 1 Depending on what psychological topic you want to investigate, looking at the variety of approaches presents a good place to begin. If you were studying the causes of schizophrenia, you might first look for a possible biological explanation. If you wanted to find out how infants learn, you might want to investigate the area of cognitive psychology.

Bullet # 2 There are perhaps as many different ways to study psychology as there are psychologists, though it is generally agreed that there are six or seven basic approaches to psychology.

## Seven Approaches

- 1. Evolutionary
- 2. Biological
- 3. Behavioral
- 4. Cognitive
- 5. Humanistic
- 6. Psychodynamic
- 7. Sociocultural

Slide # 3

Some psychologists choose to adopt one specific approach, while others combine a variety of approaches. Often, it's not practical to employ just a single approach or to identify a specific psychologist with only one approach. Some of the approaches listed on this slide are more current or are more likely to be employed by contemporary psychologists than others. We will first look at how a psychologist might apply different approaches to specific case studies, then we will examine the advantages, disadvantages, and limitations of each approach.

## Application



- How do you explain the causes of depression?
- How do you examine the personality of an assassin?

Slide # 4

Bullet # 1 The top picture in this slide shows a painting of actress Patty Duke. She suffered bouts of depression for many years. If you wanted to investigate the causes of depression, you might first take a biological approach and look for physical, organic, or biochemical factors. You could then adopt a cognitive approach and explore how an afflicted person's thought processes might influence their depression. You might even take a psychoanalytic approach and investigate how early childhood experiences and unconscious thoughts relate to depression

Bullet # 2 If you wanted to understand the mind of an assassin, you might use a sociocultural approach. For example, to what extent was Lee Harvey Oswald a product of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century American culture and society? The bottom picture in this slide shows Oswald being shot by Jack Ruby.

## Application #2



- How can we explain the power of cult leaders?
- What social conditions exist that promote the rise of cults?

Slide # 5

Where would you begin your psychological search if you were trying to explain the rise of cults? The top left picture in this slide shows Marshall Applewhite of the Heaven's Gate cult. He and 39 of his followers committed suicide in 1997 in the belief that doing so would allow them to hook up with a UFO they believed was hiding behind the Hale-Bopp comet. The top right picture shows Reverend Jim Jones, leader of the People's Temple cult. He and 900 of his followers committed mass suicide in the Venezuelan jungle in 1979. The bottom left picture shows David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidian cult. He and his followers died in a controversial fire after a 51-day standoff with the U.S. government. On the bottom right is Charles Manson, who is still in prison for the ritualistic killing of nine people. In trying to explain the actions of cult leaders and members, you could adopt a behaviorist approach and examine the nature of obedience. You could also employ a sociocultural approach to see how culture shapes individuals who join cults.

## Application #3



- ▶ How could you investigate the causes of mental illness?



Slide # 6

If you wanted to understand the causes of schizophrenic behavior, you might first take a biological approach, since the affliction has a biochemical origin. The top picture in this slide depicts a catatonic schizophrenic. Catatonics often maintain unusual postures for many hours or even days. The bottom painting shows Dr. Cameron West, author of the book *First Person Plural*. He suffers from multiple personality disorder, a rare condition in which one person switches back and forth between several distinct personalities. A psychodynamic approach has helped psychologists gain a better understanding of multiple personality disorder. Evidently, the disease springs in part from physical abuse suffered as a child.

## Application #4



- How could you explain the reasons for obedience to authority?

Slide # 7

Why do people tend to obey authority figures, even when such obedience might seem irrational? We see this phenomenon in action both in atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II (depicted in the top picture in this slide), and in the resocialization process that takes place during basic training in the military. Which psychological approaches could you use to explore obedience? You might want to start with a sociocultural approach and investigate how societal norms can influence behavior.

## Application #5



- ▶ How could you achieve a better understanding of why a person would commit suicide?

Slide # 8

The picture in this slide shows musician Kurt Cobain, who took his own life at the height of his career. The cognitive approach, which focuses on thought processes, might work best to help us understand why people kill themselves. You might also try a psychodynamic approach and investigate unconscious motives.

## Application #6



Where would you look if you wanted to understand how and why some people seem so extraordinary and important in our society?

Slide # 9

If you were trying to understand the greatness of an Abraham Lincoln, where would you begin your search? It might be good to start with a humanist approach. Humanists such as Abraham Maslow have proposed theories about why some people aspire to greatness. You might also take a sociocultural approach and look at the phenomenon of hero worship.

## Overview of Each Approach

- **Biological:** Focuses primarily on the activities of the nervous system, the brain, hormones, and genetics
- **Psychodynamic:** Emphasizes internal, unconscious conflicts; the focus is on sexual and aggressive instincts that collide with cultural norms

Slide # 10

No special notes.

## Approaches to Psychology

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity #1

Match the following psychological approaches with the descriptions listed below. Put the appropriate letter next to the number.

1. \_\_\_ structuralist
2. \_\_\_ functionalist
3. \_\_\_ psychoanalyst
4. \_\_\_ behaviorist
5. \_\_\_ humanist
6. \_\_\_ cognitive psychologist
7. \_\_\_ psychobiologist

Definitions:

- a. A psychologist who studies how physical and chemical changes in the brain influence our behavior
- b. A psychologist who focuses on how we process, store and use information and how this affects our thinking
- c. A psychologist who believes that people are free to direct their own destinies
- d. A psychologist who analyzes how organisms learn or modify their behavior based on events in their environment
- e. A psychologist who studies how unconscious motives and conflicts affect our lives
- f. A psychologist who studies the function rather than the structure of consciousness
- g. A psychologist who studies the basic elements that make up conscious mental experiences

## Approaches to Psychology

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

### Activity #1: Answer Key

Match the following psychological approaches with the descriptions listed below. Put the appropriate letter next to the number.

1. \_\_\_ structuralist
2. \_\_\_ functionalist
3. \_\_\_ psychoanalyst
4. \_\_\_ behaviorist
5. \_\_\_ humanist
6. \_\_\_ cognitive psychologist
7. \_\_\_ psychobiologist

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- f. A psychologist who studies the function rather than the structure of consciousness
- g. A psychologist who studies the basic elements that make up conscious mental experiences

Key

1. Structuralist = h
2. Functionalist = f
3. Psychoanalyst = e
4. Behaviorist = d
5. Humanist = c
6. Cognitive psychologist = b
7. Psychobiologist = a