

## 01: Introduction to AP Psychology

### Key Concepts

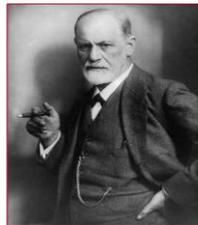
**Psychology** is the science that deals with mental processes and behavior.

**AP Psychology** is an introductory college psychology course to introduce the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of humans and other animals.

**Psychological focus** is on emotional and behavioral characteristics of the individual through all stages of life, the characteristics of groups and the characteristics of various activities.

Therefore, **Psychologists** experiment with, observe, test, and treat behavior.

### Psychoanalytic



**Sigmund Freud**

Sigmund Freud was a pioneer in the development of psychoanalysis and the psychodynamic school of psychology. This way of approaching psychology, is based on the influence of the unconscious mind on an individual's behavior. This method of observation, introspection and clinical observation is used to treat psychological distress.

### Subfields of Psychology

Psychology is a collection of diverse subfields. Some psychologists do basic research, some do applied research, and others provide professional services.

**Biological** Psychologists explore links between brain and mind.



**Developmental** Psychologists study our changing abilities from prenatal to the elderly.

**Cognitive** Psychologists experiment with how we perceive, think, and solve problems.



**Personality** Psychologists investigate our persistent traits.

**Social** Psychologists explore how we view and affect one another.



### Basic Questions in Psychology

**Psychology** is a science that seeks to answer all sorts of questions about all of us: how we think, feel and act.

- To what extent is one's personality predisposed by one's genes; or by one's home and neighborhood environment?
- What do babies actually perceive and think?
- How often and why do we dream?
- Does sheer intelligence explain why some people get richer, think more creatively, or relate more sensitively?
- What triggers our bad moods – and our good ones?
- In what ways are humans alike? Or different?

### Current Perspectives in Psychology

#### **A neuroscience perspective**

- Focus on how the body and brain enable emotions, memories and sensory experiences.
- Sample Questions:  
How are messages transmitted within the body?  
How is blood chemistry linked with moods and motives?

#### **An evolutionary perspective**

- Looks at how the natural selection of traits promotes the perception of one's genes.
- Sample Questions:  
How does evolution influence behaviour tendencies?

#### **A behaviour genetics perspective**

- Focus on how much our genes and our environment influence our individual differences.
- Sample Questions:  
To what extent are psychological traits such as intelligence, personality, sexual orientation, and vulnerability to depression attributable to our genes or to our environment?

#### **A psychodynamic perspective**

- Focus on how behaviour springs from unconscious drives and conflicts.
- Sample Questions:  
How can someone's personality traits and disorders be explained in terms of sexual and aggressive drives or as the disguised effect of unfulfilled wishes and childhood traumas?

#### **A behavioral perspective**

- Focus on how we learn observable responses.
- Sample Questions:  
How do we learn to fear particular object or situations?  
What is the most effective way to alter our behaviour, say to lose weight or stop smoking?

#### **A cognitive perspective**

- Focus on how we encode, process, store, and retrieve information.
- Sample Questions:  
How do we use information in remembering; or reasoning; or solving problem?

#### **A social-cultural perspective**

- Focus on how behaviour and thinking vary across situations and cultures.
- Sample Questions:  
How are we, as Africans, Asians, Australians, or North Americans, alike as members of one human family; as products of different environmental contexts; or how do we differ?

**How to Use This Cheat Sheet:** These are the keys related this topic. Try to read through it carefully twice then rewrite it out on a blank sheet of paper. Review it again before the exams.