

# Cheat Sheet: Psychological Foundations

## Essential Concepts

### Early Psychology

- Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behavior. Students of psychology develop critical thinking skills, learn about the scientific method, and understand the complexity of behavior.
- Wundt and James played pivotal roles in establishing psychology as a scientific discipline. Wundt focused on structuralism, breaking cognitive experiences into parts through introspection. James promoted functionalism, exploring how mental activities adapt to the environment.
- Freud emphasized the significance of the unconscious mind in understanding conscious behavior. He used techniques like dream analysis and free association in his work.
- Gestalt psychology, popular in Europe, adopted a holistic view of individuals and their experiences. Some principles from Gestalt psychology still influence the study of sensation and perception.

### The History of Psychology

School of Psychology	Description	Earliest Period	Historically Important People
<b>Psychodynamic perspective</b>	Focuses on the role of the unconscious and childhood experiences in affecting conscious behavior.	Very late 19th to Early 20th Century	Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson
<b>Behavioral perspective</b>	Focuses on observing and controlling behavior through what is observable. Puts an emphasis on learning and conditioning.	Early 20th Century	Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner

<b>Humanistic perspective</b>	Emphasizes the potential for good that is innate to all humans and rejects that psychology should focus on problems and disorders.	1950s	Abraham Maslow, The Blackfoot Nation, Carl Rogers
<b>Cognitive perspective</b>	Focuses not just on behavior, but on mental processes and internal mental states.	1960s	Ulric Neisser, Noam Chomsky, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky

Early Perspectives of Psychology: Still Active and Advanced Beyond Early Ideas

In addition to these early perspectives, some other key perspectives that developed in the latter part of the 20th century include:

- the biological perspective (focusing on physiological causes for behavior),
- the evolutionary perspective (behaviors have an evolutionary cause—which grew from functionalist views), and
- the sociocultural perspective (the environment strongly influences thoughts and behaviors).

## The Psychological Domains

Psychology is a diverse discipline that is made up of several major subdivisions with unique perspectives. The five psychological domains, or pillars, divide the main areas of study within psychology into 5 categories:

- Domain 1: Biological psychology involves the study of the biological bases of behavior, which includes neuroscience, consciousness, and sensation. (Sensation and perception refer to the area of psychology that is focused on how information from our sensory modalities is received, and how this information is transformed into our perceptual experiences of the world around us.)
- Domain 2: Cognitive psychology is concerned with the relationship that exists between thought and behavior, and includes the study of perception, attention, memory, and intelligence.
- Domain 3: Developmental psychology is the study of physical and cognitive changes that occur throughout one's lifespan. This includes the study of learning and conditioning, lifespan development, and language.
- Domain 4: Social and Personality psychology focuses on individuals' unique patterns of behavior, thought, and emotion.

- Domain 5: Mental and Physical psychology is the study of abnormal psychology, with its focus on abnormal thoughts and behaviors, as well as counseling and treatment methods, and recommendations for coping with stress and living a healthy life.
- Industrial and organizational psychology, health psychology, sport and exercise psychology, forensic psychology, and clinical psychology are all considered applied areas of psychology.

## Careers in Psychology

- Generally, academic careers in psychology require doctoral degrees. However, there are a number of nonacademic career options for people who have master's degrees in psychology.
- While people with bachelor's degrees in psychology have more limited psychology-related career options, the skills acquired in an undergraduate education in psychology are useful in a variety of work contexts.

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# Glossary

## American Psychological Association

professional organization representing psychologists in the United States

## behaviorism

the psychological focus on observing and controlling behavior. Behaviorism as a theory holds that behaviors are learned or conditioned through environmental experiences.

## biological perspective

a psychological approach that examines physiological causes for behavior

## biopsychology

study of how biology influences behavior

## biopsychosocial model

perspective that asserts that biology, psychology, and social factors interact to determine an individual's health

## clinical psychology

area of psychology that focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders and other problematic patterns of behavior

**cognitive psychology**

area of psychology that focuses on studying thoughts and their relationship to our experiences and actions

**cognitive revolution**

a period of change in psychology during the 1950s and 1960s, characterized by a shift back to studying mental processes and the emergence of cognitive psychology as a prominent perspective

**counseling psychology**

discipline that focuses on emotional, social, vocational, and health-related outcomes in individuals who are considered psychologically healthy

**cross-cultural psychologists**

compare populations across countries

**developmental psychology**

the scientific study of development across a lifespan

**dissertation**

long research paper about research that was conducted as a part of the candidate's doctoral training

**eclectic approach**

an approach in psychology where psychologists draw from multiple ideas and theories, integrating different perspectives to understand and study human behavior

**empirical method**

method for acquiring knowledge based on observation, including experimentation, rather than a method based only on forms of logical argument or previous authorities

**evolutionary perspective**

A psychological approach that posits behaviors have an evolutionary cause and grew from functionalist views

**evolutionary psychology**

seeks to understand human behavior as the result of psychological adaptation and natural selection

**forensic psychology**

area of psychology that applies the science and practice of psychology to issues within and related to the justice system

**functionalism**

focused on how mental activities helped an organism adapt to its environment

**health psychology**

the study of how psychological factors, including thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and social interactions, influence health and well-being

**humanism**

perspective within psychology that emphasizes the potential for good that is innate to all humans

**humanistic perspective**

a psychological approach that emphasizes the potential for good in all humans and rejects a focus on problems and disorders. It emerged in the 1950s, with influential figures such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

**multicultural psychologists**

develop theories and conduct research with diverse populations, typically within one country

**natural selection**

a process by which heritable traits conferring survival and reproductive advantage to individuals tend to be passed on to succeeding generations and become more frequent in a population

**-ology**

suffix that denotes "scientific study of"

**personality psychology**

study of patterns of thoughts and behaviors that make each individual unique

**personality trait**

consistent pattern of thought and behavior

**PhD (doctor of philosophy)**

doctoral degree conferred in many disciplinary perspectives housed in a traditional college of liberal arts and sciences

**postdoctoral training program**

allows young scientists to further develop their research programs and broaden their research skills under the supervision of other professionals in the field

**psyche**

Greek word for soul

**psychiatrist**

a person with a medical degree who specializes in treating mental health issues and diagnosable disorders, they can prescribe medications

**psychoanalysis**

a type of talk therapy originally developed by Freud but still practiced today that focuses on the interaction between conscious and unconscious elements and involves a person talking about their past experiences to uncover and understand the reasons for behavior

**psychoanalytic theory**

focus on the role of the unconscious in affecting conscious behavior

**psychodynamic perspective**

a psychological approach that focuses on the role of the unconscious and childhood experiences in shaping conscious behavior. It originated in the late 19th to early 20th century, with notable figures like Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson.

**psychological domain**

specific areas of study within the broader discipline of psychology. Each domain examines a different aspect of human experience and behavior.

**psychological perspective**

theoretical frameworks psychologists use to understand, describe, and explain human behavior and cognitive processes. Each perspective emphasizes different aspects of human behavior and uses different techniques and methods for treatment and study.

**psychology**

the scientific study of mental processes and behavior

**PsyD (doctor of psychology)**

doctoral degree that places less emphasis on research-oriented skills and focuses more on application of psychological principles in the clinical context

**social psychology**

the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others

**sociocultural perspective**

a psychological approach that emphasizes the influence of the environment on thoughts and behaviors

**sport and exercise psychology**

area of psychology that focuses on the interactions between mental and emotional factors and physical performance in sports, exercise, and other activities

**structuralism**

understanding the conscious experience through introspection