

ACTIVITY 2

Using Psychological Perspectives to Answer Questions on Behavior

This activity aligns with the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* Scientific Inquiry Domain, Content Standard 1: Development of psychology as an empirical science, Performance Standard: 1.3 Describe perspectives employed to understand behavior and mental processes.

This activity encourages discussion of the various psychological perspectives and the views they bring to bear upon questions about behavior. For each of the following statements, ask students to indicate with which psychological perspective they would be most likely to agree: Psychodynamic (P), Behavioral (B), Behavior Genetics (BG), Evolutionary (E), Cognitive (C), Sociocultural (S), Neuroscience (N), or Humanistic-Existential (HE). Although each of the statements is keyed to one of these perspectives, it is important to realize that events in the real world are often complex, and students may be able to make good arguments for more than a single perspective in some cases. And of course these statements are only examples; you (or your students) could easily generate additional statements to contribute to the discussion.



**BACK TO
CONTENT
OUTLINE**



The statements:

- The mind can be viewed as an information processing system.
- Behavior is motivated by forces that individuals may not understand or be aware of.
- Human thought and behavior can be understood in terms of activity at the neural level.
- One limitation of our understanding of behavior is that most research has been conducted on subjects from North America.
- Psychological science is the study of behavior that is observable and measurable.
- Personality is attributable more to genes than to environmental experience.
- Many of our behaviors have developed as a result of our species' adaptation to the challenges of surviving across millennia.
- Future behavior is influenced by memory and analysis of past experience.
- Pain tolerance is largely a result of the effects of endorphins and other neurochemicals.
- Pain tolerance is influenced by expectancies and interpretation of experiences.
- Behavior is powerfully influenced by its consequences, in the form of reinforcement and punishment.
- Behavior may be the product of unconscious conflict and anxiety.
- Basic facial expressions of emotion are universal across many cultures.
- Identical twins tend to have similar levels of intelligence, even when separated early in life.
- Women around the world tend to choose older mates who will be good providers.
- Behavior is motivated by self-actualization and the promise of human potential.



Answer key:

- The mind can be viewed as an information processing system. [C]
- Behavior is motivated by forces that individuals may not understand or be aware of. [P]
- Human thought and behavior can be understood in terms of activity at the neural level. [N]
- One limitation of our understanding of behavior is that most research has been conducted on subjects from North America. [S]
- Psychological science is the study of behavior that is observable and measurable. [B]
- Personality is attributable more to genes than to environmental experience. [BG]
- Many of our behaviors have developed as a result of our species' adaptation to the challenges of surviving across millennia. [E]
- Future behavior is influenced by memory and analysis of past experience. [C]
- Pain tolerance is largely a result of the effects of endorphins and other neurochemicals. [N]
- Pain tolerance is influenced by expectancies and interpretation of experiences. [C]
- Behavior is powerfully influenced by its consequences, in the form of reinforcement and punishment. [B]
- Behavior may be the product of unconscious conflict and anxiety. [P]
- Basic facial expressions of emotion are universal across many cultures. [E]
- Identical twins tend to have similar levels of intelligence, even when separated early in life. [BG]
- Women around the world tend to choose older mates who will be good providers. [E]
- Behavior is motivated by self-actualization and the promise of human potential. [HE]



This activity was modeled after an activity titled *The Three Faces of Psychology* (Gruber, 2007):

Gruber, C. W. (2007). Three faces of psychology. In *Instructor's manual for Zimbardo, Johnson, Weber, and Gruber Psychology, AP Edition* (pp. 329-333). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Another activity, similar to this one but with a slightly different approach to psychological perspectives, is available at the following site: http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073382736/student_view0/perspectives_in_psychology/five_perspectives_in_psych___/

