

Approaches: Paper 2 A level Psychology

Sub section	Do I have class notes on it?	Do I understand it?	Have I revised it?
The Origins of Psychology: Wundt's approach, introspection and the emergence of Psychology as a science.			
Learning approaches: the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and operant conditioning and social learning theory. The work of Pavlov, Skinner and Bandura			
The cognitive approach: internal mental processes, schemas, the use of theoretical and computer models to explain and make inferences about mental processes. The emergence of cognitive neuroscience.			
The biological approach: the influence of evolution, genes, biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour.			
The psychodynamic approach: the role of the unconscious, the structure of personality, defence mechanisms and psychosexual stages.			
Humanistic Psychology: free will, self-actualisation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, congruence. The influence on counselling Psychology.			
Comparison of approaches: exploring how the different approaches contrast with one another and complement one another			

Homework:

Review the first three approaches using your knowledge of psychopathology and attachment. Your review should use bullet points to demonstrate your knowledge of:

What behaviours the approaches can explain

How the behaviours are explained by the approaches

How the approaches can be used to change behaviours

How the approaches would investigate behaviours

What factors the approaches overlook in their explanation

Lesson 1: The Origins of Psychology

Psychology has been studied since around 1875. At this time Wilhelm Wundt, a physician from Germany, set up the first laboratory to investigate the mind of humans. Since then psychology has developed and includes five main approaches. These are:

- **The behaviourist (learning) approach**
- **The cognitive approach**
- **The biological approach**
- **The psychodynamic approach**
- **The humanistic approach**

We will look at all of these approaches during the course as the exam board requires you to be able to **outline, evaluate and compare** them.

Firstly, it is important to understand the **contribution that Wundt made to psychology**; without him we would not be where we are now in terms of our understanding of human behaviour and scientific methods of investigation. He set up the **Institute of Experimental Psychology** at the University of Leipzig in 1879; this became the centre of for the experimental study of psychology.

Referring to topics you have covered so far, outline how setting up this institute has benefited psychologists in the field of social psychology and psychopathology as well as attachment research.

Wundt's initial focus was to look at aspects of the mind in a manner which could be **observed and measured under controlled conditions**. Wundt believed in **introspection**; he argued we can study functions of the mind through asking individuals to **describe their thoughts, feelings and experiences**.

Is introspection still used today in psychology? Explain your answer

Is the process of introspection objective or subjective? Explain your answer

The different approaches in psychology developed over time, with Wundt's work initiating this process in 1879, with his opening of the Institute of Experimental Psychology. Following this, **Freud's** work emerged in the **1900s**; he focused on dream analysis. During the early **20th century** **behaviourism** was developed and psychologists looked at how we respond to stimulus in the environment. In the **1950s** we saw the emergence of **humanism**; this approach focuses on the self. Following this, the **1960s and 70s** were focused on **cognitive psychology** which looked at mental processes. **Social learning theory**, which is classified as a **behaviourist** approach, was investigated during the **1960s**. Finally, psychology moved towards a **biological perspective** later in the **20th century**.

Why do you think we still consider all of the approaches whilst investigating human behaviour rather than just looking at current popular developments?

Wundt wanted the mind to be studied empirically using experiments; he wanted knowledge of the mind which was based on evidence. Did he achieve this using introspection? Explain your answer.

John B. Watson facilitated the behaviourist movement and encouraged the study of behaviour through looking at how we respond to stimulus. Watson used observations in an attempt to be more objective than Wundt; he wanted judgments being made which are based on facts and not subject to interpretation. Do you think he achieved this? Explain your answer.

To be considered a science psychology must:

Use controls

Be empirical

Include hypothesis testing

Be objective

Have replicability

Have predictability

Look at these descriptions and decide which feature of a science they are describing:

- Be able to prejudge the outcome of research based on previous research
- Provide knowledge based on evidence
- Create predictions which can be tested
- Allow judgements to be made which are not the result of interpretation
- Ensure research can be repeated and check whether results are consistent
- Keep variables constant and isolate those you want to investigate so cause and effect can be established

From your knowledge of learning theories, the cognitive approach and the biological approach which you looked at during psychopathology, decide how scientific these approaches are. Refer to the features of a science above.

Learning theories:

Cognitive approach:

Biological approach:

Lesson 2: Learning Theories/Behaviourist Approach

The learning approach includes:

Classical conditioning

Operant conditioning

Social learning theory

This approach focuses on the role of the **environment** and how we learn from **experience**. Behavioural psychologists believe that we should only investigate **observable behaviour** using **laboratory experiments**. The aim is to establish cause and effect by **controlling variables**.

As you know from your study of psychopathology and attachment which are part of paper 1, Pavlov developed the theory of classical conditioning in 1927. He was interested in how we learn through association. Using dogs he noted that if a new stimulus was paired with an existing stimulus-response then an association can be made between the two stimuli.

Recap Pavlov's original experiment with his dogs by creating a visual summary of before, during and after conditioning –they were trained to salivate to the sound of a bell. Refer to the following: Food, salivation, bell, UCS, UCR, NS, no response, CS and CR.

Pavlov's follow up research found that dogs were conditioned with other bells of varying tones and pitches – this is known as stimulus generalisation. Think back to the case of little Albert who was conditioned to fear a white rat, what other stimuli do you think he would be scared of? Explain your answer

If we are exposed to several different neutral stimuli but only one is paired with the unconditioned stimulus then **stimulus discrimination** occurs; only one stimuli will become the conditioned response. The unconditioned stimulus and neutral stimulus must be paired together or occur around the same time for the association to be made; this is called **temporal contiguity**.

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

Unlike classical conditioning, **operant conditioning** does not focus on associations, instead it looks at how we **learn from the consequences** of our actions. Again, we looked at this when investigating how attachments are formed as well as how phobias are maintained.

According to Skinner, who developed the theory of operant conditioning, we repeat behaviours which are **reinforced** and do not repeat behaviours which are punished. Reinforcements can be positive or negative, as can punishments. However, **reinforcements are always rewarding** and punishments are not.

Using your knowledge from attachment and psychopathology, give an example of the following:

Positive reinforcement:

Negative reinforcement:

Positive punishment:

Negative punishment:

Skinner investigated learning using rats. He found they could be trained to repeat or avoid behaviours. He varied the **consequences** of the action of pressing a lever; sometimes doing this gave food, other times it stopped electric shocks and other times it delivered an electric shock. The rats learned what would lead to **positive consequences** and **repeated** such behaviour.

What is food – a reinforcement or punishment? Is it negative or positive?

What is stopping electric shocks - a reinforcement or punishment? Is it negative or positive?

What is delivering electric shocks - a reinforcement or punishment? Is it negative or positive?

Reinforcement can be **continuous**; every response is reinforced. This can be useful to learn a particular response but cannot be maintained long term. Therefore **partial reinforcement schedules** reinforce regularly and can be maintained over time; it is unrealistic to expect a reward every time and the reward will have less effect so this schedule is preferred.

How could partial reinforcement schedules be used:

a) With Skinner's rats

b) In schools

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

The most recent aspect of behaviourism which psychologists focused on during the 1960s is **social learning theory**. This theory was devised by Bandura (1971) and rather than just looking at stimulus-response relationships, he highlighted the role of **cognitive processes in learning**.

SLT argues that we learn from **observing others**; when we see someone being rewarded then we **imitate** their behaviour in order to get the same reward. This is referred to as **vicarious reinforcement**; we do not experience the reward directly but through another person. We tend to pay **attention** to those who we can **identify** with; our **role models** are those we have similarities to and who we can aspire to be like.

Describe one of your role models and note any characteristics which you share with them

Mediational processes refers to the fact that behaviour is noticed by others and remembered (**retained**). If the behaviour is rewarded this is a **motivation** for the behaviour to be copied by others (**reproduction**).

Why is motivation a subjective concept?

To investigate learning, Bandura used **observations** to see if we copy what we see others do; he was interested in learning whether human behaviour can be transmitted. Bandura acknowledged the role of learning but wanted to understand the **cognitive processes** involved.

Bandura conducted the **Bobo doll experiment** in 1961 to investigate whether children will learn and imitate aggressive behaviour which they saw an adult role model carrying out. The **children observed an adult role model** being aggressive to a Bobo doll or not being aggressive towards it. The children then experienced mild frustration before being left alone with the Bobo doll. Those who saw aggressive role models **imitated** the aggression and were aggressive towards the doll. Those who watched a non-aggressive role model were less aggressive. This research was used to conclude that behaviour can be learnt from others.

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

Lesson 3: The Cognitive Approach

This approach was developed in response to the behaviourist approach; researchers in this field criticised a lack of understanding with regards to **internal mental processes**. Cognitive psychologists argue to fully understand human behaviour we must study internal processes of the **mind** in **controlled conditions**.

Which research method do you think is used? Explain your answer

Can internal processes be studied objectively? Explain your answer

This approach assumes that internal processes can be studied to make **inferences** about the mind from the behaviour displayed. To help us understand the importance of mental processes, this approach uses the **analogy of a computer**. This analogy sees the senses as inputting to the mind/brain which processes the information to produce an output (behaviour) just like we type into a computer and this is processed before being printed out.

Cognitive psychologists proposed the ideas of **schemas**; these are unique packets of information that we can use to understand our world. We acquire schemas from our **experiences** and use them to help us make **predictions** about new situations.

Are schemas the same for all? Explain your answer

Are they constant? Explain your answer

Cognitive neuroscience is an emerging field within psychology. This aims to **scientifically investigate how different areas of the brain are involved in various mental processes**. We can use scanning techniques to investigate the brain and see how it functions.

What are the benefits of understanding which parts of the brain are involved in particular functions?

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

Lesson 4: The Biological Approach

This approach looks at the effect of genes, neurochemicals and the nervous system as well as evolutionary drives. This approach makes the following assumptions:

The central nervous system influences behaviour

Hormones and neurotransmitters influence behaviour

Our genetic makeup influences behaviour and genes can be implicated in mental illness, criminal behaviour and characteristics of our personality

Genes which have an advantage in terms of survival are passed down

From your knowledge of biopsychology, recap what the central nervous system includes and does

How can we use twins to investigate the role of genetics on behaviour? In your answer show your knowledge of MZ and DZ twins

Our **genotype** is the actual genetic material we have and is unique to us (except if you are an identical twin). However, our **phenotype** is the way our genes are expressed in terms of our behaviour and physical appearance; this can be influenced by environment.

Does this mean we should only study biological components to understand behaviour? Explain your answer

According to evolution we **adapt to our environment**. Genetic material is passed down through generations and behaviour which aids survival is passed down.

Which response which we studied in biopsychology is an example of an adaptive response which has been passed down?

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

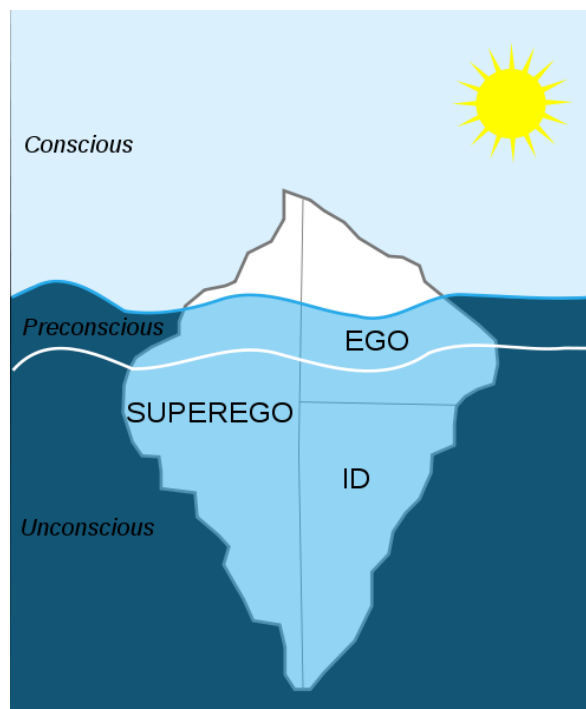
How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

Lesson 5: The Psychodynamic Approach

Freud developed this approach in the 19th century. He focused on explaining **personality** and how mental disorders can be addressed using psychoanalytic therapy. Freud focused on the role of the **unconscious** and argued this part of the human mind is **influential** on our behaviour but is **not accessible**. To help us understand his view on how the mind was structured, Freud used the analogy of an **iceberg**; most of our thoughts are below the surface and not in our conscious mind. He stated that we have an **unconscious mind** which contains information which the conscious mind would find uncomfortable and to cope we use **defence mechanisms** to **repress** such information and **reduce anxiety**.



How could we test this model?

Freud outlined **three defence mechanisms** which can be used to protect us from uncomfortable thoughts. These are:

Repression

Denial

Displacement

Read these descriptions and then label them to show your understanding of the defence mechanisms:

_____ : refusing to accept reality so psychological pain can be avoided

_____ : redirecting impulses from the real target to a safer/more acceptable one

_____ : unconsciously diverting unacceptable desires to protect the person; these wishes do not go away and continue to affect behaviour

Now look at these examples and decide which defence mechanism they are an example of:

_____ : being annoyed by work colleagues leads you to slam doors and punch walls at home or in the office toilets

_____ : convincing yourself that smoking is beneficial to your health as it relieves stress whilst overlooking the nasty cough and other negative health implications

_____ : despite being attracted to men, you push these feelings aside and marry a woman to avoid being labelled as gay

Freud believed the human personality has a specific structure and has three distinctive parts. Firstly, there is the Id which is present from birth. The ego then develops between the ages of 2 and 3 years old. Finally, the superego develops between the ages of 3 and 6 years old. The id contains our primitive desires whilst the ego provides us with our reality principle. The superego provides us with morality principle.

Read the points below and decide if they relate to the id, ego or superego:

This provides us with our pleasure principle

This mediates between our desires and reality

This involves our desires for sex and death

This punishes us with guilt when we break the rules of society and thus pushes us to be good

This demands gratification immediately

This aims to get us what we want but in a socially acceptable manner

This is part of our unconscious

This is made up of our conscience and our ideals

Which part of the personality could be represented by:

- a) An angel: _____
- b) A devil: _____
- c) A referee: _____

The personality, according to Freud, develops through a **five developmental stages**. Each stage involves **conflicts and psychological urges** which must be **resolved/controlled** in order to develop normally. The stages are:

The oral stage (0-2)

The anal stage (2-3)

The phallic stage (3-6)

The latency stage (6-12)

The genital stage (12+)

During which stage does the ego develop?

During which stage does the superego develop?

Read these descriptions and decide which stage of development they relate to:

Gratification is achieved by feeding and there is a focus on exploring the world with the mouth. This stage is when the Id is most dominant.

Sexual energy is the focus here and is directed towards relationships with sexual partners.

This involves achieving gratification through pooing so there is a focus on anal activity. At this point potty training can begin.

At this stage there is focus on developing relationships with others so conflicts from the prior stages are repressed if they are not resolved.

This is when a child will start to focus on their genitals. Boys will go through the Oedipus complex whilst girls will go through the Electra complex. At this stage we develop our gender identity.

Based on what you have learnt, unresolved conflicts at which stage could lead to the following disorders:

OCD: _____

Gender Identity disorder: _____

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

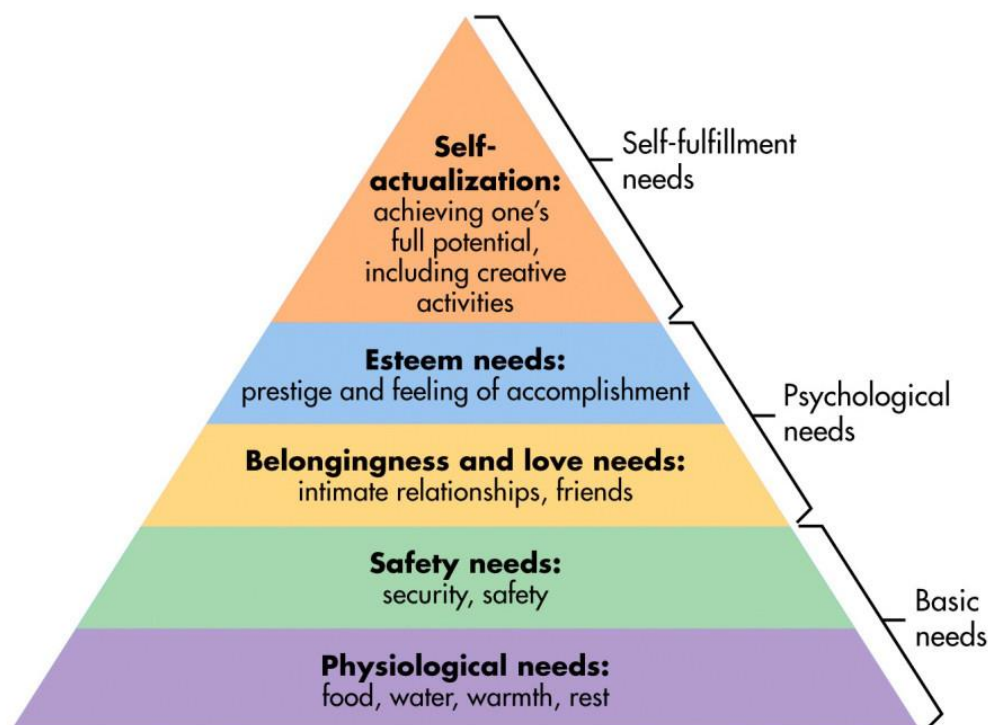
Lesson 6: The Humanistic Approach

This approach was put forward by **Rogers and Maslow** during the 1950s. This area of psychology can be referred to as the 'third force', with Freudian ideas being the 'first force' and early behaviourism being the 'second force.' Humanism rejects the idea that we can be objective; it focuses on **subjective experience** and strives for every person to be seen as **unique**. Therefore, psychologists in this field do not advocate the isolation and testing of variables in laboratory conditions. One of the main developments from this approach has been in the field of **counselling psychology**. Unlike Freud, humanists focus on conscious thoughts and how humans are aware of themselves and the reactions of others. One benefit of this is that we are able to **make choices** and have **responsibility**. According to this approach there is intention behind every behaviour; our **actions have a purpose**.

If we take this approach in psychology are we being scientific or not? Explain your answer.

Maslow (1954) proposed the **hierarchy of needs** to explain the idea that we are driven to be the best that we can if our needs are met. Needs are initially basic; these are **physiological and safety needs**. Once these initial needs are met then we can address our **psychological needs** and ultimately achieve **self-actualisation**.

This is Maslow's hierarchy of needs:



Look at these examples below and decide where they would fit on the hierarchy:

Breathing

Creativity

Sex

Morality

Confidence

Employment

Body safety

Accepting facts

Respected by others

Property

Achievement

Family security

Spontaneity

Sleep

Lack of prejudice

Respect others

Homeostasis

Excretion

Self-actualisation is a core concept in this approach and is when we become the best person we can be; **we achieve our full potential** as a human being. To achieve this, **lower level needs must be met**. Once self-actualisation is achieved, to maintain it then we must **continue to meet these lower needs**. Achieving self-actualisation is not the norm; **most people never will**.

Why do you think most people never achieve it?

How can we measure it?

Supporters of this approach believe **in free will**; they argue we choose who we want to be. This is in stark contrast to more deterministic approaches which argue who we are is beyond our control and pre-programmed by factors such as genetics or parenting. However, **humanists do not ignore the role of nature and nurture**; our physiological needs are present from birth and our environment can help to facilitate or inhibit self-actualisation.

We have looked at how other psychological approaches believe we should treat psychological illnesses during our lessons on psychopathology. The specification also requires you to be aware of **humanistic approaches to treatment**. When considering an approach you must reflect on what treatment options it provides and the **practical and ethical considerations** of these.

Before we look at humanistic approaches to treatment, recap how the following approaches suggest we should treat those with mental illnesses and evaluate their suggestions:

Biological approach:

Cognitive approach:

Behavioural approach:

Humanistic psychology advocates the use of counselling as personal growth is hampered by experiencing **conditional positive regard** and therapy aims to direct the person towards **unconditional positive regard**. Conditional positive regard forces us to act in a way which meets certain requirements so that we can gain approval. This **limits the chance to self-actualise** and achieve **congruence**. Congruence is when the ideal self and our self-concept match. **Client centred therapy** allows personal growth as **it provides unconditional positive regard** as the client is accepted for who they are without judgement.

Look at the examples below and decide if they are showing conditional or unconditional positive regard:

A child feels their parents only like them if they get a good report card

A child feels accepted by their parents even if they do not achieve the same grades as their siblings

A child has no worries about announcing they are gay to their relatives

A child feels if their parents find out they are gay they will be disappointed and treat them differently to their siblings

How would experiencing conditional positive regard make a person feel? What mental illnesses do you think it could make a person vulnerable to?

Client centred therapy is about developing a good **client-therapist relationship** so that the therapist can create conditions which allow for the **client to achieve personal growth**. To achieve this the client must develop their own **understanding** of their issues and decide for themselves how that can be addressed. This means the therapist takes a **non-directive** role; they reflect back to the client whatever the client shares in a manner that is respectful. Sessions promote trust and mutual regard. The aim is for clients to solve their own problems by examining them with the therapist. The therapist must provide **empathy and unconditional positive regard** for this to happen.

Can you think of any psychological illnesses or individual differences which may mean this approach to therapy is not suitable? Explain your answer

Rogers (1951) argued there are three selves and these need to be integrated if we are to feel good and achieve congruence. The three selves are:

The self-concept – the self you think you are

The real self – who you really are

The ideal self – the self you aspire to be

Which one of these is similar to self-esteem? Explain your answer

Rogers believed that for self –actualisation to occur then a person must be **congruent**. This means that their selves should all be the same or similar. Therapy aims to achieve this by providing unconditional positive regard so that self-esteem increases and the ideal self can be adjusted; the aim being for the ideal self and self-concept to be **similar to the real self**. This approach has been praised for being an alternative to medication and less time consuming than psychoanalysis.

We will now evaluate this approach by considering:

The method of investigation:

How the approach can be applied:

Factors which are overlooked:

Any other relevant points:

Lesson 7: Comparing the Approaches

This is an important skill as it shows that you understand the approaches and can confidently compare them. You must be able to compare them in terms of:

Their key principles

Their methods of investigation

Their approaches to treatment

How scientific they are

How deterministic they are

To what degree they acknowledge the role of free will

How reductionist they are

How holistic they are

How nomothetic they are

How idiographic they are

Their view regarding the role of nature

Their view regarding the role of nurture

Read these statements and decide which approach they are relevant to:

Behaviour is predetermined by genetics and influenced by biochemistry and brain structure so we do not have free will over our actions.

Human beings have free will and can choose to act in an appropriate way

Our behaviour is beyond our control as it is driven by our unconscious mind

Whilst there are some elements of free will as we can change our thoughts, our environment shapes our schemas and so has some control over behaviour

The environment shapes our behaviour and we learn by responding to stimulus. This means we have limited control over our actions. We can choose to follow suitable role models however.

Now use this information to help you order the approaches from the most to the least deterministic:

Homework:

- 1) Create a revision tool to help you compare and contrast the approaches.
- 2) Explain two difference between the biological and humanistic approaches (4 marks)
- 3) Explain two similarities between the cognitive and behavioural approaches (4 marks)
- 4) Explain two similarities between the cognitive and psychodynamic approach (4 marks)
- 5) Briefly discuss how scientific the behavioural and biological approaches are (4 marks)
- 6) What is meant by the term inference? (2 marks)
- 7) Explain how psychologists from two different fields approach treatment of mental disorders (4 marks)
- 8) Outline and evaluate the cognitive approach to explaining human behaviour. In your answer you should refer to at least one other approach (16 marks)