

# WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

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## WHY?

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Psychology is defined as the scientific study of human and animal behavior and mental processes. It is not a particularly old social science, but certainly one of the most important, since it deals with everything we do. Psychologists have different perspectives on just how to best understand behavior, but it is clear that no one approach provides all the answers.

## Outcomes: Students will

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- A. comprehend the definition of psychology
- B. acquire knowledge of the history of the field of psychology
- C. identify the six different approaches to psychology
- D. identify what different kinds of psychologists do
- E. explain how the scientific method is used in psychology
- F. comprehend different methods of psychological experimentation
- G. consider the ethical principles involved in psychological experimentation

## Resources

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- A. text
  - 1. Chapter 1, p. 2-25
  - 2. Chapter 2, p. 26-51

## Outline

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- I. PSYCHOLOGY: the scientific study of human and animal behavior and mental processes
  - A. physical v. social science
  - B. The History of Psychology
    - 1. Early History
    - 2. Wilhelm Wundt
    - 3. Sigmund Freud
    - 4. William James
    - 5. John B. Watson
  - C. psychological contrasts
    - 1. Nature v. nurture
    - 2. Mind v. body
- II. Approaches to Psychology: Psychological Perspectives
  - A. Biopsychological
  - B. Behavioral
  - C. Humanistic
  - D. Psychoanalytic
  - E. Cognitive
  - F. Sociocultural
  - G. eclectic
- III. What psychologists do
  - A. research v. applied psychology
  - B. psychology v. psychiatry
  - C. Occupations of psychologists

1. Clinical/counseling
2. School/educational
3. Environmental
4. Developmental/child
5. Industrial/consumer
6. Engineering
7. Experimental
8. Academic

IV. Scientific Methods in Psychology

- A. the scientific method in psychology
- B. Experimental methods
  1. Laboratory experiment
  2. Field experiment
- C. Observational methods
  1. Survey method
  2. Naturalistic observation
  3. Interview
  4. Case study
  5. Psychological testing
- D. Duration & goals of experiments: Longitudinal & cross-sectional studies
- E. When good experiments go bad
  1. Demand characteristics
  2. Hawthorne effect
  3. Differential survival
  4. Halo effect
  5. Experimenter effect
- F. Ethics of psychological experimentation

**Vocabulary**

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applied psychologist	independent variable	sociocultural approach
behavioral approach	interview method	subjects
case study method	introspection	survey method
cognitive approach	laboratory experiment	theory
control	longitudinal method	variables
control group	naturalistic observation	
cross-sectional method	neurobiological approach	B.F. Skinner
dependent variable	placebo	Carl Rogers
double-blind study	psychoanalysis	Charles Darwin
eclecticism	psychoanalytic approach	Sigmund Freud
experimental group	psychological test	Wilhelm Wundt
field experiment	psychology	William James
humanistic approach	research psychologist	
hypothesis	sample	