Introduction to

Psychological Approaches



What is Psychology?

Psychology is the study of MIND and BEHAVIOUR. There are many different psychological approaches to explain this relationship. These include:

* The Biological Approach
* The Behaviourist Approach
* The Cognitive Approach
* The Psychodynamic Approach
* The Humanistic Approach.

The following pages will give you some idea about the main assumptions of the above approaches. You task will be to write an essay comparing the two approaches: what they have in common; what they have considered that other approaches have not; the strengths and the limitations.

Some useful websites to help you gain a more in-depth understanding can be found below:

[www.tutor2u.net/psychology](http://www.tutor2u.net/psychology)

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

<http://www.psychologywizard.net/>

Note: Keywords are highlighted in **bold.**

**The Biological Approach**

The biological approach looks at psychology from a biological perspective.

A Biological Psychologist would argue that all behaviour can be explained through:

* Genetics
* Chemicals (Endocrine system, releasing hormones).
* **Neuroanatomy** (nervous system)

**The Behaviourist Approach**

According to the behavioural approach, developed by Watson and Skinner, all behaviour is product of classical or operant conditioning.

* **Classical conditioning-** Automatic learning (animals produce saliva in response to food).
* **Operant conditioning-** Learning is due to punishments and rewards.

**The Cognitive Approach**

The Cognitive Approach was influenced by behaviourists and their exploration of the learning process. However, it focuses more on an input-thought-output model much like a computer analogy.

* The cognitive approach is concerned with the thought processes that we have, and how these influence our behaviour.
* The cognitive approach argues that mental disorders are caused by distorted/irrational thinking that go against our shared **schemas**.

**The Psychodynamic Approach**

Developed by Sigmund Freud (1915), who argued that mental illnesses arise out of unresolved unconscious conflicts that form in early childhood and influence our adult life.

Freud stressed the significance of the:

* **Conscious mind**: What we are currently thinking
* **Unconscious mind**: Locked and we only gain access to it in our dreams.
* **Id, ego and super-ego**: the dimensions of personality.

**The Humanist Approach**

Devised by Rogers and Maslow (1959), who felt that we all try to achieve self-actualisation (reach our potential!).

* According to this approach, psychological development takes place when a child receives unconditional positive regard from its parents, which leads to high self-esteem.
* Maslow outlined a **hierarchy of needs** to explain how one reaches their potential.
* Carl Rogers believed that for a person to achieve self-actualisation they must be in a state of **congruence**. This means that self-actualisation occurs when a person's “ideal self” (i.e., who they would like to be) is congruent with their actual behaviour (self-image).

**Task:**

**Outline** and **compare** two approaches in psychology. **[16]**

AO1 refers to understanding and knowledge

AO3 asks that you evaluate, analyse or discuss

**AO1 = 6 marks** **AO3 = 10 marks**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Marks** | **Description** |
| 4 | 13 – 16 | Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. Comparison is thorough and effective. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor detail and / or expansion of argument sometimes lacking. |
| 3 | 9 – 12 | Knowledge is evident. There are occasional inaccuracies. Comparison is apparent and mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used effectively. Lacks focus in places. |
| 2 | 5 – 8 | Some knowledge is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any comparison is only partly effective. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. |
| 1 | 1 – 4 | Knowledge is limited. Comparison is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used. |
|  | 0 | No relevant content. |

**Struggling to start?**

**AO1**

*The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ approach would argue…*

*It also outlines the importance of…*

*This area of psychology researched…*

*The findings provide some support for…*

*(Name of Psychologist) explain behaviour as a response…*

**AO3**

*A strength of this approach is…*

*A limitation of this approach is…*

*Alternatively…*

*In comparison to…*

*On the other hand…*

If you would like any assistance with your notes/essay writing, just email [smeehan@kingswoodsecondaryacademy.org](mailto:smeehan@kingswoodsecondaryacademy.org)

In order to shape a ‘complete’ argument, you must spend the time researching key theorists, conducted research and specialist terms involved. Try to include these in your work. You will not be marked harshly on your first attempt!