

INTRODUCTION TO **Psychology**

Second Edition

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS



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Chapter 1

Critical Thinking Questions

41. Why do you think psychology courses like this one are often requirements of so many different programs of study?
42. Why do you think many people might be skeptical about psychology being a science?
43. How did the object of study in psychology change over the history of the field since the 19th century?
44. In part, what aspect of psychology was the behaviorist approach to psychology a reaction to?
45. Given the incredible diversity among the various areas of psychology that were described in this chapter, how do they all fit together?
46. What are the potential ethical concerns associated with Milgram's research on obedience?
47. Why is an undergraduate education in psychology so helpful in a number of different lines of work?
48. Other than a potentially greater salary, what would be the reasons an individual would continue on to get a graduate degree in psychology?
49. The scientific method is often described as self-correcting and cyclical. Briefly describe your understanding of the scientific method with regard to these concepts.
50. In this chapter, conjoined twins, Krista and Tatiana, were described as being potential participants in a case study. In what other circumstances would you think that this particular research approach would be especially helpful, and why?
51. Presumably, reality television programs aim to provide a realistic portrayal of the behavior displayed by the characters featured in such programs. This chapter pointed out why this is not really the case. What changes could be made in the way that these programs are produced that would result in more honest portrayals of realistic behavior?
52. Aside from biomedical research, what other areas of research could greatly benefit by both longitudinal and archival research?
53. Earlier in this chapter, we learned about research suggesting that there is a correlation between eating cereal and weight. Cereal companies that present this information in their advertisements could lead someone to believe that eating more cereal causes healthy weight. Why would they make such a claim, and what arguments could you make to counter this cause-and-effect claim?
54. A study was published in the journal, *Nutrition and Cancer*, which established a negative correlation between coffee consumption and breast cancer. Specifically, it was found that women consuming more than five cups of coffee a day were less likely to develop breast cancer than women who never consumed coffee (Lowcock et al., 2013). Imagine you see a newspaper story about this research that says, "Coffee Protects Against Cancer." Why is this headline misleading, and why would a more accurate headline draw less interest?
55. Sometimes, true random sampling can be very difficult to obtain. Many researchers make use of convenience samples as an alternative. For example, one popular convenience sample would involve students enrolled in Introduction to Psychology courses. What are the implications of using this sampling technique?
56. Peer review is an important part of publishing research findings in many scientific disciplines. This process is normally conducted anonymously; in other words, the author of the article being reviewed does not know who is reviewing the article, and the reviewers are unaware of the author's identity. Why would this be an important part of this process?
57. Some argue that animal research is inherently flawed in terms of being ethical because, unlike human participants, animals do not consent to be involved in research. Do you agree with this perspective? Given that animals do not consent to be involved in research projects, what sorts of extra precautions should be taken to ensure that they receive the most humane treatment possible?
58. At the end of the last lesson, you were asked to design a basic experiment to answer some question of interest. What ethical considerations should be made with the study you proposed to ensure that your experiment would conform to the scientific community's expectations of ethical research?



Chapter 2

Critical Thinking Questions

21. The theory of evolution by natural selection requires variability of a given trait. Why is variability necessary, and where does it come from?
22. Cocaine has two effects on synaptic transmission: It impairs reuptake of dopamine, and it causes more dopamine to be released into the synapse. Would cocaine be classified as an agonist or antagonist? Why?
23. Drugs such as lidocaine and novocaine act as Na^+ channel blockers. In other words, they prevent sodium from moving across the neuronal membrane. Why would this particular effect make these drugs such effective local anesthetics?
24. What are the implications of compromised immune function as a result of exposure to chronic stress?
25. Examine Figure 2 in Lesson 2.3, illustrating the effects of sympathetic nervous system activation. How would all of these things play into the fight-or-flight response?
26. Before the advent of modern imaging techniques, scientists and clinicians relied on autopsies of people who suffered brain injury with resultant change in behavior to determine how different areas of the brain were affected. What are some of the limitations associated with this kind of approach?
27. Which of the techniques discussed would be viable options for you to determine how activity in the reticular formation is related to sleep and wakefulness? Why?
28. Hormone secretion is often regulated through a negative feedback mechanism, which means that once a hormone is secreted, it will cause the hypothalamus and pituitary to shut down the production of signals necessary to secrete the hormone in the first place. Most oral contraceptives are made of small doses of estrogen and/or progesterone. Why would this be an effective means of contraception?
29. Chemical messengers are used in both the nervous system and the endocrine system. What properties do these two systems share? What properties are different? Which one would be faster? Which one would result in long-lasting changes?



Chapter 3

Critical Thinking Questions

25. Health care professionals often work rotating shifts. Why is this problematic? What can be done to deal with potential problems?
26. Generally, humans are considered diurnal, which means we are awake during the day and asleep during the night. Many rodents, on the other hand, are nocturnal. Why do you think different animals have such different sleep-wake cycles?
27. If theories that assert sleep is necessary for restoration and recovery from daily energetic demands are correct, what do you predict about the relationship that would exist between individuals' total sleep duration and their level of activity?
28. How could researchers determine if given areas of the brain are involved in the regulation of sleep?
29. Differentiate the evolutionary theories of sleep and make a case for the one with the most compelling evidence.
30. Freud believed that dreams provide important insight into the unconscious mind. He maintained that a dream's manifest content could provide clues into an individual's unconscious. What potential criticisms exist for this particular perspective?
31. Some people claim that sleepwalking and talking in your sleep involve individuals acting out their dreams. Why is this particular explanation unlikely?
32. One of the recommendations that therapists will make to people who suffer from insomnia is to spend less waking time in bed. Why do you think spending waking time in bed might interfere with the ability to fall asleep later?
33. How is narcolepsy with cataplexy similar to and different from REM sleep?
34. The negative health consequences of both alcohol and tobacco products are well-documented. A drug like marijuana, on the other hand, is generally considered to be as safe as, if not safer than, these legal drugs. Why do you think marijuana use continues to be illegal in some parts of the United States?
35. Why are programs designed to educate people about the dangers of using tobacco products just as important as developing tobacco cessation programs?
36. What advantages exist for researching the potential health benefits of hypnosis?
37. What types of studies would be most convincing regarding the effectiveness of meditation in the treatment for some type of physical or mental disorder?



Chapter 4

Critical Thinking Questions

26. Not everything that is sensed is perceived. Do you think there could ever be a case where something could be perceived without being sensed?
27. Give an original example of how just noticeable difference can change as a function of stimulus intensity.
28. Why do you think other species have such different ranges of sensitivity for both visual and auditory stimuli compared to humans?
29. Why do you think humans are especially sensitive to sounds with frequencies that fall in the middle portion of the audible range?
30. Compare the two theories of color perception. Are they completely different?
31. Color is not a physical property of our environment. What function (if any) do you think color vision serves?
32. Given what you've read about sound localization, from an evolutionary perspective, how does sound localization facilitate survival?
33. How can temporal and place theories both be used to explain our ability to perceive the pitch of sound waves with frequencies up to 4,000 Hz?
34. Many people experience nausea while traveling in a car, plane, or boat. How might you explain this as a function of sensory interaction?
35. If you heard someone say that they would do anything not to feel the pain associated with significant injury, how would you respond given what you've just read?
36. Do you think women experience pain differently than men? Why or why not?
37. The central tenet of Gestalt psychology is that the whole is different from the sum of its parts. What does this mean in the context of perception?



Chapter 5

Critical Thinking Questions

17. Compare and contrast classical and operant conditioning. How are they alike? How do they differ?
18. What is the difference between a reflex and a learned behavior?
19. If the sound of your toaster popping up toast causes your mouth to water, what are the UCS, CS, and CR?
20. Explain how the processes of stimulus generalization and stimulus discrimination are considered opposites.
21. How does a neutral stimulus become a conditioned stimulus?
22. What is a Skinner box, and what is its purpose?
23. What is the difference between negative reinforcement and punishment?
24. What is shaping, and how would you use shaping to teach a dog to roll over?
25. What is the effect of prosocial modeling and antisocial modeling?
26. Cara is 17 years old. Cara's mother and father both drink alcohol every night. They tell Cara that drinking is bad, and she shouldn't do it. Cara goes to a party where beer is being served. What do you think Cara will do? Why?



Chapter 6

Critical Thinking Questions

25. Describe a social schema that you would notice at a sporting event.
26. Explain why event schemata have so much power over human behavior.
27. How do words not only represent our thoughts but also our values?
28. How could grammatical errors actually be indicative of language acquisition in children?
29. What is functional fixedness, and how can overcoming it help you solve problems?
30. How does an algorithm save you time and energy when solving a problem?
31. Describe a situation in which you would need to use practical intelligence.
32. Describe a situation in which cultural intelligence would help you communicate better.
33. Why do you think different theorists have defined intelligence in different ways?
34. Compare and contrast the benefits of the Stanford-Binet IQ test and Wechsler's IQ tests.
35. What evidence exists for a genetic component to an individual's IQ?
36. Describe the relationship between learning disabilities and intellectual disabilities to intelligence.



Chapter 7

Critical Thinking Questions

13. Compare and contrast implicit and explicit memory.
14. According to the Atkinson-Shiffrin model, name and describe the three stages of memory.
15. Compare and contrast the two ways in which we encode information.
16. What might happen to your memory system if you sustained damage to your hippocampus?
17. Compare and contrast the two types of interference.
18. Compare and contrast the two types of amnesia.
19. What is the self-reference effect, and how can it help you study more effectively?
20. You and your roommate spent all of last night studying for your psychology test. You think you know the material; however, you suggest that you study again the next morning an hour prior to the test. Your roommate asks you to explain why you think this is a good idea. What do you tell them?



Chapter 8

Critical Thinking Questions

15. Describe the nature versus nurture controversy, and give an example of a trait and how it might be influenced by each.
16. Compare and contrast continuous and discontinuous development.
17. Why should developmental milestones only be used as a general guideline for normal child development?
18. What is the difference between assimilation and accommodation? Provide examples of each.
19. Why was Carol Gilligan critical of Kohlberg's theory of moral development?
20. What is egocentrism? Provide an original example.
21. What are some known teratogens, and what kind of damage can they do to the developing fetus?
22. What is prenatal care, and why is it important?
23. Describe what happens in the embryonic stage of development. Describe what happens in the fetal stage of development.
24. What makes a personal quality part of someone's personality?
25. Describe some of the newborn reflexes. How might they promote survival?
26. Compare and contrast the four attachment styles and describe the kinds of childhood outcomes we can expect with each.
27. What is emerging adulthood, and what are some factors that have contributed to this new stage of development?
28. Describe the five stages of grief and provide examples of how a person might react in each stage.
29. What is the purpose of hospice care?



Chapter 9

Critical Thinking Questions

13. How might someone espousing an arousal theory of motivation explain visiting an amusement park?
14. Schools often use concrete rewards to increase adaptive behaviors. How might this be a disadvantage for students intrinsically motivated to learn? What are educational implications of the potential for concrete rewards to diminish intrinsic motivation for a given task?
15. The index that is often used to classify people as being underweight, normal weight, overweight, obese, or morbidly obese is called BMI. Given that BMI is calculated solely on weight and height, how could it be misleading?
16. As indicated in this chapter, White women from industrialized, Western cultures tend to be at the highest risk for eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia nervosa. Why might this be?
17. Imagine you find a venomous snake crawling up your leg just after taking a drug that prevented sympathetic nervous system activation. What would the James-Lange theory predict about your experience?
18. Why can we not make causal claims regarding the relationship between the volume of the hippocampus and PTSD?



Chapter 10

Critical Thinking Questions

15. While much research has been conducted on how an individual develops a given sexual orientation, many people question the validity of this research, citing that the participants used may not be representative. Why do you think this might be a legitimate concern?
16. There is no reliable scientific evidence that gay conversion therapy actually works. What kinds of evidence would you need to see in order to be convinced by someone arguing that they had successfully converted their sexual orientation?
17. Why do psychologists find it important to differentiate between sex and gender? What importance does the differentiation have in modern society?
18. How is children's play influenced by gender roles? Think back to your childhood. How gendered were the toys and activities available to you? Do you remember gender expectations being conveyed through the approval or disapproval of your choices?
19. In what way do parents treat their children differently based on gender? How do children typically respond to this treatment?
20. Identify three examples of how U.S. society is heteronormative.



Chapter 11

Critical Thinking Questions

24. What makes a personal quality part of someone's personality?
25. Describe the personality of someone who is fixated at the anal stage.
26. Describe the difference between extroverts and introverts in terms of what is energizing to each.
27. Discuss Horney's perspective on Freud's concept of penis envy.
28. Compare the personalities of someone who has high self-efficacy to someone who has low self-efficacy.
29. Compare and contrast Skinner's perspective on personality development to Freud's.
30. How might a temperament mix between parent and child affect family life?
31. How stable are the Big Five traits over one's lifespan?
32. Compare the personality of someone who scores high on agreeableness to someone who scores low on agreeableness.
33. Why might it be important to consider cultural influences on personality?
34. Why might a prospective employer screen applicants using personality assessments?
35. Why would a clinician give someone a projective test?



Chapter 12

Critical Thinking Questions

29. Compare and contrast situational influences and dispositional influences and give an example of each. Explain how situational influences and dispositional influences might explain inappropriate behavior.
30. Provide an example of how people from individualistic and collectivistic cultures would differ in explaining why they won an important sporting event.
31. Why didn't the "good" guards in the Stanford prison experiment object to other guards' abusive behavior? Were the student prisoners simply weak people? Why didn't they object to being abused?
32. Describe how social roles, social norms, and scripts were evident in the Stanford prison experiment. How can this experiment be applied to everyday life? Are there any more recent examples where people started fulfilling a role and became abusive?
33. Give an example (one not used in class or the text) of cognitive dissonance and how an individual might resolve this.
34. Imagine that you work for an advertising agency, and you've been tasked with developing an advertising campaign to increase sales of a brand of soda. How would you develop an advertisement for this product that uses a central route of persuasion? How would you develop an ad using a peripheral route of persuasion?
35. Describe how seeking outside opinions can prevent groupthink.
36. Compare and contrast social loafing and social facilitation.
37. Some people seem more willing to openly display prejudice regarding sexual orientation than prejudice regarding race and gender. Speculate on why this might be.
38. When people blame a scapegoat, how do you think they choose evidence to support the blame?
39. Compare and contrast hostile and instrumental aggression.
40. What evidence discussed in Lesson 12.6 suggests that cyberbullying is difficult to detect and prevent?
41. Describe what influences whether relationships will be formed.
42. The evolutionary theory argues that humans are motivated to perpetuate their genes and reproduce. Using an evolutionary perspective, describe traits in men and women that humans find attractive.



Chapter 13

Critical Thinking Questions

15. What societal and management attitudes might have caused organizational psychology to develop later than industrial psychology?
16. Many of the examples of I-O psychology are applications to businesses. Name four different nonbusiness contexts that I-O psychology could impact.
17. Construct a good interview question for a position of your choosing. The question should relate to a specific skill requirement for the position, and you will need to include the criteria for rating the applicant's answer.
18. What might be useful mechanisms for avoiding bias during employment interviews?
19. If you designed an assessment of job satisfaction, what elements would it include?
20. Downsizing has commonly shown to result in a period of lowered productivity for the organizations experiencing it. What might be some of the reasons for this observation?
21. What role could a flight simulator play in the design of a new aircraft?



Chapter 14

Critical Thinking Questions

21. Provide an example (other than the one described earlier) of a situation or event that could be appraised as either threatening or challenging.
22. Provide an example of a stressful situation that may cause a person to become seriously ill. How would Selye's general adaptation syndrome explain this occurrence?
23. Review the items on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. Select one of the items and discuss how it might bring about distress and eustress.
24. Job burnout tends to be high in people who work in human service jobs. Considering the three dimensions of job burnout, explain how various job aspects unique to being a police officer might lead to job burnout in that line of work.
25. Discuss the concept of Type A behavior pattern, its history, and what we now know concerning its role in heart disease.
26. Consider the study in which volunteers were given nasal drops containing the cold virus to examine the relationship between stress and immune function (Cohen et al., 1998). How might this finding explain how people seem to become sick during stressful times in their lives (e.g., final exam week)?
27. Although problem-focused coping seems to be a more effective strategy when dealing with stressors, do you think there are any kinds of stressful situations in which emotional-focused coping might be a better strategy?
28. Describe how social support can affect health both directly and indirectly.
29. In considering the three dimensions of happiness discussed in Lesson 14.5 (the pleasant life, the good life, and the meaningful life), what are some steps you could take to improve your level of happiness?
30. The day before the drawing of a \$300 million Powerball lottery, you notice that a line of people waiting to buy their Powerball tickets is stretched outside the door of a nearby convenience store. Based on what you've learned, provide some perspective on why these people are doing this and what would likely happen if one of these individuals happened to pick the right numbers.



Chapter 15

Critical Thinking Questions

23. Discuss why thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that are merely atypical or unusual would not necessarily signify the presence of a psychological disorder. Provide an example.
24. Describe the DSM-5. What is it, what kind of information does it contain, and why is it important to the study and treatment of psychological disorders?
25. *The International Classification of Diseases* (ICD) and the DSM differ in various ways. What are some of the differences in these two classification systems?
26. Why is the perspective one uses in explaining a psychological disorder important?
27. Describe how cognitive theories of the etiology of anxiety disorders differ from learning theories.
28. Discuss the common elements of obsessive-compulsive disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, and hoarding disorder.
29. List some of the risk factors associated with the development of PTSD following a traumatic event.
30. Describe several of the factors associated with suicide.
31. Why is research following individuals who show prodromal symptoms of schizophrenia so important?
32. The prevalence of most psychological disorders has increased since the 1980s. However, as discussed in Lesson 15.7, scientific publications regarding dissociative amnesia peaked in the mid-1990s but then declined steeply through 2003. In addition, no fictional or nonfictional description of individuals showing dissociative amnesia following a trauma exists prior to 1800. How would you explain this phenomenon?
33. Imagine that a child has a genetic vulnerability to antisocial personality disorder. How might this child's environment shape the likelihood of developing this personality disorder?
34. Compare the factors that are important in the development of ADHD with those that are important in the development of autism spectrum disorder.



Chapter 16

Critical Thinking Questions

15. People with psychological disorders have been treated badly throughout history. Describe some efforts to improve treatment and include explanations for the success or lack thereof.
16. Describe the criteria that must be met in order for an individual to be hospitalized.
17. Imagine that you are a psychiatrist. Your patient, Pat, comes to you with anxiety and feelings of sadness. Which therapeutic approach would you recommend, and why?
18. Compare and contrast individual and group therapies.
19. You are conducting an intake assessment. Your client is a 45-year-old single, employed male with cocaine dependence. He failed a drug screening at work and has been mandated to treatment by his employer if he wants to keep his job. Your client admits that he needs help. Why would you recommend group therapy for him?
20. Deja is a 24-year-old Black American female. For years she has been struggling with bulimia. She knows she has a problem, but she is not willing to seek mental health services. What are some reasons why she may be hesitant to get help?