

# Introduction to Psychology

# Introduction to Psychology – Study Notes

## 1. What Is Psychology?

- **Definition:** The scientific study of behavior and mental processes.
- **Key Focus:** How people think, feel, and act, and why they do so.
- **Scope:** Encompasses biological, cognitive, social, and cultural dimensions.

## 2. Historical Foundations

| Era / Figure                | Main Contribution                           | Core Idea                                          |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Wilhelm Wundt (1879)</b> | First experimental psychology lab (Leipzig) | Psychology as a laboratory science; introspection. |
| <b>William James (1890)</b> | <i>The Principles of Psychology</i>         | Functionalism – purpose of mental processes.       |
| <b>Sigmund Freud</b>        | Psychoanalysis                              | Unconscious drives, psychosexual stages.           |
| <b>John B. Watson</b>       | Behaviorism (1913)                          | Observable behavior as the only scientific data.   |
| <b>B.F. Skinner</b>         | Operant conditioning                        | Reinforcement & punishment shape behavior.         |
| <b>Jean Piaget</b>          | Cognitive Development                       | Stages of logical thinking in children.            |
| <b>Carl Rogers</b>          | Humanistic psychology                       | Person-centered therapy; self-actualization.       |
| <b>Aaron Beck</b>           | Cognitive therapy                           | Thoughts influence emotions & behavior.            |

### 3. Major Sub?Fields

| Sub?field | Primary Questions | Typical Methods |
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|
|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|

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|                                                   |                                                          |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Biological / Neuropsychology</b>               | How do brain structures & chemicals affect behavior?     | Neuroimaging, EEG, lesion studies.                   |
| <b>Cognitive Psychology</b>                       | How do we perceive, remember, think, and solve problems? | Experiments, reaction?time tasks, computer modeling. |
| <b>Developmental Psychology</b>                   | How does behavior change across the lifespan?            | Longitudinal & cross?sectional studies.              |
| <b>Social Psychology</b>                          | How do people influence and are influenced by others?    | Lab experiments, field studies, surveys.             |
| <b>Clinical / Counseling Psychology</b>           | How can mental illness be diagnosed & treated?           | Psychotherapy, assessment, clinical trials.          |
| <b>Industrial?Organizational (I?O) Psychology</b> | How to improve workplace performance & well?being?       | Surveys, job analysis, selection testing.            |
| <b>Health Psychology</b>                          | How do psychological factors affect health?              | Behavioral interventions, epidemiological studies.   |

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## 4. Research Methods

### 1. Experimental Method

- Manipulate independent variable (IV) ? observe effect on dependent variable (DV).
- Random assignment ? control for confounds.

### 2. Correlational Studies

- Measure relationship between two variables (r).
- No causation implied.

### 3. Observational Methods

- Naturalistic: observe behavior in real settings.
- Structured: controlled observation in lab.

### 4. Surveys & Questionnaires

- Collect self?report data.

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- Importance of reliability & validity.

## 5. Case Studies

- In-depth analysis of a single individual or group.
- Useful for rare phenomena.

## 6. Neurophysiological Techniques

- fMRI, PET, EEG, TMS.
  - Link brain activity to mental functions.
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## 5. Core Concepts & Terminology

- **Behavior** – Observable actions or responses.
- **Mental Processes** – Thoughts, feelings, memories, perceptions.
- **Conscious vs. Unconscious** – Awareness vs. processes outside awareness.
- **Nature vs. Nurture** – Genetic inheritance vs. environmental influence.
- **Plasticity** – Brain's ability to change structurally/functionally.