*Principles of Psychology* by Matt Jarvis and Paul Okami

Assignments

# Chapter 1

1. Research a recognised ‘myth’ in psychology. Write a short summary of the psychological evidence which contradicts the lay belief.
2. Visit the university library. Search for either a hard copy or e-copy of a recent psychology journal – enlist the help of your subject librarian if needed. Note the features of each of the articles in the publication (e.g. abstract, tables/figures, authorship, title and subheadings). What do they have in common and how are they different?
3. Research Sternberg’s triarchic model of thinking. Write your own definitions and examples for the three types of thinking: analytical, synthetic and practical.

# Chapter 2

1. Write a short comparison of psychology and one of the natural sciences, outlining what you see as the main similarities and differences.
2. Identify a specific career related to psychology, such as an Educational Psychologist, Counsellor or Research Assistant. The BPS website is a good starting point (<https://careers.bps.org.uk/>). Research what qualifications and experience are required for the role.
3. Sketch a timeline from the origins of psychology in introspectionism up until recent developments in neuroscience and evolutionary psychology. Briefly indicate the rise of different approaches and work of key psychologists.
4. Create a presentation which summarises the key perspectives in psychology (biological, evolutionary, behavioural, cognitive, psychodynamic, humanistic, positive, sociocultural and critical social).

# Chapter 3

1. Research one famous case study in psychology, such as HM or Little Hans. Write a brief reflection on the pros and cons of using an individual or small group of individuals to study different psychological phenomena.
2. Propose a topic for psychological study and briefly explain how you would carry out an observation to explore this area.
3. Find a short survey to complete on any topic- online or in a magazine or newspaper for example. Review or even complete the survey yourself. Identify which questions elicit qualitative responses and which would produce quantitative data.
4. Design an experiment on gender differences in memory. Include detail about choice of experimental design and sampling, and explain how each variable would be operationalised.
5. Research an ethically controversial psychology study (check out <https://www.onlinepsychologydegree.info/unethical-experiements-psychology/> for ideas). Identify the ethical breaches and note down how, if possible, such problems might be avoided by researchers today.

# Chapter 4

1. Construct a flowchart which explains the fight or flight response of the sympathetic nervous system and the adrenal-cortical system to a threatening stimulus.
2. Choose either the hind, mid or forebrain and create a presentation briefly explaining the function of each of the major structures.
3. Locate a firsthand account in which a person describes a ‘near death experience’. Use your understanding of brain function and human experience to explain their account.
4. Sketch a human body. Label it, indicating the ways in which the systems connecting brain, body, and behaviour interact, overlap, and affect each other.
5. Find a piece of recent neuroscience news and write a brief summary.

# Chapter 5

1. Explain the role of gene-environment interactions in relation to a current issue such as obesity and write a brief summary.
2. Identify an example of an environmental mismatch and explain it in evolutionary terms.
3. Create a short presentation on sex differences which may have an evolutionary explanation. You may wish to focus on a particular issue such as child-rearing, romantic relationships or career choice.
4. Research the controversy around IQ as a way of measuring intelligence. Summarise the influence of culture and heritability in relation to this method of measurement.

# Chapter 6

1. Keep a dream diary for one week; write down your recollections of your dream when you wake. Analyse symbols in your dreams, using a Freudian ‘dream dictionary’, such as those available online (e.g. <https://www.dream-analysis.com/dictionary/>). Write a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of dream analysis as a method of studying meaning in dreams.
2. Research one of the following sleep disorders and write an essay outlining causes, symptoms and treatment:
* Insomnia
* Obstructive sleep apnoea
* One or more types of parasomnias
1. Find a self-hypnosis video online (e.g. YouTube) and write a brief reflection on your experience, considering how hypnosis and other altered states of consciousness may be understood in subjective terms.
2. Locate a report in the media about one type of psychoactive drug. Write a brief reflection contrasting this with real facts about the drug.

# Chapter 7

1. Classical Conditioning

<https://educationalgames.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/pavlov/pavlov.html>

Use this link to see if you can successfully train a dog as in Pavlov’s original experiment. Note down the steps of the process of classical conditioning you have used including the following terms:

* Unconditioned stimulus
* Conditioned stimulus
* Neutral stimulus
* Unconditional response
* Conditioned response
1. Identify an example of operant conditioning being used in everyday life (for example, in token economies) Write a brief reflection; how do the processes of operant conditioning work and what factors make them more (or less) successful?
2. Look up a recent controversy about media violence (e.g. video games, film or music). Write a short explanation of how the processes of observational learning might be responsible for encouraging violence amongst the audience.

# Chapter 8

1. Find an example of an optical illusion. Write a short explanation of why this illusion ‘works’, thinking about the limitations of human senses and how sensory information is ultimately perceived.
2. Draw a diagram of the eye. Label the following key structures involved in vision from this chapter: lens, iris, retina, optic nerve, pupil, photoreceptors, fovea, rods and cones, optic disc.
3. Complete this test: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo>

Write a brief explanation of your experience based on the processes of attention and perception.

# Chapter 9

1. <http://www.exploratorium.edu/memory/dont_forget/index.html>

Try playing these memory games which illustrate the capacity and duration of your short-term memory. You can also explore the tips for each to enhance processes of encoding.

1. Design a brief study guide for students preparing for exams. Apply your knowledge of the factors affecting retrieval to make recommendations for improving student recall of information.
2. Research two types of memory fallibility. Create a short presentation explaining why each occurs and how it might explain real-life forgetting.
3. Look up a case of false eyewitness testimony. Write a short explanation of why false memories can occur and reflect how they can lead to wrongful convictions.

# Chapter 10

1. Think of a highly creative individual (someone you know, or perhaps a famous artist/ musician etc.). Write a short reflection on ways in which this individual demonstrates originality, flexibility and even utility.
2. Research the case of Genie Wiley. Write a short essay discussing how her abilities and experience support or contradict the idea of an internal language faculty and the idea of a critical period for language acquisition.
3. Find a language study which uses non-human participants. Create a short presentation outlining the aim of the study, the method used to train the sample and the key findings.

# Chapter 11

1. Create a short presentation or podcast summarising the current evidence on biological and environmental contributions to temperament.
2. Research and summarise a recent article about the role of fathers in the social and emotional development of children.
3. Write a short article aimed at parents/ carers of young children summarising the positive and negative aspects of different forms of day care.
4. Sketch out a timeline of the development of children’s peer relations from infancy through to adolescence.

# Chapter 12

1. Research a recent or classic paper on infant perception. Looking at the results and conclusions of the study, write a brief analysis of whether they support the nativist or empiricist position.
2. Create a brief presentation outlining Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. Include details such as:
* Name/ age of stage
* Developing abilities
* Evidence for and against Piaget’s theory
1. Imagine a student is struggling to understand fractions. Apply what you know about social constructivism to write a list of recommendations for the student’s teacher to support their learning.
2. Write a short critique of Kohlberg’s theory of moral development, considering the role of bias in his research. You may wish to focus on the influence of either culture or gender.
3. Summarise the procedure of the ‘Sally-Anne’ test of theory of mind and explain the responses of the participants in this video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oazK2fkRU1A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oazK2fkRU1A)

# Chapter 13

1. Research adolescence in a culture different and write a short essay comparing and contrasting the type and duration of one of Erikson’s stages with their own experiences.
2. Choose a particular point of conflict or controversy experienced by adolescents (e.g. drug abuse, parental conflict, reckless driving). Use your knowledge of neural development at this time to explain the behaviour of individuals at this life stage.
3. Find out about the process of death and dying in another culture. Summarise the contrasting attitudes toward and rituals surrounding death with their own experiences.

# Chapter 14

1. Write a brief reflection on the use of psychometric testing, discussing what you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of this method. You may wish to think about issues of validity, reliability, application to real-life and social sensitivity.
2. Create a short presentation outlining both Sternberg and Gardner’s theories of intelligence. Explain the similarities and differences and include at least one piece of research evidence for each.
3. Summarise the evidence for and against the influence of genes and environment on intelligence. Reflect on what problems psychologists face in trying to study these two influences.
4. Research a piece of technology, game or other exercise which claims to improve intelligence. Assess the claims made by the manufacturers in light of the research evidence around promoting intelligence.

# Chapter 15

1. Select one of the ‘grand theories’ of personality from this chapter. Write a short reflection on the implications of this theory for freewill and determinism.
2. Read through a trait personality test online (e.g. Eysenck Personality Inventory at <http://www.iluguru.ee/test/eysencks-personality-inventory-epi-extroversionintroversion/> or [https://trans4mind.com/personality/#](https://trans4mind.com/personality/)) Review the test and note down any methodological problems or issues with reliability or validity might psychologists have administering/scoring such a test.
3. Research projective tests such as the Thematic Apperception Test or Rorsach Test. Create a presentation outlining the materials and method used to administer such tests, and summarise key criticisms of each.
4. Locate and summarise a journal article on stability (or instability) of personality across the lifespan.

# Chapter 16

1. Locate an interview with a competitive sports person discussing their motivation. Write a brief reflection on how this relates to motivation as instinct, drive or motivation.
2. Research and summarise the four factors influencing self-efficacy, according to Bandura. Identify how each could be applied to a situation that requires motivation, such as smoking cessation.
3. Try out Rotter’s Locus of Control questionnaire here: <http://www.psych.uncc.edu/pagoolka/LocusofControl-intro.html> Explain the advantages and disadvantages of measuring motivation in this way.

# Chapter 17

1. Research then compare and contrast display rules across a two or three different cultures to your own.
2. Select one of the theories of emotion explained in this chapter. Write a brief reflection on why you find it most convincing, and any problems that may remain with the theory in accounting for our experience of emotions.
3. Find a recent report or article which compares the happiness levels of different cultures or countries. Identify which factors might be responsible for these psychological differences.
4. Choose one method for coping with anger. Research the method and summarise findings for and against in short presentation.

# Chapter 18

1. Select a psychological disorder from this chapter or your own research and write a brief research paper on the history around diagnosis and treatment.
2. Choose one example of a psychological disorder in a film or book. Identify it according to DSM-5, and critique whether the portrayal is accurate based on knowledge of particular defining characteristics of the disorder.
3. Find a case of mental health issue in the news and write a brief reflection on how the person and issue in question are portrayed.

# Chapter 19

1. Create a presentation comparing and contrasting two types of cognitive/ cognitive-behavioural therapies.
2. Find out what is meant by the placebo effect. Briefly research and summarise what this might mean for outcomes for psychological treatment.
3. Research and summarise the effectiveness rates of one type or group of prescription pharmaceuticals, how this was measured and who wrote the reports making the claims.
4. Research one biological treatment option (pharmacotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy or psychosurgery) and write a brief paper explaining its history, method, efficacy, and limitations.

# Chapter 20

1. Jury trials required individuals to come together to consider evidence and testimony before deliberating over a verdict. Identify and explain potential sources of bias in jury trials.
2. Apply the theory of cognitive dissonance to explain why people are motivated to justify their efforts in one real-life example.
3. Research a particular group such as environmentalists or socialists. Write a brief reflection on the symbolic function of this group for its membership.

# Chapter 21

1. Research a real or fictional example of informational conformity and an example of normative conformity in the news, or film/literature. Write a short explanation of the differences between the two.
2. Find an historical or recent example of real-life destructive obedience. Write a paper explaining how situational variables may explain such events.
3. Identify a social group which engages in controversial or even illegal practices, such as far right extremists. Write a paper on how social identity theory might explain the attraction of group membership.
4. Design an experimental study to investigate cultural differences in facial attractiveness. Write an aim, hypothesis and procedure that a psychologist could use to carry out your study.

# Chapter 22

1. Take one example of altruism that you know about, or select a story from the media (e.g. [www.giraffe.org/heroes-stories](http://www.giraffe.org/heroes-stories)). Write a short reflection on the story you have chosen, explaining the possible role of empathy, the theory of inclusive fitness and the theory of reciprocal altruism.
2. Find a psychological study on bystander apathy. Write an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the method. You should also consider the ethical implications of the research.
3. Locate a press article about a case that has involved prejudice and/or discrimination. Create a short presentation explaining your example using at least one of the theories from this chapter.
4. Research the BBC Prison Experiment ([www.bbcprisonstudy.org/](http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/)). Summarise the differences between the findings of this and the Stanford Prison Experiment.