

Week 1

What is psychology?

This week you will:

- complete a questionnaire assessing your knowledge of psychology
- define the terms “psychology” and “behaviour”
- distinguish psychology from psychiatry
- summarise the historical development of psychology

Key knowledge:

- the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes, including perception, cognition and emotion
- the distinction between psychology and psychiatry and the diverse fields of psychology as a discipline and a profession
- the historical development of psychology, for example, Wilhelm Wundt, William James, Hermann Ebbinghaus, Alfred Binet, John B. Watson

Tasks this week relate to Outcome 1.

Defining psychology

We all have different understandings of what psychology is and what psychologists do. For example, if you talk to friends and family you will probably get a huge range of opinions, from statements like ‘psychology is just common sense’ to detailed definitions from those who have studied psychology at tertiary level.

Let’s start our study of psychology by finding out what you and your classmates know about this subject.

SEND

WORK FOR SUBMISSION

Activity 1: What do Unit 1 students know about psychology?

The following activity will be completed over two weeks. This week you will complete a questionnaire, which contains statements about major ideas in psychology. You will score the questionnaire and send in your corrected questionnaire to me. In Week 4 we’ll summarise the class scores and interpret the data that we have collected.

Here’s what you need to do:

1. Read the statements on pages 1.3 – 1.5 carefully. You will not be graded on the correctness of your answers so don’t worry about your results. We want an accurate measure of what students know and at the start of your study of VCE Psychology. We don’t expect you to have a wide range of knowledge.
2. Complete the questionnaire by indicating which statements you believe to be true and which you believe to be false by indicating T for true and F for false in the column provided. If you cannot decide about an answer write N for not sure.

Knowledge of Psychology Questionnaire

	T/F/N	✓
1. Psychology is basically the study of the unconscious mind.		
2. Out of the billions of people on earth there is probably someone exactly like me.		
3. There are some people who simply have no personality at all.		
4. Personality can be measured by the number of friends an individual has.		
5. Although all higher animals have a brain, the human brain is entirely different from the brains of animals.		
6. Only human beings can think.		
7. A clinical psychologist can read people's minds.		
8. A trained hypnotist can hypnotise anybody.		
9. Creative people always score high on intelligence tests.		
10. Colour blindness is more common in men than in women.		
11. Drug therapy usually treats the symptoms, not the causes, of personality disturbances.		
12. Knowledge of people's attitudes enables you to predict their behaviour.		
13. "Shock therapy" is mainly used to punish patients.		
14. We are likely to remember better if we sleep after learning material than if we take up another activity immediately after the learning.		
15. Having someone read to you while you're asleep results in efficient learning of the material.		
16. A fear of large spiders is inborn in most females.		
17. Most, if not all, individuals dream.		
18. Psychologists recommend that infants be taught self-reliance by giving them little cuddling and attention during their early months.		
19. Psychologists and psychoanalysts are almost identical in their beliefs.		
20. Prejudice is a learned attitude.		
21. Committees which consist of odd numbers of people make quicker decisions than those that have an even number of people.		
22. The throw of a pair of dice can be influenced by concentration on the number desired.		
23. You can tell quite accurately what emotion people are experiencing by noting the expression on their faces.		
24. Mothers contribute more than fathers to the genetic characteristics of their children.		
25. You can always recognise intellectually challenged people by their facial expressions.		

1.4

26. Raising children is mainly an instinct. It is done in much the same way everywhere.		
27. Too much studying is a frequent cause of a 'nervous breakdown'.		
28. Children who wear spectacles tend to be high achievers in school.		
29. People are less likely to help another human being in distress if they are in a hurry.		
30. People are limited to five senses: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.		
31. Psychologists agree that thoughts can be transferred from one individual to another individual without the use of the senses.		
32. In learning, rewards are generally more effective than punishments.		
33. Individuals who are very brilliant as children usually become dull or mentally ill in adult life.		
34. Intelligence tests measure an individual's total abilities.		
35. Nearly all intellectually challenged people must be cared for in an institution.		
36. Dangerous criminals share certain physical characteristics which allow them to be more easily recognised.		
37. The more related people are to each other, the more alike their IQs will be.		
38. Freud developed a therapeutic technique called psychoanalysis.		
39. Psychologists have developed tests which can reveal to a person, with great certainty, what career that person should pursue.		
40. All individuals can have a normal IQ if they go to school long enough.		
41. Sensation and perception are much the same thing.		
42. There are four basic skin sensations: pressure, pain, warmth and cold.		
43. Alcohol is a stimulant.		
44. If two events usually occur together, then we can conclude that one causes the other.		
45. The 'generation gap' is a relatively recent phenomenon.		
46. Social behaviour begins to develop once we are old enough to speak.		
47. There are certain parts of the brain that are associated with specific behaviour.		
48. The main reason that we don't remember things is that we don't pay attention.		
49. Many people at one time or another seriously believe that they are emotionally disturbed.		
50. The female increases in height faster than the male until the teens.		
51. Social development begins at six weeks of age.		
52. The effects of hallucinogens on individuals are predictable.		
53. Psychology has little relationship to other sciences.		
54. Psychologists obtain many of their data through the method of observation.		
55. Most epileptics can lead relatively normal lives with appropriate treatment.		

1.5

56. There is considerable evidence that most psychologists agree on what is meant by the term 'personality'.		
57. Human beings have similar biological needs.		
58. All neurons perform essentially the same role within the nervous system.		
59. A hypothesis is the more common name for a true statement.		
60. Racism and prejudice are the same thing.		
61. All human reflexes have a survival function.		
62. An important factor which influences our perception of objects and situations is previous experience.		
63. Not everyone has emotions, although most people do.		
64. An individual dining alone at a table is more likely to tip a higher percentage of the bill than are several individuals dining as a group.		
65. Having someone agree with you makes it easier for you to withstand pressure from others to change your views.		
66. Rapid eye movement is associated with dreaming.		
67. Psychologists have developed effective strategies for enhancing an individual's long-term memory.		
68. People seek therapy only for severe emotional disorders.		
69. By adult standards, the newborn infant's vision is probably quite fuzzy.		
70. The retina in a human eye registers images in two dimensions.		
71. Direct electrical stimulation of the brain can cause a person to 'see' visions.		
72. The more highly motivated people are, the better they are at solving complex problems.		
73. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.		
74. Heredity doesn't have much influence on development after conception.		
75. We engage in more risky behaviour when we are alone than when we are in a group.		

Total Score _____

1.6

3. Use the table below to score your responses. Tick (✓) those responses you got correct. Responses marked with an N are not ticked.

Table 1.1 Correct responses for statements in Psychology knowledge questionnaire.

Statement	Response	Statement	Response	Statement	Response
1	F	26	F	51	F
2	F	27	F	52	F
3	F	28	F	53	F
4	F	29	T	54	T
5	F	30	F	55	T
6	F	31	F	56	F
7	F	32	T	57	T
8	F	33	F	58	T
9	F	34	F	59	F
10	T	35	F	60	F
11	T	36	F	61	F
12	F	37	T	62	T
13	F	38	T	63	F
14	T	39	F	64	T
15	F	40	F	65	T
16	F	41	F	66	T
17	T	42	T	67	T
18	F	43	F	68	F
19	F	44	F	69	T
20	T	45	F	70	T
21	F	46	F	71	T
22	F	47	T	72	F
23	F	48	F	73	F
24	F	49	T	74	F
25	F	50	T	75	F

Adapted from Grivas & Lawrie (1991), pages 3-5.

1.7

4. Write your total score in the space below figure 1.1 on page 1.5, for your records, and on page 1.17 to send to me.

5. Complete the following questions.

a) In your opinion, did the questionnaire accurately measure your knowledge of psychology? Why/Why not?

(Note: think about your knowledge of psychology and the measuring device used to collect this data.)

b) Are there any responses in the table of answers that surprised you? If so then list which ones and why?

1.8

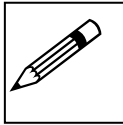
Now let's explore what psychology is.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) states ... *'psychology is the study of the nature and development of mind and behaviour in both humans and animals, including the biological structure and processes that underpin and sustain both'* (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2004, p.7).



Pages 45-48 of your text.

Here you will notice that psychology is defined as ... **the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes including perception, cognition and emotion.** Other important terms are also explained here. Please make sure you understand the meaning of overt and covert behaviours and perception, cognition and emotion. Figure 1.2 (page 46) visually summarises the meaning of some of these terms.



Briefly outline the goals of psychology. Write one word for each goal and then write a phrase or sentence to explain what is involved in achieving each goal. Try to use your own words in the explanation rather than quoting from the text.

SEND

WORK FOR SUBMISSION

Activity 2: Defining and identifying behaviour

1. While behaviour may seem clearly distinguishable from thoughts and feelings, it is not so easy to apply a label to some behaviours. Complete the table on page 1.9 by categorising the behaviours as either 'overt' or 'covert' and then giving a reason to explain your choice of category.

1.9

Name

Number

Behaviour	Overt or Covert?	Reason
Playing a video game		
Running		
Singing a song in your head		
Writing a letter		
Remembering to get the washing in		
Worrying about your test results		
Singing in a choir		
Reading		
Playing chess		
Listening to music on headphones		
Daydreaming		
Planning an excuse for late submission of work		

Psychology as a profession

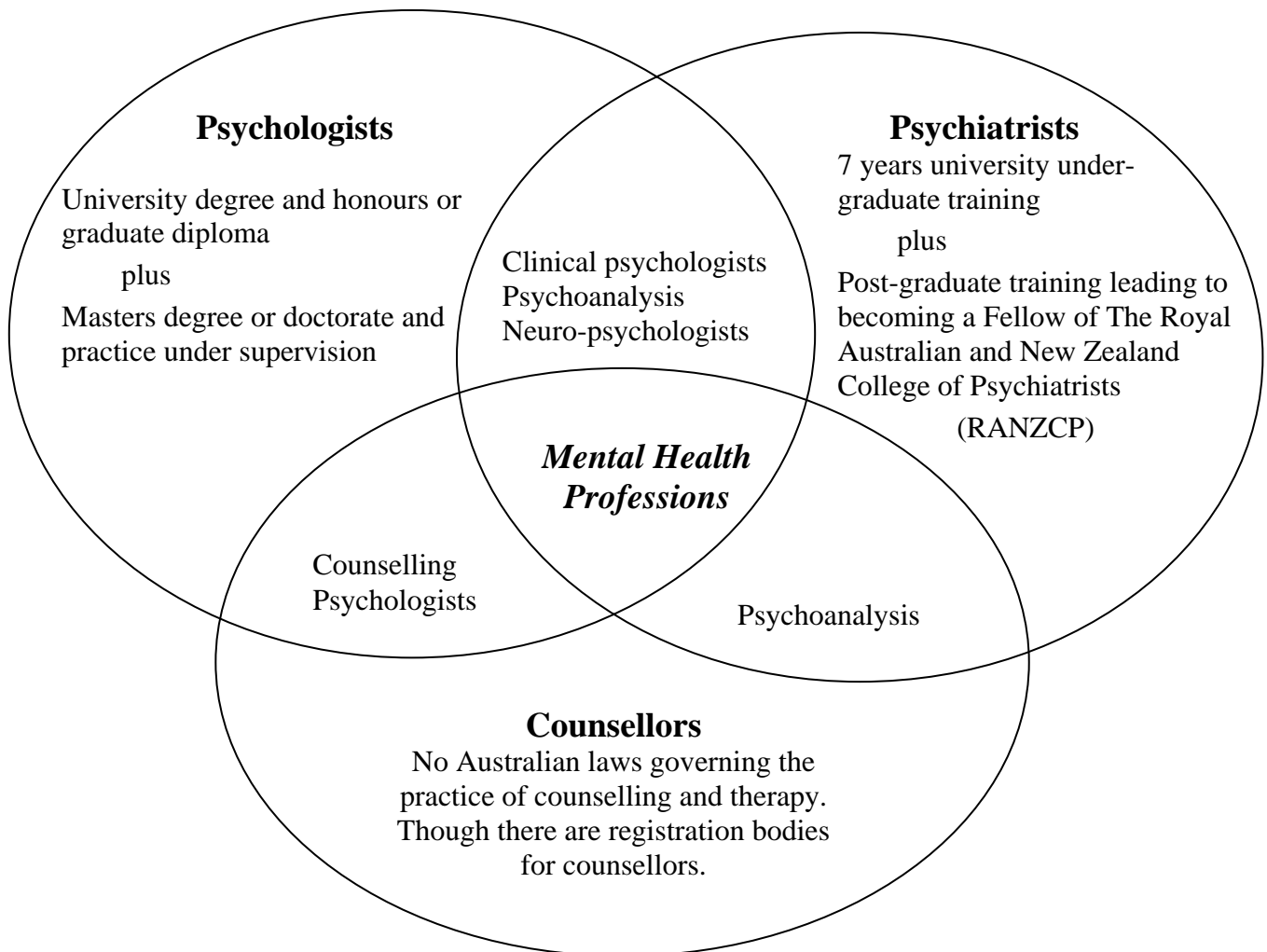
There is often confusion within the community about the differences between people working in the areas of psychology, psychiatry and (psycho) therapy. What they all have in common is that some or all of their members are professional ‘helpers’ – they assist people with problems of living.



Psychology as a science and a profession on pp. 48 – 53 of the text.

The similarities and differences between psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors is summarised in the diagram below.

Comparison of Psychologists, Psychiatrists and Counsellors



Activity 3: Psychology and psychiatry

Using your text, the Internet and any other resources, investigate the similarities and differences between Psychologists and Psychiatrists.

For each of the following activities, indicate whether a psychologist or psychiatrist or both would be likely to carry them out and give reasons to explain your decision.

1. Counselling a depressed adult
2. Prescribing medication to a depressed adult
3. Running an anger management group
4. Assessing the intelligence of a child
5. Administering an 'Ink Blot' test of personality (see page 247 of the text for an example)
6. Assessing the suitability of job applicants
7. Negotiating with hijackers
8. Performing corrective surgery on the brain
9. Training personal coaches
10. Counselling a patient prior to having a brain scan

Diversity within psychology

The activities of psychologists generally fall under two broad headings:

- Research and teaching – the science
- Service provision – the helping profession.

Some psychologists work across these areas. Some, for instance, do research and provide clinical services in a mental health setting, such as a research hospital. Others work in universities as well as conducting a private practice in counselling psychology.



Pages 52-53 of the text, which examines some of the disciplines of psychology.

Name Number

SEND

WORK FOR SUBMISSION

Activity 4: Specialist areas of psychology

A. Match each area of psychology on the left with its correct description on the right by drawing a line from the area of psychology to its description.

Area	Description
1. sport psychologist	(a) helps people in workplaces.
2. community psychologist	(b) works with people in legal and correctional service settings.
3. forensic psychologist	(c) works on the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of mental health problems.
4. organisational psychologist	(d) helps teachers and students with issues that affect student learning.
5. educational psychologist	(e) helps athletes achieve peak performance.
6. counselling psychologist	(f) promotes and maintains health-related behaviour; improves health care system.
7. neuropsychologist	(g) helps people deal with all kinds of personal and relationship problems.
8. academic psychologist	(h) diagnoses and treats problems caused by brain or nerve damage.
9. health psychologist	(i) conducts research on areas of interest in psychology, usually combined with teaching/supervising students.
10. clinical psychologist	(j) works with individuals, community groups/agencies, helping people achieve their goals in areas such as community health/welfare.

B. Of the areas of psychology listed above, which is the most interesting to you? Why?

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.....

History of psychology



Pages 57 – 64 of the text.

Let's now take a look at the development of psychology and those people who contributed to our understanding.

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Activity 5: A summary of the development of psychology

Cut and paste the boxes below into the correct columns of the table on pages 1.14 to summarise the historical development of psychology.

William James	Sigmund Freud	Hermann Ebbinghaus	William Wundt	Watson and Skinner	
Alfred Binet	1856-1939	1878-1958	1857-1911	1832-1920	1842-1910
1850-1909	The Forgetting Curve	Psychoanalytic	Educational Psychology		
Behaviourism	Functionalism	Experimental Self Observation			
Studied how people's behaviour and mental abilities helped them adapt to their environment	Explored unconscious motives for behaviour	Studied overt, observable behaviour			
Studied assessment of intelligence and general abilities	Observed and measured how human body reacted to stimuli	Memory and the cognitive processes of remembering and forgetting			

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WORK FOR SUBMISSION**Activity 6: Personal profile**

Please complete the following profile. This information will be held in confidence.

Name: _____ **Student Number:** _____

I am studying with the DECV because: _____

I chose to study Psychology because: _____

Please number the following in order of the method of communication that you feel most comfortable with (a 1. will indicate your first preference) If you cannot use one or more of these forms of communication please mark the box with a cross (X).

- Telephone (my number is _____)
- Mail
- E-mail (my address is _____)
- In person

What are the best days & times to contact you?

Which of the following best describes how you feel about keeping in contact with me?

- I am confident when contacting you for help and aim to keep in regular contact
- I am fairly confident about contacting you on the phone but I would like you to make the first call
- I am quite shy about contacting you on the phone and would like you to contact me if you feel I need to discuss my work
- I like to work alone and I do not plan to call you
- Other _____

My hobbies and interests are: _____

My aims for the future are: _____

Submission of graded tasks



Page 0.3. of this course book where I've outlined how the unit will be assessed. Please read through carefully and complete and sign the following student declaration.

It is important you understand that if your study circumstances change you must contact me as soon as possible, to discuss appropriate options and/or actions. These circumstances may include changes in address, personal health issues or family matters.

Key Terms

Key Term	Definition
Psychology	
Perception	
Cognition	
Emotion	
Behaviour	
Overt behaviour	
Covert behaviour	

Checklist

This week you should send the following work to me.
Please tick the items you've sent and keep this as your record.

- Activity 1: My score for the questionnaire
- Activity 2: Defining and identifying behaviour
- Activity 4: Specialist areas of Psychology
- Activity 5: Summary of the development of psychology
- Activity 6: Personal profile
- Student Declaration (send the section below)

END OF WEEK 1

Student Declaration

I have read the Timetable and Assessment details in the Introduction. I understand that graded tasks in VCE Unit 1 Psychology will only be graded if received on or before the timetabled deadline or by the date negotiated following an extension of time or variation to my timetable.

Name:

DECV Student Number:

Signature:

Date:

YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTRE TEACHER'S COMMENTS

DISTANCE EDUCATION CENTRE TEACHER