

Introductory Psychology Instructor Guide

Module 1: Psychological Foundations

Table of Contents

Introductory Psychology	1
Instructor Guide	1
Learning Outcomes	2
Summary of Module	2
Background You'll Need Section	2
Topic 1: Early Psychology	3
Topic 2: The History of Psychology	4
Topic 3: The Psychological Domains	5
Topic 4: Careers in Psychology	5
Module Resources	6
Activity One: Chronology Game	6
Activity Two: Two Truths and a Lie	10
Activity Three: Getting Personal with Psychologists—Toasting the Greats or Speed-Dating	13
Additional Resources	16
Assignments	18
Discussion	20
Perspectives in Psychology	20

Learning Outcomes

[Detailed Course Learning Outcome Spreadsheet is linked here.](#)

Topic	Student Learning Goals
1: Early Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define psychology• Define structuralism and functionalism• Describe the contributions and limitations of key researchers to the development of psychology• Define Freud's psychoanalytical theory• Define Gestalt psychology
2: The History of Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain behaviorism• Describe humanism• Describe cognitive psychology• Describe multicultural and feminist psychology
3: The Psychological Domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the 5 major domains within psychology• Describe the biological domain• Describe the cognitive domain• Describe the developmental domain• Describe the social and personality psychology domain• Describe the abnormal, clinical, and health psychology domain
4: Careers in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify common subfields within psychology• Describe the value of studying psychology• Describe careers in psychology

Summary of Module

This module covers the definition and approaches to psychology, and the history of psychology, including notable figures and schools of thought. They also learn about the 5 major domains of psychology, subfields of psychology, and careers available to those in the field of psychology.

Background You'll Need Section

Here students are introduced to the APA's [integrative themes](#). We recommend printing this off, displaying the themes, or linking to them in an obvious location so they can be a frequent point of class discussion.

The Readiness check gives an example of a social experiment that is then connected to theme B. The [video clip "What Would You Do?"](#) explores societal biases and stereotypes by presenting a quasi-experiment where people's reactions to a collapsing person are observed based on their appearance, addressing the influence of social factors on behavior.

- To extend this conversation about the APA themes in class, you could have students work to create a mnemonic to remember them all.

Topic 1: Early Psychology

In this section, students learn about the definition of psychology and the structuralist and functionalist approaches to psychology. They also learn about influential early psychologists (such as Hall, Sumner, Prosser, and Cattell), Sigmund Freud and his Psychoanalytic Theory, as well as Gestalt psychology.

It might be helpful here to have a discussion with students about the value of studying the history of psychology.

On the Apply It page, students explore the issue of the WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) bias in psychology research and the importance of considering diverse populations and cultures. Students are asked to reflect on the lessons learned from the history of psychology regarding the biases and assumptions that arise from studying predominantly WEIRD populations and how this knowledge should shape their future approach to studying and conducting psychological research.

Topic 2: The History of Psychology

In this section, students learn about the emergence of several unique schools of psychology. Students learn about behaviorism and humanism, as well as the cognitive revolution and cognitive psychology. They also learn about multicultural and cross-cultural psychology as well as feminist psychology.

On the Apply It page, students are asked to apply different psychological perspectives (such as psychoanalysis, behaviorism, cognitive psychology, humanism, and the sociocultural perspective) to explain various human behaviors. They are also prompted to reflect on the findings of the Doll Study and consider alternative explanations for the preference for White dolls over Black dolls, while discussing the impact of societal influences on self-perception and potential measures to address these influences. Finally,

students are invited to share which psychological perspective resonates with them in this context and explain why.

You can review all of the psychological perspectives students learned about using the mnemonic of a hand, starting with the thumb:

1. Thumb: this stands for the **psychodynamic perspective** stemming from Freud's work and emphasizing unconscious drives. Our THUMBS are so "PSYCHO" and versatile in the way that they move.
2. Pointer finger: this represents the **behavioral perspective** with its focus on learning and conditioning. Shake your POINTER finger back and forth as you might at someone demonstrating bad BEHAVIOR.
3. Middle finger: this stands for the **humanistic perspective** with its focus on the positive aspects of human nature. Your MIDDLE finger is the tallest and closest to self-actualization.
4. Ring finger: this represents the **cognitive perspective**, with a focus on internal thoughts and feelings. Your RING finger represents where you might wear a wedding band—a decision you would definitely want to THINK carefully about.
5. Pinkie finger: this stands for the **biological perspective** with a focus on physiological causes for behavior. Your PINKIE finger is the smallest—you can thank your BIOLOGY for that.
6. Extra finger?: the **evolutionary perspective** emphasizes how behaviors have an evolutionary cause. Maybe someday we'll EVOLVE to have an extra 6th finger after our pinkies?
7. Palm: this stands for the **sociocultural perspective** with a focus on ways the environment influences thoughts and behaviors. The palm of your hand represents how in many CULTURES, giving a HIGH-FIVE is an acceptable greeting.

*Note that if you wanted to add in earlier historical perspectives, you could start with the **brain** to represent structuralism, **arms** (and their many purposes) to represent functionalism, and **hands** together forming a [complete] circle to represent Gestalt psychology.

Topic 3: The Psychological Domains

In this section, students learn about the American Psychological Association (APA) and the 5 psychological domains. The first domain is the Biological domain, which includes evolutionary psychology, neuroscience, consciousness, and sensation. The second domain is The Cognitive domain, which includes the study of perception, cognition, memory, and intelligence. The third domain is the Developmental domain, which includes learning and conditioning, lifespan development, and language. The fourth domain is the Social and Personality domain, which includes the study of personality, emotion,

motivation, gender, and culture. Lastly, the fifth domain is the Mental and Physical Health domain, which includes abnormal psychology, therapy, and health psychology.

On the Apply It page, students review the psychological domains by matching how a psychologist from within each of the five domains of psychology approach different medical issues, such as concussions or anxiety. They are then asked to reflect on whether one of the domain appeals to them more according to their future career goals.

Topic 4: Careers in Psychology

In this section, students learn about some of the other subfields of psychology that can lead to careers in the field, such as Industrial-Organizational psychology, multicultural and cross-cultural psychology, sport and exercise psychology, forensic psychology. They also learn about the versatility and value of an undergraduate degree in psychology, as well as careers that require advanced degrees in the field.




On the Apply It page, students explore careers in psychology by visiting websites such as the American Psychological Association (APA) and job websites, researching specific jobs, and answering questions about the job responsibilities, appealing aspects, required education/certifications, and typical pay. They are then encouraged to reflect on their findings and consider how the information aligns with their interests, skills, and career goals.

Module Resources

PowerPoint

-  [Module 1 Slides](#)

Worksheets/Handouts

-  [Activity One Flashcards](#): Chronology Game
-  [Module 1 Assignment](#): Topics in Psychology Ted Talks
-  [Module 1 Discussion](#): Perspectives in Psychology

Activity One: Chronology Game

Evidence-Based Teaching Practices:



Varied

This activity is engaging and collaborative as students get to actively reflect and discuss the key historical events in history.




Belonging

By highlighting the historical events from the APA Historical Chronology alongside more traditional historical milestones, students get a better and more comprehensive understanding of bias in psychology and how to engage intersectionality.

Background

This is an interactive game intended to be used in class after students have been introduced to the general historical concepts and key major players in psychology.

Follow the rules for the [game Chronology](#). You can easily play this at the class level with two teams, or print off several copies of the game to give to specific groups.

 Chronology: History of Psychology Game Flashcards (click file>make a copy to cust...

A majority of these events were pulled either from [this APA timeline](#), the [APA Historical Chronology](#), or this [History of Psychology Wikipedia page](#).

The reason the Historical Chronology events are included alongside the more commonly known dates in psychology is to highlight the connections between them.

- Note that this is not a comprehensive timeline and MANY other milestones could be added. You can click FILE>Make a copy>to easily customize this document and add in your own dates and events.

- **Topic Alignment:** History of Psychology
- **Learning Outcome:** Explain the early development of psychology and the contributions of key researchers to the development of the field.
- **APA Learning Outcome:** APA Theme D: Psychology values diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion in the pursuit of a more just society.
- **Source:** Lumen Learning, CC-BY

Time Estimate: 45-60 minutes

Instructions

1. Provide appropriate background information.

Ensure that students are prepared for the types of materials that they'll see in the timeline game. Let them know that some of the events are from a more traditional timeline while others emphasize some events that highlight inequalities and injustices that are connected with the history of psychology. You may want to read the first paragraph of the [APA Apology](#) or briefly show the [Historical Chronology](#).

2. Explain the game and divide into teams.

The game Chronology can be played either within groups (if you print off multiple copies of the game), or at the whole-class level. At the whole class level, we recommend dividing the class into two teams, Team A and Team B. You as the instructor will be the moderator.

3. Begin with an anchor card.

Draw one card from the deck and read the description of the event or milestone on the card. As an entire class, try to guess the year that it happened. Turn it over to reveal the answer. This date is now your anchor date, so the next card that is drawn needs to be placed either before or after that anchor date.

4. Draw a card and read off the event or milestone.

If playing at the class level, draw from the deck (make sure the cards are shuffled) and read off the back of the card to just Team A.

5. One team guesses where the new event belongs on the timeline.

Team A then decides if that event comes before or after the anchor date. For example, if the anchor date is that *On Dreams* was published by Freud in 1901, and the new card says "The APA is formed," then the team would only get it correct if

they correctly state that it comes BEFORE that event on the timeline. If they get it wrong, Team B has the chance to steal.

6. If the team misses, the other team can “steal” the card by guessing correctly.

You can play the game by keeping points (either 2 points for each correctly placed card and 1 point for a steal), or by keeping it simple and just counting every correctly placed card and working to get to a set number of correct cards, like 8 correct cards.

7. Play.

Play continues back and forth until one team reaches your set number of points.

8. Variations.

There are several ways you could change this game.

- a. **Standing timeline (long version):** Hand a card to each person in the class (or to a small group of students) They should take a few minutes to learn more about their event or milestone so that they can explain it to everyone else. Next, have two students come up and explain their events/milestones WITHOUT revealing their date. The rest of the class (or just one person at a time—you could take turns going through each student) tries to guess the decade in which that event or milestone occurred.

Once someone correctly guesses the decade of the event/milestone on the card, have the person holding the card turn over their card to reveal that date. Do the same with the second person. Have them stand at the front of the classroom—they are now the anchor points for the timeline. Have another student come up and describe their event/milestone (without revealing the date).

The guessing student(s) can ask them clarifying questions as needed and they then guess where on the timeline that event goes—either before, after, or between the events already there. Once the guess is made, have the person reveal their date and move them to the correct place on the timeline.

- b. **Standing timeline (short version).** Hand each student or each group of students a card that is face-up and tell them NOT to look at the date on the back (you could also keep the dates covered with sticky notes). Working in groups of no more than 10 cards at a time, have the students hold their card and get into what they believe is their correct chronological order. Then have them reveal their dates and adjust their timeline accordingly.

Discussion

After playing the game, a discussion is imperative in helping students see the implications and pervasiveness of racism and prejudice through the history of psychology, using questions such as:

- What stands out to you from this timeline?
- What are some observations you can make about the development of psychology during its early phases?
- Do you see yourself represented in the early field of psychology? How do you think that may be different now?
- Can you think of current evidence of these injustices or ways that these past injustices in the history of psychology are relevant today?
- How can psychological research help alleviate the wrongs that the APA has committed in the past?
- Continue the conversation from the Apply It—If Psych is WEIRD, why is that a problem (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic)?

Debrief

This activity highlights some terrible events in the history of psychology including racist, derogatory, and offensive remarks and actions acknowledged by the APA in the [APA Historical Chronology](#). The [APA Issued an Apology](#) in 2021 and outlined some tasks they plan to focus on moving forward. That apology concludes with this:

- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that future APA actions could also include targeted interventions to benefit other groups that have experienced systems of oppression, including those based on religion, sex, class, sexual orientation and gender diversity, and disability identity.
- THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that APA reaffirms its rejection of racism and racist ideologies and its commitment to dismantling racism in all forms, including within the discipline itself, will continue to work to identify psychology's significant potential to dismantle racism in important systems and sectors of society, and will continue to advocate for policies that create a more equitable and inclusive society that honors the needs and well-being of people of color.

You could include this conclusion from the APA apology in the class discussion and ask students about practical ways to incorporate these resolves into the future study of psychology.

Online Variation

If working in groups during a synchronous online class, you could give each group a handful of the descriptions of the events/milestones (without the dates) and have them utilize [this APA timeline](#), the [APA Historical Chronology](#), or this [History of Psychology Wikipedia page](#) to put their events and milestones in the correct order. Then hold a discussion based on the questions above.

If fully asynchronous, this could be turned into more of a static assignment by asking students to create their own timeline based on 10 events from the history of psychology, but at least 4 of the events must come from the [APA Historical Chronology](#). Then have them answer reflection questions based on what they learned.

Activity Two: Two Truths and a Lie

Evidence-Based Teaching Practices:



Community Building

Educators encourage students to build relationships with one another in order to establish peer networks of support, encouragement, and help that persist beyond a single course or term. They use “get to know you” activities, story sharing, small group work, and other exercises to help build community through differences, not despite differences.

Background

This activity is intended to give students the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other and connect that to some topics they may have heard about as related to psychology. This activity can be both big or small, but if you have the time to do it, we recommend introducing the activity and referencing it again several times throughout the class.

- **Topic Alignment:** History of Psychology
- **Learning Outcome:** Explain some of the key players in the history of psychology

- **APA Learning Outcome:** Integrative Theme A: Psychological science relies on empirical evidence and adapts as new data develop.
- **Source:** Lumen Learning, with inspiration from Stephen Chew, <https://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/psn/2022/09/two-truths>

Time Estimate: 10-30 minutes

Instructions

1. Introduce the idea of Two Truths and a Lie

First, pose the question and give students a few seconds to think about these options:

- A. The earliest modern psychologists focused on studying mental illness.
- B. Psychoanalysis, developed by Freud, is still relevant for modern psychologists.
- C. The science of psychology has contributed to positive social change.

2. Ask students to use i-clickers or do a class vote to identify the lie.

Answer: A is the lie, though B and C both have nuanced answers.

Psychoanalysis as Freud developed it involved several unique theories—many of which are unfounded and discredited (for example, the theory of psychosexual development we'll talk about later), but the basic ideas Freud brought forth that there are unconscious forces and deeply buried emotions or experience can affect behavior, and that by bringing those to the surface and addressing them, we can deal with those. This is still a component of psychoanalytic talk therapy today.

C is definitely true in that psychology has done a lot of good (reducing stigma around mental disorders, developing evidence-based therapies, improving mental health in general, etc.), but it's important to mention that it has also done a lot of bad. Especially in early psychology, when "research" was conducted to prove harmful stereotypes or support racist views.

3. Have students play 2 truths and a lie game.

Have students play this game to introduce themselves, either to the whole class, or just in small groups or partners.

To play, each person thinks of two true statements about themselves and one lie. Others have to guess which statement is the lie.

Start with your own example from your life.

4. Teach about lie-spotting.

Students are generally very curious about whether or not psychologists can spot liars. Here you can explain that psychological science conducts research to learn about these types of behaviors. Lie-spotting became quite trendy just over a decade ago alongside a popular TV show. More recent research on lie-spotting has shown mostly inconclusive results.

For example, do liars fidget? There is almost no backing for these non-verbal cues and liars. Liars often make lots of eye contact; they still smile, laugh, etc.. Some small observations are that liars might be less cooperative, shift their blink rate, use barrier objects, alter or raise their vocal tone (see <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/why-you-cant-spot-liar-just-looking-180977359/>).

So what CAN you do to spot a liar? These articles might help, but one key takeaway is that asking questions can help “trip up” the liar.

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/forensic-insights/202101/the-psychology-deception-asking-questions-spot-liars>
- <https://nypost.com/2021/01/18/how-to-spot-a-liar-according-to-science/>
<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsos.200839#d1e288>

5. Historical Connection: Play 2 Truths and a Lie Again.

If teaching about some of the major early players in the field of psychology, play the game a third time, but have students use the internet to look up basic facts about their psychologists and create two truths and a lie about their lives. For example, you can have them play using some of the major players (Wundt, James, Freud, Hall, etc.) or you can assign them some of the lesser-known psychologists like John Dewey, James McKeen Cattell, Mary Whiton Calkins, Margaret Floy Washburn, Leta S. Hollingworth, Francis C. Sumner, Inez Beverly Prosser, Ruth Winifred Howard.

This time, allow students to ask clarifying questions to see if they can figure out the lie. After classmates guess the psychologists' “lies,” have the students provide a brief summary about that psychologist—who they are and why they are important.

Online Variation

You can convert components of this into a discussion board activity by asking students to introduce themselves using 2 truths and a lie, then having students guess, and then creating a separate forum where students can create their 2 truths and a lie activity about a historical figure from psychology. Students can return to the discussion board to reveal their answers.

Activity Three: Getting Personal with Psychologists—Toasting the Greats or Speed-Dating

Evidence-Based Teaching Practices:



Enjoyment

Educators engage students in enjoyable learning activities such as games, debates, virtual field trips, and other activities to create a fun environment that is conducive to learning. They do this by asking students to write toasts to explain the important contributions of historical psychologists.

Background

In this activity, students have the opportunity to conduct research about a famous psychologist and write a toast to share about their person. Students should already be familiar with the general timeline of events and know some of the major players in psychology before beginning.

Alternatively, students could conduct their research with the end goal of sharing about their person in a speed-dating format.

- **Topic Alignment:** History of Psychology

- **Learning Outcome:** Describe the contributions and limitations of key researchers to the development of psychology (including Wundt, James, Calkins, Hall, Sumner, and Cattell)
- **Source:** Noba Psychology Instructor Resources, CC-BY-NC-SA.
Toasting activity: From Wight, R. D. (1993). Expanding the coverage in the history course by toasting significant but often overlooked contributors. *Teaching of Psychology*, 20, 112. doi:10.1207/ s15328023top2002_12
Speed-dating: Zehr, D. (2004). Two active learning exercises for a history of psychology class. *Teaching of Psychology*, 31, 54-56. doi:10.1207/s15328023top3101_10

Time Estimate: 15-30 minutes

Instructions

1. Pick or assign a psychologist from history to research

For both the toasting activity or the speed-dating activity, either ask each student to pick one person from the module ideas they found interesting OR assign them someone to learn more about.

To assign names to the students, gather the names of each of the major historical figures discussed in the module and put one name on each notecard (or notecards if you have a large class and will be dividing the class into groups).

2. Conduct research

For the toasting activity, have students learn more about their given psychologist. Given what they know, they should write a short toast (less than 2 minutes) as if they were honoring the person they chose at a formal dinner or banquet. For example, "Here's to Pinel, who lost his head saving the minds of others" or "Here's to Koffka, who never lost sight of the big picture."

Remind students to be specific in their toasts such that there is a good understanding as to why they are honoring this person and their ideas. If there is time, students can actually write these in class. Students can also be assigned this in between classes and bring it with them to the next class meeting.

For the speed-dating activity, have students learn enough about their figure to write a short bio about their person.

3. Share out

For the toasting activity, the activity concludes by having students share their toasts. This can be done with the larger class (for willing students) or in small

groups.

For the speed-dating now, in a speed-dating format, students spend two minutes exchanging information with one another and then rotate. The end result is that every student eventually talks to every other student thereby exposing them to all of the major people covered in class.

4. Conclude

Both activities can conclude by having students write a brief write-up about who they think made the most important contribution to the history of psychology, excluding the character they were assigned.

Discussion (As needed)

- What was the most surprising or interesting fact you learned about your psychologist during your research?
- Based on your research, what limitations or criticisms have been directed towards your chosen psychologist's theories or methods?
- How does the work of your assigned psychologist tie into the current state of psychology? Are their theories or methods still relevant or applied today?
- What did you learn from your classmates' presentations that surprised you or changed your understanding of the history of psychology?

Online Variation

To do this activity asynchronously, you could have students complete the same activity, but assign it beforehand and have them share their toasts via a video recording and post those to a discussion board.

Additional Resources

- 1 As this module is traditionally taught first, it's a great idea to do some icebreaker activities to help students get acquainted with each other. Some we recommend are:

- a. Scavenger Hunt, Guess Who?, The Name Game, and 3 of a Kind:
<https://blog.campusgroups.com/campusgroups/2021/11/30/10-fun-icebreakers-for-college-students-to-better-connect>
- b. This or That, 3 Ps: <https://tophat.com/blog/classroom-icebreakers/>
- c. Chain link, Supermarket:
<https://www.letsroam.com/explorer/icebreaker-games-college-students/>
- 2 Assignment ideas related to the history of psychology:
https://historyofpsych.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Goodwin_Activities.pdf
- 3 Activity about women in psychology from Feminist Voices in Psychology:
<https://feministvoices.com/>. Students could complete this scavenger hunt activity, for example:
<https://feministvoices.com/files/teaching/PFVWomenPastScavengerHuntHandout.pdf>
- 4 Another idea is to have students investigate some of the early psychological research, some of which is explained here: MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL INSTRUMENTATION. It could be a good asynchronous discussion activity to go look one of these up and share about it.
- 5 Psychology from the margins:
<https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/psychologyfromthemargins/>

Anticipation Guide

Anticipation Guides can be used in a variety of ways—they may be assigned to students before reading the text outside of class, at the beginning of class to kick off the lecture, or as in-class discussion questions for reflection.

Instructions

1. Before diving into your learning session, determine if you agree or disagree with each statement. Place a Y (yes) or N (no) in the “Agree to Disagree” column.
2. After or during your learning session, decide whether your original agree/disagree decision for each statement was correct, based on information you’ve found in the text. Place a Y (yes) or N (no) in the “Were you right?” column.
3. In the “Why/why not” column, write a few sentences about why you were correct or incorrect with your initial guess. Try to think critically about how new information has supported or changed your original belief and display this in your answer.

Statements	Agree or Disagree?	Were you right?	Why/why not?
The earliest modern psychologists focused on studying mental			

illness.			
Psychology is one of the oldest sciences.			
We can understand human behavior by observing it carefully and systematically.			
The science of psychology has contributed to positive social change.			
The most dominant field within psychology is that of psychoanalysis, developed by Freud.			

Assignments and Discussions



[Module 1 Assignment](#): Topics in Psychology Ted Talks



[Module 1 Discussion](#): Psychological Perspectives. This includes a “Get to know you activity” plus an analysis of the perspectives.