

Group Assignment: Explaining Behavior with Psychological Perspectives

Scenario

A high school junior has started skipping classes, avoiding friends, and spending most of their time alone in their room. Their grades are dropping, and their parents are worried.

Task

Your group (3–4 students) will explain this scenario using **one of the seven major psychological perspectives**:

- Biological
- Cognitive
- Evolutionary
- Social-Cultural
- Behaviorism
- Humanism
- Psychoanalytic

Group Roles

Each student in the group will take one of these roles:

1. **Definer** — Clearly define the group's assigned perspective in your own words.
2. **Applier** — Explain how this perspective would interpret the teen's behavior.
3. **Supporter** — Provide examples, evidence, or possible real-world applications. (Encouraged to use **AI tools like ChatGPT** and reliable sources to find support.)
4. **Connector** (optional if 4 students) — Connect this perspective to another one (similarities/differences), OR suggest how treatment/intervention might look.

Guidelines

- Presentation should be **5 minutes max**.
- Be clear and creative — skits, visuals, or slides are encouraged.
- At least one part of your work should reflect information found with **AI** (students should note how AI was used and what prompts worked best).

Deliverable

Each group will present to the class. The rest of the class will use the **Note-Taking Worksheet** below to record key takeaways.

Note-Taking Worksheet

Directions

As you listen to each group, fill out the chart below. Be prepared to share one thing you learned from another group's perspective.

| Group Perspective | Definition (in your words) | How it explains the teen's behavior | Example/Evidence they gave | What stood out to you? |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Biological | | | | |
| Cognitive | | | | |
| Evolutionary | | | | |
| Social-Cultural | | | | |
| Behaviorism | | | | |
| Humanism | | | | |
| Psychoanalytic | | | | |

Sample Completed Worksheet Entry: Evolutionary Perspective

| Group Perspective | Definition (in your words) | How it explains the teen's behavior | Example/Evidence they gave | What stood out to you? |
|-------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Evolutionary | A perspective that explains human behavior and mental processes as adaptations shaped by natural selection to help survival and reproduction. | Skipping school and withdrawing from friends could be seen as a protective response — avoiding social rejection, conserving energy, or reducing exposure to stressors. Evolutionary psychologists might say the teen is showing an adaptive response to perceived threats in their environment. | For example, social withdrawal may have evolved as a way to minimize conflict within a group or to avoid situations that feel unsafe. Some studies suggest withdrawal in adolescence can be linked to stress regulation mechanisms that were adaptive in ancestral environments. | Interesting how behaviors that look negative today (like isolation) might once have been protective and “made sense” for survival. |

Group Presentations: Explaining Teen Behavior Through Psychology Perspectives

Scenario: A teenager has recently started skipping school and withdrawing from friends.

Your task: Each group will present how ONE psychological perspective explains the teen's behavior. As you listen to other groups, take notes below.

Definitions of Perspectives

Write down the definition of each perspective as presented by the group.

| Perspective | Definition (from group) | How it explains the behavior | Example/Evidence shared | What stood out? |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Biological | | | | |
| Cognitive | | | | |
| Evolutionary | | | | |
| Sociocultural | | | | |
| Behavioral | | | | |
| Humanistic | | | | |
| Psychoanalytic | | | | |

Reflection (complete after all groups present)

1. Which perspective did you find most convincing for this scenario? Why?

2. Which perspective do you think was the hardest to apply to the scenario? Why?

3. If you could combine two perspectives for the best explanation, which would they be?
