Social Psychology and Personality

AP Psychology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
Social psychology /ˈsəʊʃl saɪˈkɒlədʒi/	**Social psychology** studies how other people affect us.
attribution /ətrɪˈbjuːʃn/	An **attribution** is the reason a player gives for success or failure.
dispositional /ˌdɪspəˈzɪʃənl/	A **dispositional** explanation blames the person's character.
situational /ˌsɪtʃuːˈeɪʃənl/	A **situational** explanation blames the circumstances.
fundamental attribution error /ˌfʌndəˈmentl ətrɪˈbjuːʃn ˈerə/	The **fundamental attribution error** blames the person and ignores the situation.
actor-observer bias /ˈæktə əbˈzɜːvə ˈbaɪəs/	**Actor-observer bias**: "I was late because of traffic; she was late because she is lazy."
self-serving bias /self ˈsɜːvɪŋ ˈbaɪəs/	The **self-serving bias** means we take credit for wins and blame others for losses.
just-world phenomenon /dʒʌst wɜːld fɪˈnɒmɪnən/	The **just-world phenomenon** is believing people get what they deserve.
explanatory style /ekˈsplænətəri staɪl/	Your **explanatory style** is how you explain good and bad events.
optimistic /ˌɒptɪˈmɪstɪk/	An **optimistic** person expects things to go well.
pessimistic /ˌpesɪˈmɪstɪk/	A **pessimistic** person expects things to go badly.

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mere exposure effect /mɪə ekˈspəʊʒə ɪˈfekt/	The **mere exposure effect** makes us like songs we hear often.
self-fulfilling prophecy /self fʊlˈfɪlɪŋ ˈprɒfəsi/	A **self-fulfilling prophecy** happens when expecting failure leads to failure.
Social comparison /ˈsəʊʃl kəmˈpærɪsn/	**Social comparison** means judging yourself against others.
upward /ˈʌpwəd/	**Upward** comparison means comparing yourself with someone better.
downward /ˈdaʊnwəd/	**Downward** comparison means comparing yourself with someone worse off.
stereotype /ˈsterɪəʊtaɪp/	"All teenagers are lazy" is a **stereotype**.
Prejudice /ˈpredʒuːdɪs/	**Prejudice** is judging someone before knowing them.
discrimination /dɪˌskrɪmɪˈneɪʃn/	Paying women less for the same work is **discrimination**.
Implicit attitudes /ɪmˈplɪsɪt ˈætɪtjuːdz/	**Implicit attitudes** are feelings we may not know we have.
Belief perseverance /bɪˈliːf ˌpɜːsɪˈvɪərəns/	**Belief perseverance** means keeping a belief after it is proved wrong.
Confirmation bias /kɒnfəˈmeɪʃn ˈbaɪəs/	**Confirmation bias** means looking only for facts that agree with you.
Cognitive dissonance /ˈkɒgnɪtɪv ˈdɪsənəns/	**Cognitive dissonance** is the bad feeling when your actions and beliefs clash.
Social norms /ˈsəʊʃl nɔːmz/	**Social norms** are unwritten rules, like queuing.

Word	Example
Conformity /kənˈfɔːmɪti/	**Conformity** means doing what the group does.
Obedience /əʊˈbiːdiəns/	**Obedience** means following orders from someone in charge.
Normative social influence /ˈnɔːmətɪv ˈsəʊʃl ˈɪnfluːəns/	**Normative social influence** makes us go along to fit in.
informational social influence /ˌɪnfəˈmeɪʃənl ˈsəʊʃl ˈɪnfluːəns/	**Informational social influence** makes us follow others who seem to know.
Persuasion /pəˈsweɪʒn/	**Persuasion** tries to change what people think.
elaboration likelihood model /ɪˌlæbəˈreɪʃn ˈlaɪklihʊd ˈmɒdl/	The **elaboration likelihood model** describes two routes to persuasion.
central route /ˈsentrəl ruːt/	The **central route** persuades with strong facts.
peripheral route /pəˈrɪfərəl ruːt/	The **peripheral route** persuades with a famous face or nice music.
foot-in-the-door /fʊt ɪnðə dɔː/	The **foot-in-the-door** method starts with a small request.
door-in-the-face /dɔː ɪnðə feɪs/	The **door-in-the-face** method starts with a huge request that gets refused.
Social facilitation /ˈsəʊʃl fəˌsɪlɪˈteɪʃn/	**Social facilitation** helps you run faster when people watch.
Social loafing /ˈsəʊʃl ˈləʊfɪŋ/	**Social loafing** is when people work less in a group.
Deindividuation /ˌdeɪndɪˌvɪdjuːˈeɪʃn/	**Deindividuation** makes people in a crowd act in ways they would not alone.

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Group polarization /gruːp ˌpəʊlərəraɪˈzeɪʃn/	**Group polarization** makes a group's views more extreme after discussion.
groupthink /ˈgruːpθɪŋk/	**Groupthink** happens when no one wants to disagree.
Individualism /ˌɪndɪˈvɪdʒuːəlɪzəm/	**Individualism** puts personal goals first.
collectivism /kəˈlektɪvɪzəm/	**Collectivism** puts the group first.
multiculturalism /ˌmʌltɪˈkʌltʃərəlɪzəm/	**Multiculturalism** values many cultures in one society.
false consensus effect /fɒls kənˈsensəs ɪˈfekt/	The **false consensus effect** makes us think most people agree with us.
Superordinate goals /ˌsuːpəˈrɔːdɪnət gəʊlz/	**Superordinate goals** make rival groups work together.
Altruism /ˈɔːltruːɪzəm/	**Altruism** is helping others with no reward.
prosocial behavior /ˈprɒsəʊʃl bɪˈheɪvjə/	Sharing and helping are **prosocial behavior**.
bystander effect /ˈbaɪstændə ɪˈfekt/	The **bystander effect** means people are less likely to help in a crowd.
diffusion of responsibility /dɪˈfjuːʒn ɒv rɪˌspɒnsəˈbɪlɪti/	**Diffusion of responsibility** means each person feels less responsible in a group.
Personality /ˌpɜːsəˈnælɪti/	**Personality** is your usual way of thinking, feeling and acting.

Word	Example
psychodynamic /ˌsaɪkəʊdaɪˈnæmɪk/	The **psychodynamic** view says hidden feelings from childhood shape how we act.
unconscious /ʌnˈkɒnʃəs/	Freud said much of the mind is **unconscious**: we are not aware of it.
Ego defense mechanisms /ˈiːgəʊ dɪˈfens ˈmekənɪzəmz/	**Ego defense mechanisms** protect us from worrying thoughts.
denial /dɪˈnaɪəl/	A smoker in **denial** says, “Smoking won’t hurt me.”
displacement /dɪˈspleɪsmənt/	**Displacement** means taking anger out on someone safer, like a pet.
projection /prəˈdʒekʃn/	**Projection** means seeing your own bad feelings in someone else.
rationalization /ˌræʃənəlaɪˈzeɪʃn/	“I failed because the test was unfair” can be **rationalization**.
reaction formation /rɪˈækʃn fɔːˈmeɪʃn/	**Reaction formation**: being extra kind to someone you dislike.
regression /rɪˈgreʃn/	**Regression**: an older child starts sucking their thumb again under stress.
repression /rɪˈpreʃn/	**Repression** pushes painful memories out of awareness.
sublimation /ˌsʌblɪˈmeɪʃn/	**Sublimation** turns anger into something useful, like sport.
projective tests /prəˈdʒektɪv tests/	The inkblot test is one of the **projective tests**.

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Word	Example
humanistic /ˌhjuːməˈnɪstɪk/	The **humanistic** view focuses on growth and free choice.
unconditional positive regard /ʌŋkənˈdɪʃənl ˈpɒzɪtɪv rɪˈgɑːd/	**Unconditional positive regard** means accepting a person no matter what.
self-actualization /self ˌæktʃuːəlaɪˈzeɪʃn/	**Self-actualization** means becoming the best you can be.
social-cognitive /ˈsəʊʃl ˈkɒgnɪtɪv/	The **social-cognitive** view says personality comes from our thoughts and our situations.
reciprocal determinism /rɪˈsɪprəkl dɪˈtɜːmɪnɪzəm/	**Reciprocal determinism** says our traits, actions and surroundings all affect each other.
Self-efficacy /self ˈefɪkəsi/	**Self-efficacy** is believing you can do a task.
locus of control /ˈləʊkəs ɒv kənˈtrəʊl/	Your **locus of control** is where you think success comes from.
internal /ɪnˈtɜːnl/	People with an **internal** locus of control think their effort matters.
external /ekˈstɜːnl/	People with an **external** locus of control think luck decides.
Trait theories /treɪt ˈθɪəriz/	**Trait theories** describe personality with features like shy or outgoing.
Big Five /bɪg faɪv/	The **Big Five** traits are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.
openness to experience /ˈəʊpənnəs tʊ ekˈspɪərɪəns/	People high in **openness to experience** enjoy new ideas.

Word	Example
conscientiousness /ˌkɒnsɪˈenʃəsnəs/	A person high in **conscientiousness** is careful and well organised.
extraversion /ˌekstrəˈvɜːʃn/	People high in **extraversion** enjoy parties and talking.
agreeableness /əˈgriːəbəlnəs/	People high in **agreeableness** are kind and helpful.
neuroticism /njuːˈrɒtɪsɪzəm/	A person high in **neuroticism** often feels worried or upset.
Drive-reduction theory /draɪv rɪˈdʌkʃn ˈθɪəri/	**Drive-reduction theory** says hunger drives us to eat.
homeostasis /ˌhəʊmiːəˈstɑːsiz/	**Homeostasis** keeps body temperature steady.
Arousal theory /əˈraʊzl ˈθɪəri/	**Arousal theory** says we seek the right level of excitement.
Yerkes-Dodson law /jɜːks ˈdɒdsn lɔː/	The **Yerkes-Dodson law** says a little stress helps, but too much hurts.
Self-determination theory /self dɪˌtɜːmɪˈneɪʃn ˈθɪəri/	**Self-determination theory** says we need choice, skill and friends.
intrinsic motivation /ɪnˈtrɪnsɪk ˌməʊtɪˈveɪʃn/	Enjoying the game itself is **intrinsic motivation**.
extrinsic motivation /ekˈstrɪnsɪk ˌməʊtɪˈveɪʃn/	Playing to win a medal shows **extrinsic motivation**.
incentive theory /ɪnˈsentɪv ˈθɪəri/	**Incentive theory** says rewards pull us to act.
Instincts /ˈɪnstɪŋkts/	**Instincts** are behaviours we are born with.

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Lewin's motivational conflicts /ˈluːɪnz ˌməʊtɪˈveɪʃənl ˈkɒnflɪkts/	**Lewin's motivational conflicts** describe three kinds of hard choices.
approach-approach /əˈprəʊtʃ əˈprəʊtʃ/	An **approach-approach** conflict is choosing between two good films.
approach-avoidance /əˈprəʊtʃ əˈvɔɪdəns/	An **approach-avoidance** conflict: a cake tastes good but is unhealthy.
avoidance-avoidance /əˈvɔɪdəns əˈvɔɪdəns/	An **avoidance-avoidance** conflict: study or clean your room.
Sensation-seeking theory /senˈseɪʃn ˈsiːkɪŋ ˈθɪəri/	**Sensation-seeking theory** explains why some people love roller coasters.
Emotion /ɪˈməʊʃn/	Fear and joy are each an **emotion**.
affect /əˈfekt/	Her **affect** was cheerful.
James-Lange theory /dʒeɪmz lændʒ ˈθɪəri/	The **James-Lange theory** says we feel afraid because our heart races.
Cannon-Bard theory /ˈkænən bɑːd ˈθɪəri/	The **Cannon-Bard theory** says the racing heart and the fear happen together.
Schachter-Singer two-factor theory /ˈʃætʃtə ˈsɪŋə tuː ˈfæktə ˈθɪəri/	The **Schachter-Singer two-factor theory** says we feel arousal and then name it.
cognitive label /ˈkɒgnɪtɪv ˈleɪbl/	A **cognitive label** turns a racing heart into "I am excited".
Broaden-and-build theory /ˈbrɔːdn ænd bɪld ˈθɪəri/	The **broaden-and-build theory** says happy feelings help us learn and grow.

Word	Example
display rules /dɪ'spleɪ ruːlz/	**Display rules** tell us when it is OK to show feelings.

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