Theorists, schools and their claims

Supported GRE teaching and original transfer practice

Theorists, schools and their claims

- Match each school to its main claim and method.
- Explain what each school reacted against.
- Link major theorists to their ideas.
- Tell the kinds of evidence apart: introspection, clinical case, experiment.

The first schools

- **Structuralism** (Titchener, Wundt's student): break conscious experience into basic elements by trained introspection.
- **Functionalism** (William James, *Principles of Psychology*, 1890): ask what mental processes are for, how they help us adapt. Influenced by Darwin.
- **Gestalt psychology** (Wertheimer, Köhler, Koffka): the whole is seen before its parts, so experience cannot be built from elements. Wertheimer's 1912 study of apparent motion is the starting point.

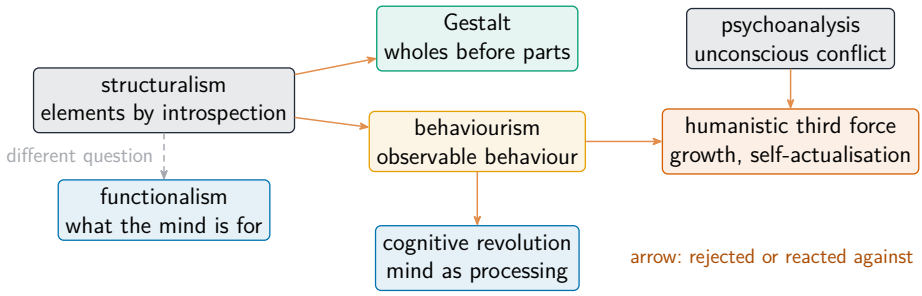
Psychoanalysis and behaviourism

- Freud's psychoanalysis: unconscious conflict, early experience, defence mechanisms and psychosexual stages. Its evidence was clinical cases, and many of its claims are hard to test.
- Later analysts changed the emphasis: Horney stressed social relationships and coping by moving toward, against or away from people; Adler stressed striving to overcome inferiority.
- **Behaviourism** (Watson, 1913): psychology should study only observable behaviour, not consciousness. Skinner's radical behaviourism explained behaviour by its consequences.

The third force and the cognitive revolution

- Humanistic psychology (Maslow, Rogers): growth, free will and self-actualisation, against both psychoanalysis and behaviourism. Maslow's hierarchy of needs; Rogers's unconditional positive regard.
- The **cognitive revolution** of the 1950s brought mental processes back as objects of science: Miller's 1956 limits of short-term memory, Chomsky's 1959 review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*, and Neisser's 1967 *Cognitive Psychology*.
- Later traditions combined approaches: Bandura's social learning, Beck's cognitive therapy for depression, Eysenck's personality dimensions.

Figure: The third force and the cognitive revolution



- Each school defined itself against an earlier one.
- Read the axes and units first.

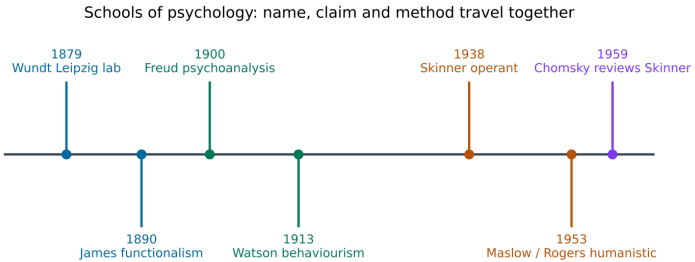
Kinds of evidence

- Introspection: trained self-report. Observers often disagreed, and there was no way to settle disputes.
- Clinical case: rich detail about individuals, but no control group.
- Experiment: manipulates a variable and controls others, which allows causal claims.
- When classifying a theory, ask what mechanism it proposes and what evidence could test it.

Worked example: matching emphases

- A researcher maps how reinforcement schedules shape lever pressing: behaviourism.
- A researcher models a temporary store that holds about four chunks: the cognitive approach.
- A researcher asks how a habit helps an animal survive in its environment: **functionalism**.

Figure: Worked example: matching emphases



- Link each school's name to its claim, its method and its date
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Worked example: naming the theorist

- "The perception of a melody does not depend on its individual notes; transpose it and it stays the same": Gestalt.
- "Give me a dozen healthy infants, and I'll guarantee to train any one of them to become any type of specialist": Watson.
- A therapist challenges a client's automatic thought "I always fail": Beck's cognitive therapy.

Common errors

- Mixing up **structuralism** (elements of experience) and **functionalism** (purposes of the mind).
- Crediting Wundt's student Titchener's structuralism to James.
- Placing the **cognitive revolution** before behaviourism.

Common errors (2)

- Treating psychoanalytic claims and controlled experiments as the same kind of evidence.
- Matching a name to a slogan without knowing the claim.

Key terms

- **structuralism**: Titchener's school, which analysed conscious experience into basic elements by introspection.
- **functionalism**: James's school, which asked what mental processes are for.
- **Gestalt psychology**: The school holding that organised wholes are perceived before their parts.
- **behaviourism**: The school that studies only observable behaviour and its relation to the environment.

Check yourself

- Which school would study how attention helps an animal survive?
- What did Chomsky argue in his 1959 review?
- Name the two schools humanistic psychology reacted against.