

## What Is An Approach or Perspective in Psychology?

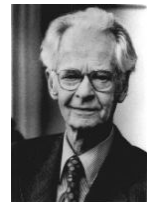
Psychology is the scientific study of our thoughts, feelings and behaviors. An approach or perspective in psychology is a particular view as to why, and how, it is we think, feel, and behave as we do.

**The science of mind and behavior has six approaches that help explain why we are as we are.**



**The psychoanalytic approach**: which analyzes us from the point of view of our unconscious, and early childhood experiences. Sigmund Freud is associated with this approach.

**The behaviorist approach**: which analyzes us from the point of view of learning in response to our environment, either by stimulus-response association, or as a result of reinforcement (rewards or punishments). People such as B.F. Skinner and J.B. Watson were behaviorists.



**The cognitive approach**: which analyzes us from the point of view of our mind and its information processes of perception, attention, language, memory, and thinking. Another word for cognitive is 'thinking'. Rational thought can influence behavior. If thoughts change, behaviors will also change.

**The biological approach (biopsychological)**: which analyzes us from the point of view of our genetics and physiology. Our genetics are those individual biological characteristics that we inherit from our natural parents, and also those evolved biological characteristics that we commonly share. Our physiology refers to our physical being, or bodily processes and functions.



**The humanistic approach**: which analyses us from the point of view of our self-image. Emphasis is that people have free-will and that people are basically good. Humanists, such as Carl Rogers & Abraham Maslow, believe that every person can fulfill his or her potential.

**The Sociocultural approach (cross-cultural)**: which analyses us from the point of view of our culture. How the impact of society, culture, ethnicity, race, and religion have on our behaviors.

*Each approach has much to offer, and together they help us understand why we think, feel, and behave the way we do.*