

Psychology 105
Introduction to Psychology
Psychology or Psychobabble

Psychology or Psychobabble?

T/F: People use only about 10% of their brains.

False: People use most of their brains - just not all at the same time. Different parts are active for different tasks. (This is one of the most persistent myths of psychology.)

Psychology 105 - Prologue 2

Psychology or Psychobabble?

1. **T/F:** Your brain produces a painkiller that is chemically similar to heroin.

True: Your brain produces chemicals known as endorphins, which have pain-killing properties and are responsible for things like the "runner's high."

Psychology 105 - Prologue 3

Psychology or Psychobabble?

2. **T/F:** Newborn human babies can see only shades of light and dark - not color, not shapes.

False. Newborns can see patterns and even prefer to gaze at face-like patterns rather than solid disks. Babies tend to be nearsighted until they are about 6 months old.

Psychology 105 - Prologue 4

Psychology or Psychobabble?

3. **T/F:** Your memory is what it is, and there is not much that you can do to improve it.

False: Research shows that there are several strategies, such as using mnemonics and associating new information with your experiences, can improve your ability to remember. And many mental and cognitive tasks such as puzzles involving logic, pictures and words not only help improve memory but also keep it from degrading or getting worse.

Psychology 105 - Prologue 5

Psychology or Psychobabble?

4. **T/F:** You were born with all the brain cells that you will ever have, and if some are injured, they are not replaced.

False: Once thought true, but recent research indicates that new brain cells can grow in adults. And we also continue to develop huge numbers of new connections between brain cells throughout life.

Psychology 105 - Prologue 6

Psychology or Psychobabble?

5. T/F: Children who grow up in families with two homosexual parents (two men or two women) are more likely to grow up heterosexual than homosexual.

True. Research has found that the incidence of homosexuality in children with two homosexual parents is no greater than in families with two heterosexual parents.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

6. T/F: Almost everyone has several dreams every night.

True: Most people dream, even though they may not remember their dreams. Research in sleep laboratories has found that if people are awakened during a phase of sleep called REM sleep, almost everyone will report that they were dreaming.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

7. T/F: "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" - the brains of men and women are very different.

There are a lot of commonalities in the behavior, physiology and psychology between men and women. And there are a lot of differences. The study of gender similarities and differences crosses many areas of psychology.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

8. T/F: Intelligence is a purely genetic trait that is fixed at the same level throughout a person's life.

False: Intelligence is neither purely genetic, nor purely environmentally determined. It, like many of our behaviors and personality characteristics, is influenced by genes, by environment and by experience.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

9. T/F: Damage to certain parts of your brain could prevent you from remembering very recent events, even though you could still recall old memories.

True: This is a rare form of memory loss in younger people, and it is one characteristic of Alzheimer's disease.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

10. T/F: Most people would refuse to obey an authority who told them to hurt an innocent person.

False: A substantial amount of research beginning with the pioneering studies of Stanley Milgram during the 1960's, shows that the majority of normal people would carry out orders to do harm to others when explicitly ordered or instructed to do so by an authority figure (e.g., scientist, doctor, police, etc.).

Psychology or Psychobabble?

11. T/F: Mental illness is quite rare.

False. Mental illness is surprisingly common. For example, about 30% of the population will experience at least one episode of depression at some period during their lives. An even greater percentage will experience an anxiety disorder such as a phobia or obsessive-compulsive disorder. One of the most severe forms of mental illness, schizophrenia, affects about 1% of the population.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

12. T/F: "Lie Detector" tests, or polygraphs, are accurate at determining whether or not people are lying.

False: Polygraphs work best on people who believe that polygraphs can detect lying. Innocent people are sometimes judged to be lying on the basis of a polygraph test. Other people have trained themselves to fool the polygraph.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

13. T/F: Eyewitness accounts of crimes and identifications of criminals are accurate at least 95% of the time.

False: Research shows that many eyewitness memories can be false, implanted, distorted or made-up. Later experiences can lead individuals to form new memories inconsistent with the real events or distorted ones that are not truly representative of the actual events that occurred. Innocent people are often falsely identified.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

14. T/F: Most mentally ill people are dangerous.

False: Mental illness is not marked by dangerous or violent behavior. Indeed, many psychiatric patients live and work in society; others withdraw in fear, secluding themselves from the world; and only a tiny minority exhibit violent behavior.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

15. T/F: If someone tried to kill themselves once, the chance that they will try again is very small.

False: As many as 80% of all completed suicides occurred after previous attempts.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

16. T/F: Some people are "right-brained" and some people are "left-brained".

False: Although there are specialized areas on each side of the brain, both sides of the brain contribute to most forms of mental function.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

17. T/F: If a pregnant woman drinks heavily during pregnancy, her baby may be born mentally retarded.

True. Consuming alcohol during pregnancy can lead to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, in which the child has abnormal brain development, mental retardation, and often is hyperactive and has poor impulse control.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

18. T/F: Psychological research has demonstrated that some people have ESP (extra-sensory perception).

False: Despite thousands of studies, researchers have not been able to find reliable, reproducible evidence for ESP, and no individual has been able to convincingly demonstrate psychic ability under controlled conditions.

This failure to find evidence does not PROVE that ESP does not exist; it means that we don't have any evidence for its existence. Note the subtle difference.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

19. T/F: Picking up crying babies only makes them cry more.

FALSE: Researcher Mary Ainsworth found just the opposite - babies who are picked up when they cry end up crying less often. Picking up crying babies and feeding them on demand, rather than on a schedule, result in a stronger bond of attachment to the mother.

Psychology or Psychobabble?

20. T/F: Boys develop sexual desires for their mothers when they are between three and six years old.

False. Freud theorized that this happened, and he called this the Oedipus complex. But later researchers have found no evidence that little boys develop sexual desire for their mothers.

Common Sense?

➤ Which do you think is more correct? Why?

- Out of sight, out of mind.
- Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

➤ Which do you think is more correct? Why?

- Birds of a feather flock together.
- Opposites attract.