What Moves Us

Three theories of motivation in everyday choices

SS24.P.15a "Describe theories that explain how biological, cognitive, and social factors influence motivation, including Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, arousal theory, and the theory drive for hunger (homeostasis)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two body signals or conditions, circle two thoughts or interpretations, and write 1 beside two social influences in the passage. Use your marks to track different factors that can shape motivation.

Why Do We Choose?

1 At a crowded music festival, a volunteer hands out water, checks exits, and helps friends find one another. Why might these actions matter differently to different people? Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs: physiological needs such as water and food, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, or developing one's potential. Needs lower in the hierarchy often demand attention first, but the order is not a strict rule. A person who feels unsafe may focus on finding an exit, while someone else seeks friendship or a chance to perform. The situation and a person's interpretation of it can shift which need feels urgent.

2 Hunger highlights a biological explanation called drive reduction. When the body's energy supply drops, internal signals can create an uncomfortable hunger drive. Eating can reduce that drive and help restore homeostasis, the body's tendency to keep internal conditions within a workable range. Yet a person who has just eaten enough to feel full might still want popcorn after smelling it at the festival. The smell is an external cue, not evidence that the body needs energy. Memories of the taste and the social pull of sharing a snack can also influence the decision to eat.

3 Arousal theory focuses on how much activation a person seeks. Too little stimulation may feel boring, while too much may make concentration difficult. At the festival, a drummer might play best with an excited crowd, but a new volunteer might need a quieter space to learn a complicated task. The best level of arousal can vary with the person and the task. This theory can explain choosing activity even when no shortage in the body needs fixing. Together, these theories show that body signals, thoughts about a situation, and other people can all shape motivation, sometimes at the same time.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. After a filling dinner, Amir says he feels full. He smells fresh bread outside a bakery and buys a roll. Why does hunger drive reduction alone not explain his choice?

2. During a storm, Nia leaves a study group to find a safer room. Which level of Maslow's hierarchy best explains her choice, and why might it take priority over staying with friends?

3. Luis feels bored in a silent study hall and chooses to work in a café. Priya finds the same café too noisy for a difficult math problem. How does arousal theory explain their different choices?

4. Jo feels hungry before lunch but waits for friends so they can eat together. Which two theories explain these different motives, and what does each explain?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a realistic choice a student makes in a setting different from those above. In four or five sentences, explain how two theories from the passage could each account for a motive behind that choice, and identify a biological, cognitive, or social factor for each.

What Moves Us

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two body signals or conditions, circle two thoughts or interpretations, and write 1 beside two social influences in the passage. Use your marks to track different factors that can shape motivation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	After a filling dinner, Amir says he feels full. He smells fresh bread outside a bakery and buys a roll. Why does hunger drive reduction alone not explain his choice?	**Amir says he feels full, so his choice is not explained by an uncomfortable hunger drive. The smell of bread is an external cue that may influence him.**
2	During a storm, Nia leaves a study group to find a safer room. Which level of Maslow's hierarchy best explains her choice, and why might it take priority over staying with friends?	**Safety best explains her choice. Feeling unsafe may make finding protection more urgent than the need for belonging.**
3	Luis feels bored in a silent study hall and chooses to work in a café. Priya finds the same café too noisy for a difficult math problem. How does arousal theory explain their different choices?	**Luis seeks more stimulation because he feels bored. Priya needs less stimulation to concentrate on a difficult task, showing that a useful arousal level can vary by person and task.**
4	Jo feels hungry before lunch but waits for friends so they can eat together. Which two theories explain these different motives, and what does each explain?	**Hunger drive reduction explains Jo's motivation to eat. Maslow's hierarchy explains the pull of belonging that leads Jo to wait for friends.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before a class presentation, Elena chooses to practice with two classmates rather than alone. Maslow's hierarchy helps explain her wish to feel included by the group, which is a social factor. Arousal theory also helps explain her choice because she thinks practicing will calm her enough to focus. Her expectation about practice is a cognitive factor, and both motives may shape her choice.

Accept explanations that connect each named theory to a specific motive supported by the passage. For the open task, the two theories should explain distinguishable motives behind the same choice.