Changing Minds

Trace how questions and methods shaped psychology.

SS24.P.1a "Investigate and describe the history of psychology from its beginning to the modern era, including key contributors to the field.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three changes in what psychologists studied or how they studied it, circle a contributor linked to each change, and number the changes in time order.

How Psychology Changed

1. Long before psychology became a science, thinkers asked how people learn, remember, and feel. In ancient Greece, Aristotle wrote about memory and the senses, but he did not run modern experiments. In 1879, Wilhelm Wundt opened a laboratory in Leipzig, Germany, devoted to studying the mind with controlled observation. Researchers there measured responses to sights and sounds. This shift from philosophical questions to systematic tests helped establish psychology as a field of scientific study.

2. Psychologists soon disagreed about what to study. William James explored how mental processes help people adapt to everyday life. Sigmund Freud argued that unconscious conflicts shape behavior, although many of his claims are difficult to test. John B. Watson instead insisted that psychologists focus on observable behavior. Later, B. F. Skinner studied how consequences change behavior. Their competing approaches pushed the field to debate what counts as evidence about the mind.

3. By the mid-twentieth century, researchers again studied mental processes, now using experiments on attention and memory. Ulric Neisser helped establish cognitive psychology through his 1967 book *Cognitive Psychology*. Today, psychologists combine approaches: brain imaging can examine activity during memory tasks, while behavior studies track what people do. Researchers also test whether findings apply across different cultures and communities. Psychology's history is not a straight march toward one answer; its methods and questions have changed together.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Wundt's approach differ from Aristotle's?

2. How did Watson and Skinner shift attention away from Freud's approach?

3. How did Neisser's work differ from Watson's focus?

4. How does present-day research bring together different approaches described in the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose a new question about daily behavior or memory. In 3 to 4 sentences, explain how you would study it using two methods from different periods in the passage and what their combination shows about psychology's history.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three changes in what psychologists studied or how they studied it, circle a contributor linked to each change, and number the changes in time order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Wundt's approach differ from Aristotle's?	**Aristotle wrote about memory and the senses; Wundt used controlled observation and measured responses in a laboratory.**
2	How did Watson and Skinner shift attention away from Freud's approach?	**Freud emphasized unconscious conflicts. Watson focused on observable behavior, and Skinner studied how consequences change behavior.**
3	How did Neisser's work differ from Watson's focus?	**Watson focused on observable behavior; Neisser helped establish an approach that studied mental processes such as attention and memory.**
4	How does present-day research bring together different approaches described in the passage?	**Researchers can examine brain activity during memory tasks while also tracking observable behavior.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would ask whether a sudden sound interrupts memory for a short list of words. Following Wundt's laboratory approach, I would measure how many words people recall after a quiet trial and a trial with a sound. Using a modern approach, I would examine brain activity during both trials with brain imaging. Together, these methods connect controlled response measures with modern study of the brain.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For Part 3, look for an original question, two methods tied to different periods, and an explanation of how the methods reflect change in the field.