One Performance, Many Lenses

Compare how psychologists explain the same behavior.

SS24.P.1b "Differentiate among various schools of thought and perspectives that have developed in psychology since 1879.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what each perspective focuses on. Circle words that show how its explanation differs from another perspective's explanation.

Why Did the Pianist Freeze?

1. In 1879, Wilhelm Wundt opened a psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany. Soon, psychologists began debating what a scientific study of the mind should explain. Imagine a student freezing before a piano performance. Structuralism, developed by Edward Titchener, would ask the student to report the basic elements of that experience, such as sensations and feelings. Functionalism, associated with William James, would instead ask what purpose the fear serves, perhaps preparing the student to respond to a demanding situation.

2. Other schools looked beyond reports of conscious experience. Behaviorism focused on observable actions and learning from the environment. A behaviorist might examine whether applause after practice increases the student's time at the piano. Psychodynamic theory, rooted in Sigmund Freud's work, emphasized unconscious conflicts and past experiences. A psychodynamic psychologist might explore whether the student's fear reflects earlier experiences of harsh criticism. Both perspectives examine the same performance, but one tracks learned actions while the other looks for hidden motives.

3. Later perspectives added different questions. Cognitive psychology investigates mental processes, such as memory, attention, and thinking. A cognitive psychologist might ask whether the student is remembering past mistakes instead of reading the music. Humanistic psychology stresses personal choice, growth, and the search for meaning; it might ask what playing the piano means to the student. A biological perspective looks at the brain and body, perhaps measuring changes in heart rate. None of these perspectives alone gives a complete account of the student's fear.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How would a structuralist's question about the student's fear differ from a functionalist's?

2. How do behaviorism and psychodynamic theory differ in what they would investigate about the student?

3. The student's heart rate rises while they remember a mistake. Which part would interest a biological psychologist, and which would interest a cognitive psychologist?

4. How would a humanistic psychologist's question about playing piano differ from a structuralist's question?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A student stops attending basketball tryouts after one difficult practice. Choose two perspectives from the passage and write a different question each would ask about the student's choice. Then explain how the questions show different focuses.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what each perspective focuses on. Circle words that show how its explanation differs from another perspective's explanation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How would a structuralist's question about the student's fear differ from a functionalist's?	**A structuralist would ask about the fear's sensations and feelings. A functionalist would ask what purpose the fear serves.**
2	How do behaviorism and psychodynamic theory differ in what they would investigate about the student?	**Behaviorism would investigate learned actions and their consequences. Psychodynamic theory would investigate unconscious conflicts and past experiences.**
3	The student's heart rate rises while they remember a mistake. Which part would interest a biological psychologist, and which would interest a cognitive psychologist?	**A biological psychologist would focus on the change in heart rate. A cognitive psychologist would focus on the memory of the mistake.**
4	How would a humanistic psychologist's question about playing piano differ from a structuralist's question?	**A humanistic psychologist would ask what playing means to the student. A structuralist would ask about the sensations and feelings in the experience.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A behaviorist might ask whether teammates' teasing after practice made the student less likely to return. A psychodynamic psychologist might ask whether the tryout stirred an unconscious fear linked to earlier criticism. The first question examines how consequences shape behavior, while the second examines hidden conflicts rooted in past experience.

Accept any two perspectives if each question fits its focus and the explanation accurately distinguishes them. Students may propose possible experiences, but they should frame them as questions rather than known facts.