What Moves Us

Compare four explanations for human behavior

P.5.5 "Describe and differentiate motivational theories as an explanation of what drives human behavior."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one action in the passage that each theory could explain, then number your underlines: 1 for drive reduction, 2 for incentive, 3 for arousal, and 4 for Maslow's hierarchy.

Choices at the Robotics Showcase

1. At a school robotics showcase, Lena skips lunch to repair a loose wheel. By late afternoon, hunger makes it hard to focus, so she buys a sandwich. Drive-reduction theory explains that choice: a biological need creates an uncomfortable drive, and behavior reduces it. Eating eases her hunger. Yet Lena also keeps polishing the robot after she is full because the winning team will receive a summer workshop invitation. Incentive theory focuses on that external reward, which pulls behavior toward a goal. One theory explains relief from an internal shortage; the other explains attraction to a possible payoff.

2. After the repair, Lena tests the robot on a difficult course even though an easy course would count for practice. Arousal theory suggests that people seek a level of alertness that feels right for the task. The harder route may give Lena the challenge she wants, while an extremely risky route might feel overwhelming. Unlike drive reduction, arousal theory does not assume people always act to lower tension. Unlike incentive theory, it does not require a prize. The same action can still have several motives: Lena might enjoy the challenge and hope judges notice her skill.

3. Near closing time, Lena sees a new student standing alone. She invites him to join her team, even though the judges have already finished scoring. Maslow's hierarchy of needs places basic physical needs and safety before needs such as belonging, esteem, and personal growth. It proposes that unmet basic needs often demand attention, but it is not a strict rule that people always follow in order. Inviting the student may express a wish for connection, while teaching him to code could support growth. These explanations are lenses, not mind readers: observing one choice cannot prove exactly what Lena felt.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do drive-reduction theory and incentive theory explain two different choices Lena makes in the first paragraph?

2. Why does Lena's choice of the difficult course fit arousal theory better than drive-reduction theory?

3. Why might Maslow's hierarchy explain Lena's invitation to the new student better than incentive theory?

4. How can drive-reduction theory and Maslow's hierarchy both help explain Lena's hunger, and what does the hierarchy add?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a situation outside the robotics showcase in which someone makes two choices. In three or four sentences, explain the choices using two different theories from the passage and give one detail that helps distinguish the explanations.

What Moves Us

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one action in the passage that each theory could explain, then number your underlines: 1 for drive reduction, 2 for incentive, 3 for arousal, and 4 for Maslow's hierarchy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do drive-reduction theory and incentive theory explain two different choices Lena makes in the first paragraph?	**Drive reduction explains buying a sandwich to ease hunger. Incentive theory explains polishing the robot to pursue the workshop invitation.**
2	Why does Lena's choice of the difficult course fit arousal theory better than drive-reduction theory?	**She may want the challenge and alertness of the difficult course, rather than trying to reduce discomfort from a biological need.**
3	Why might Maslow's hierarchy explain Lena's invitation to the new student better than incentive theory?	**The invitation may meet a need for belonging. Since judging is over, the passage gives no external prize for inviting him.**
4	How can drive-reduction theory and Maslow's hierarchy both help explain Lena's hunger, and what does the hierarchy add?	**Both recognize that a physical need can demand attention. Maslow's hierarchy also relates physical needs to needs such as belonging and growth, without requiring people to meet them in a strict order.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before a neighborhood concert, Ari drinks water because they are thirsty. Drive-reduction theory explains drinking as a way to ease a physical need. Ari then volunteers for a difficult solo because the challenge feels exciting, which fits arousal theory. Ari says they felt comfortable before volunteering, so the solo seems less like an attempt to reduce discomfort.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons that distinguish the theories' explanations. For the open task, look for two distinct choices, two accurately applied theories, and a detail that helps separate the explanations.