How Learning Happens

Four theories in one school event

PS.4.5 "Identify and explain the major theories of learning including classical conditioning, operant conditioning, social learning theory, and insight learning."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the passage. Underline the clue that identifies each type of learning, then number the four clues in the order they appear.

A Film Festival Takes Shape

1. At a school film festival, a student hears a short chime just before each screening. The lights dim, and the student repeatedly feels nervous about showing a film to classmates. After several screenings, the chime alone brings on that nervous feeling, even when no film follows. This is classical conditioning: a previously neutral sound becomes linked with an emotional response through repeated pairing with a situation that already causes it. The student does not need to choose the feeling or receive a prize. The change is in what the chime predicts, not in a new filmmaking skill.

2. Elsewhere, the festival crew learns in different ways. When Maya labels equipment shelves, the supervisor thanks her, so she labels shelves more often. Operant conditioning links a chosen action to its consequence; here, praise increases the action's frequency. Nearby, Leo watches a skilled editor trim a scene at a precise moment. Later, Leo copies the editor's timing, although nobody has rewarded him for doing it. Social learning theory emphasizes learning by observing other people and modeling their actions. Both students change what they do, but one responds to a consequence of her own action, while the other learns from an example.

3. An unexpected problem appears before the show: the projector cable will not reach the outlet without crossing a doorway. Noor studies the room, then suddenly realizes the projector can face a blank side wall near another outlet. This is insight learning, a sudden understanding of how parts of a problem fit together. Noor did not practice many cable routes or copy a solution from someone else. These theories offer different explanations rather than four names for the same event. To identify the best fit, look for a paired cue, a consequence of an action, a model to imitate, or a new way to understand a problem.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why is the student's reaction to the chime an example of classical conditioning?

2. How does Maya's change in behavior show operant conditioning?

3. Why does social learning theory fit Leo's change in editing better than operant conditioning?

4. What makes Noor's solution an example of insight learning rather than social learning?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a setting other than the film festival and write four brief examples, one for each learning theory. Name each theory and explain the clue that makes each example fit.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Read the passage. Underline the clue that identifies each type of learning, then number the four clues in the order they appear. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why is the student's reaction to the chime an example of classical conditioning?	**The chime was repeatedly paired with screenings that made the student nervous. Eventually, the chime alone brought on that feeling.**
2	How does Maya's change in behavior show operant conditioning?	**The supervisor's praise followed Maya's labeling, and she labeled shelves more often afterward.**
3	Why does social learning theory fit Leo's change in editing better than operant conditioning?	**Leo copied an editor he watched. The passage says nobody rewarded him for doing so.**
4	What makes Noor's solution an example of insight learning rather than social learning?	**Noor suddenly saw a new way to arrange the projector and outlet; Noor did not copy anyone else's solution.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In a cooking class, a timer rings just before a loud blender starts each day; later, the timer alone makes Imani tense, showing classical conditioning because the sound has become linked to the startling noise. Jae cleans the counters more often after the instructor praises the work, showing operant conditioning because praise follows Jae's action. Sal copies a classmate's dough-folding method after watching it, showing social learning because Sal learns from a model. When a tray will not fit on a shelf, Ren suddenly sees that turning it sideways will work, showing insight learning because a new way of viewing the problem reveals the solution.

Accept accurate explanations that identify repeated pairing, a consequence that changes behavior, learning from a model, and a sudden new understanding. Part 3 examples may use one setting or several, but each must include a clue that distinguishes its theory.