Why We Choose

Compare five explanations of motivation

PS.6.2 "Compare the predominant theories of motivation including drive-reduction, self-determination, instinct, conflicts, and sensation-seeking."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail in the passage that supports each of the five theories, and label it with the theory's name. Use your marks to compare what each theory emphasizes.

What Moves Movie Night?

1. Before a student-run outdoor movie night, Maya spends hours carrying chairs and skips dinner. Her stomach growls, and she buys a sandwich. Drive-reduction theory explains this choice as an attempt to ease a physical need: hunger creates discomfort, and eating restores balance. An instinct account looks instead for inherited patterns that guide behavior without being taught. A newborn's rooting response, turning toward a touch on the cheek to find food, is one example. That response differs from Maya's decision to buy a sandwich, which depends on experience and available options. Both accounts emphasize biology, but they point to different causes.

2. Maya's friend Luis stays after school to edit the movie night's trailers. He enjoys choosing the music, improving his editing, and working with his friends. Self-determination theory highlights these needs for autonomy, competence, and connection to others. It explains effort that continues even when no physical shortage needs fixing. Later, Luis must choose between helping with the sound system and watching his sister's soccer game. Both options appeal to him, so this is an approach-approach conflict. Conflict theory focuses on the pull of competing goals, not on one steady source of energy. A decision can involve several motives at once.

3. At a nearby fair after the movie, Priya chooses a fast, unfamiliar ride despite the chance of feeling dizzy. Sensation-seeking theory emphasizes her desire for novelty and strong stimulation, rather than relief from hunger or thirst. Luis might also choose the ride because his friends are going; self-determination theory would highlight connection, while sensation seeking would highlight the thrill. Priya then hesitates because she wants the ride but fears getting sick. This is an approach-avoidance conflict, since one choice has both an attractive and an unpleasant side. The same action can fit several accounts, depending on which motive the evidence supports.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do drive-reduction and instinct accounts differ in their explanations of the food-related behaviors in the first paragraph?

2. Why does self-determination theory explain Luis's editing better than drive-reduction theory does?

3. How does Luis's choice between sound and soccer differ from Priya's hesitation about the ride as a conflict?

4. If Luis joins his friends on the ride, how would sensation-seeking and self-determination theory offer different explanations?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent an everyday decision not described in the passage. In three sentences, describe the decision, explain how two theories from the passage could each explain it, and compare what evidence each theory would emphasize.

Why We Choose

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail in the passage that supports each of the five theories, and label it with the theory's name. Use your marks to compare what each theory emphasizes. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do drive-reduction and instinct accounts differ in their explanations of the food-related behaviors in the first paragraph?	**Drive-reduction explains Maya's eating as relief from hunger. Instinct explains the newborn's rooting as an inherited response that does not need to be taught.**
2	Why does self-determination theory explain Luis's editing better than drive-reduction theory does?	**Luis enjoys making choices, improving a skill, and working with friends. The passage gives no physical need that editing would relieve.**
3	How does Luis's choice between sound and soccer differ from Priya's hesitation about the ride as a conflict?	**Luis faces two appealing options, an approach-approach conflict. Priya sees both an appeal and a drawback in one option, an approach-avoidance conflict.**
4	If Luis joins his friends on the ride, how would sensation-seeking and self-determination theory offer different explanations?	**Sensation seeking would emphasize the ride's novelty and thrill. Self-determination theory would emphasize Luis's connection with his friends.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nina signs up for a beginner dance class after seeing a lively performance. Sensation-seeking theory points to her wish for a new, exciting experience, while self-determination theory points to her wish to develop a skill. The first explanation emphasizes novelty and stimulation; the second emphasizes growing competence.

Accept other supported comparisons that distinguish the motives each theory emphasizes. For Part 3, look for a new decision, two plausible explanations, and a clear comparison in three sentences.