

# Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes This means that psychologists are interested in?

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

Psychology is commonly defined as the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. It has existed since the late 19th century, with 1879 often being given as a starting date because that was when the first psychological research lab was founded. Many schools of thought within the field have come and gone since then; some, like behaviorism, have persisted and evolved if they stood up to scientific study; others, like phrenology, have faded as they have lost credibility.

One approach has only begun to gain ground over the 20th and 21st centuries as scientific research and technology have improved: the study of the brain. Neuroscience is a relatively new field, but the more research that is done, the more it appears that much of human behavior and mental processes—the key interests for psychological study—are intimately intertwined with activity in the brain. Understanding the brain is important no matter what type of psychology you will be involved with, because its effects permeate all human behavior.

Studying damaged brains is one of the most useful ways to increase our understanding of the links between the brain and behavior. A lesion is a general term for any abnormality in tissue, usually caused by disease or trauma. Lesions are important to the study of brain and behavior because if a psychologist sees a person with a partially damaged brain and then sees changes in that person's behavior, those behavioral changes can often be attributed to the brain damage. For example, damage to a part of the brain called Broca's area causes patients to lose the ability to speak; knowing this, we can infer that that part of the brain is in some way related to language production. This gives us more information about neuroanatomy and also about the influence the brain has on behavior. Dualism is the idea that the mind and

the body are two separate entities. Since the body is a physical entity and the mind is not, for many centuries philosophers (and later, psychologists) usually operated under the assumption that the body and the mind were of different kinds of substance. Rene Descartes famously theorized that the mind and body were separate, since he could doubt that he had a body because he might be dreaming, but he could not doubt that he had a mind since something was doing the doubting. Thus, the central claim of what is called Cartesian dualism is that the mind and the body are two separate substances that interact.

There is an ongoing debate today over whether the mind and body are separate materials, or whether consciousness can arise from purely physiological processes. This is known in psychology, cognitive science, philosophy, and artificial intelligence as the hard problem of consciousness.

Dualism most commonly refers to Mind–body dualism, a philosophical view which holds that mental phenomena are, at least in certain respects, not physical phenomena, or that the mind and the body are distinct and separable from one another. Property dualism, a view in the philosophy of mind and metaphysics which holds that, although the world is composed of just one kind of substance—the physical kind—there exist two distinct kinds of properties: physical properties and mental properties. Cosmological dualism, the theological or spiritual view that there are only two fundamental concepts, such as "good" and "evil", and that these two concepts are in every way opposed to one another. Dualism (cybernetics), systems or problems in which an intelligent adversary attempts to exploit the weaknesses of the investigator. Dualism (Indian philosophy)