



PRESENTS:

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGISTS

American psychology: we don't have Freud, Adler, or Jung, but we have some of our own heavy hitters. Psychology in America traces its origins to **William James**, and over the years it has evolved its own distinct character. This guide explores some of the key figures in American psychology: **John B. Watson**, **B.F. Skinner**, **Abraham Maslow**, **Erik Erikson**, and **Carl Rogers**. Lay down on the couch, relax, and let's get in touch with our American Psychologists.

By analyzing questions, you can see patterns emerge, patterns that will help you answer questions. Qwiz5 is all about those patterns. In our (Qwiz5)² guides, we present you with the most important information from a group -- the most important German composers, the most important political treaties, etc. -- and break down the key facts to help you keep them straight.

John B. Watson

The Psychobabble: John B. Watson is the father of **Behaviorism**, or the notion that behavior can be understood purely in terms of reflexive responses to stimuli. Behaviorism suggests that behaviors can be **conditioned** entirely by stimulus response. Watson demonstrated his theory of conditioning in the **Little Albert Experiment**. With the help of his lab assistant (and future second wife) **Rosalie Rayner**, Watson taught a young boy to associate furry objects with a loud and unpleasant noise. This led to the child being scared of furry objects.

Required Reading: Watson wrote many works as a psychologist. One of his best-known works, ***Psychological Care of Infant and Child***, was written with assistance from Rayner. The book urged parents to encourage self-reliance at an early age and warned against ***showing children too much affection***.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Watson's affair with Rayner resulted in his dismissal from his teaching post at Johns Hopkins. However, Watson would go on to work for the **J. Walter Thompson advertising agency**. While there, Watson came up with the concept of the **coffee break** to help advertise Maxwell House coffee.

In the Final Analysis: Behaviorism was accepted as gospel truth in American psychology until the 1950s. Watson was convinced of his theory's predictive power, and famously boasted in his **12 Infants Theory** that he could use conditioning to prepare a child for any profession he desired.

Buzz On: **Kerplunk Experiment**, an experiment wherein Watson demonstrated that rats could be trained to run mazes based on pure association rather than response to external stimuli. When the maze was shortened, rats would not compensate for it and would bang their heads into the wall, causing the titular "kerplunk" sound; **Douglas Merritte**, one of the proposed identities of Little Albert, a young boy who died of hydrocephalus at age 6.

B.F. Skinner

The Psychobabble: Skinner thought that Watson oversimplified things a bit too much. Unlike Watson, Skinner believed there was such a thing as the mind and that not everything could be reduced to stimulus-response pairings. However, Skinner thought that behavior could best be understood by response to external events. His major theory, **operant conditioning**, states that we are more likely to repeat behaviors that result in a pleasant outcome and less likely to repeat behaviors that don't. He designed **namesake "Skinner Boxes"** to study operant conditioning in rats.

Required Reading: Skinner wrote an intriguing work of utopian science fiction called **Walden Two**. In this work, **Professors Burris and Castle**, along with some friends, visit an intentional community led by **T.E. Frazier**. This intentional community follows Skinner's theories and advocates for environmental modifications to encourage optimal behavior. Skinner also wrote a behaviorist account of language called **Verbal Behavior**.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Prior to the advent of electronic missile guidance systems, Skinner had some bold ideas for guided bombs. During WWII, Skinner led **Project Pigeon**, an attempt to use pigeons that had been trained via operant conditioning to help guide bombs to their targets.

In the Final Analysis: Even though operant conditioning is no longer in vogue, Skinner's theories had a significant impact in their time. However, Skinner's legacy is sometimes overshadowed by allegations that he abused his daughter by keeping her isolated in an **air crib**. Skinner actually designed this specialized crib in order to **maintain a constant temperature** for his daughter and allow her to remain comfortable.

Buzz On: **Criticized by Chomsky**, Linguist Noam Chomsky wrote a famous critique of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*, **Mands, autoclitics, and tacts**, some of the controlling elements of verbal behavior Skinner discusses in his book of the same name.

Abraham Maslow

Psychobabble: Maslow is most famous for his namesake ***Hierarchy of Needs***, a theory of human motivation. The Hierarchy of Needs is a pyramidal five-tier model of needs, beginning with ***physiological needs*** and progressing to ***self-actualization***. Maslow theorized that as the needs on each level are met, we progress to the next highest level. Maslow also proposed the idea of ***peak experiences***; transient yet transcendent moments of joy that are felt very rarely in life, but most often are experienced by people who attain self-actualization.

Required Reading: Maslow first articulated his Hierarchy of Needs in ***A Theory of Human Motivation***. He further synthesized his thoughts regarding motivation and peak experiences in ***The Farther Reaches of Human Nature***.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Maslow wrote *The Psychology of Science*, and in that work invented the conceit of ***Maslow's Hammer***. Maslow's Hammer says that "If you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail." This conceit explains our cognitive bias of ***over-reliance*** on a familiar tool.

In the Final Analysis: Maslow is considered one of the first ***humanist psychologists***. Maslow himself distinguished his approach from Behaviorism and Freudian psychoanalysis, labeling it a "***third force***" in psychology.

Buzz on: ***D Needs and B Needs***, The first four levels of Maslow's Hierarchy are known as "D Needs" or "Deficit needs." Self-actualization is considered a "B Need" or "Being Need;" ***Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, or Abraham Lincoln***, All "exemplary" people Maslow studied when defining what made self-actualization.

Erik Erikson

Psychobabble: Erikson proposed the **eight stages of psychosocial development** to explain the development of a personality. Each stage is characterized by a different **crisis** which must be successfully resolved for healthy personality growth. Erikson described the **identity crisis**, a period of intense introspection first emerging in one's teenage years, during the developmental stage of **identity vs. role confusion**.

Required Reading: Erikson is well-known for his **psychobiographies** of famous figures. Among these works are 1958's **Young Man Luther**, describing the titular Protestant Reformer's prolonged identity crisis. In 1969 Erikson wrote **Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence**, a psychobiography that would earn him a **Pulitzer Prize**.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: While engaged in fieldwork with anthropologist **Alfred Kroeber**, Erikson developed many of the theories that he would explore in his book **Childhood and Society**. Erikson worked alongside Kroeber to interview the **Yurok people** of Northern California.

In the Final Analysis: Although Erikson began his work by studying children, his theories trace the entire development of an individual's personality. Erikson was profoundly concerned with maintaining hopefulness and happiness well into old age, and his final stage of development **ego integrity vs. despair** emphasizes this.

Buzz On: **Vital Involvement in Old Age**, A study by Erikson on old age that includes a discussion of the geriatric protagonist of Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*;
Revelation in the tower or Tower Crisis, A defining moment of Martin Luther's psychosocial development according to Erikson.

Carl Rogers

Psychobabble: Carl Rogers was influenced by Maslow's humanistic philosophy, and he believed that self-actualization was essential to becoming a **fully functioning person**. Rogers believed this self-actualization could only be attained when a person's **ideal self** became congruent with their **self-image**. Therapists and family could facilitate a person's self-actualization through offering them **unconditional positive regard**.

Required Reading: Rogers wrote many works on the development of a fully functioning person from childhood. Some of his more famous works include **Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child** as well as **On Becoming a Person**.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Rogers wrote about a variety of subjects, including teaching in **Freedom to Learn** and marriage in **Becoming Partners: Marriage and its Alternatives**.

In the Final Analysis: Rogers is viewed as one of the first practitioners of **client-centered therapy**. This humanistic psychological approach employed Rogers' notions of unconditional positive regard, **empathy**, and **congruence** (a friendly, equal relationship between therapist and client) in order to facilitate a patient's self-actualization.

Buzz On: **The good life**, An ideal state for an organism according to Rogers, in which the organism continues to self-actualize; **The Q Technique or Q-Sort**, A technique Rogers introduced as an objective assessment of whether patients thought they were improving or not.

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