

**Comparing and
Contrasting the
Psychological
Perspectives
and Approaches**

Five key areas to compare and contrast -

To what extent is behaviour due to genes or the environment?

Genes vs environment

How much choice do we have over our behaviour?

Free Will vs Determinism

To what extent can we simplify explanations of human behaviour?

Reductionism vs Holism

To what extent could this approach be considered scientific?

Scientific or Non-scientific

Methodology/
Treatment

What types of methods of investigation and types of treatment does each approach employ?

Approach/ Debate	Genes/ Environment	Determinism /Free will	Reductionist/ Holistic	Scientific/ Non-scientific	Methodology/ Treatments
Biological Approach	Genes, brain structure, neuro-transmitters etc.	Determinism – biology is our destiny	Reduces all behaviour down to our genes and biology	Scientific – empirical studies have supported this	Neuroimaging, animal studies, psychosurgery, ECT, drug therapy
Psychodynamic Approach	Psychosexual stages, Personality ID, Ego & Superego.	Psychic determinism – our Psyche determines how we behave	Reduces behaviour down to psychosexual stages, personality and consciousness	Scientific – according to Freud, although he did not have evidence at the time	Case studies, psychoanalysis, dream analysis
Behavioural Approach	Environment – Tabula Rasa. We learn from our environment	Determined by our environment and via conditioning	Reduces behaviour down to learning from the environment	Highly scientific – principles of learning	Experiments, animal studies, behavioural modification
Cognitive Approach	Both – brain structures that support our cognition	Soft determinism – brain structures but cognition helps us make sense of world	Reduces behaviour down to cognition and thought processes	Scientific – adopts principles of science applied to cognition	Experimental studies, case studies, REBT, CBT, DBT, CBTp
Humanistic Approach	Both – but celebrates uniqueness of human experience	We have free will to choose our destiny	Adopts a holistic approach – considers the `whole person`	Non-scientific – rejects studying people as a scientific phenomenon	No methods as such but, Q-sort, EMDR, Psychotherapy, Family therapy

The Biological Approach	Genes	Determinism	Reductionist	Scientific	Methods / Treatments
Study 1 – Wilson (1983) Louisville Twin Study	Produced strong evidence of concordance rates for intelligence in MZ twins	Intelligence is largely determined by genes	Reduces intelligence down to genetic factors above those of the environment	Yes, biology is a science, therefore by definition the approach is scientific	Twin studies (in this case). No treatment advocated in this study
Study 2 – Buss (1986) Universal mate preferences	Universal agreement of qualities preferred in a mate	Biologically driven to seek out certain physical characteristics in a mate	Reduces sexual selection down to evolutionary factors to ensure reproductive success	As above, but supported by the universal agreement in the findings	Not applicable for this study

Other topics you could select – depression, anxiety, eating disorders, personality, intelligence, aggression, studies from cognitive psychology (memory, language, attention) and lots more!

The Behavioural Approach	Environment	Determinism	Reductionist	Scientific	Methods / Treatments
Study 1 – Wilson (1983) Louisville Twin Study	Also found evidence for reduced genetic influence for DZ twins and siblings – environment must play a part	Twin behaviours was likely due to learning from being treated similarly and similar environment	Twin behaviours could be explained by conditioning and shaping – simple S-R bonds	Yes, because the twins could be studied in a lab environment and their behaviour modified to support learning theory	Yes, because the twins could be studied in a lab environment and their behaviour modified to support learning theory
Study 2 – Buss (1986) Universal mate preferences	We learn from our environment what is socially acceptable and desirable in a mate	Our mate preference is determined by the societal expectations of beauty	Our mate preference is reduced down to social influences on who we should select	As above, but supported by the universal agreement in the findings - replicability	The use of measurable questionnaires that can be statistically analysed
Other topics/studies/evidence that you could select – depression, anxiety, eating disorders, personality, intelligence, aggression, studies from cognitive psychology and lots more!					

The Cognitive Approach	Genes/ Environment	Soft Determinism	Reductionist	Scientific	Methods / Treatments
Study 1 – Wilson (1983) Louisville Twin Study	The study acknowledges both genes (MZ similarities) and environment (DZ and sibling differences)	Our biology provides brain structures for functions, but our cognition shapes how these structures function	Reduces intelligence down to the way in which our cognition shapes our interpretation and interaction with our environment	Yes, because the twins could be studied in a lab environment and IQ test could be used to measure behaviour – replication	Yes, because the twins could be studied in a lab environment and IQ test could be used to measure behaviour – replication
Study 2 – Buss (1986) Universal mate preferences	Both – genes influence our biological drives, but the environment influences our perception of beauty	Our biological heritability influences our desire to procreate but as individuals we perceive we have a choice	Our desire to procreate is because society expects us to form a family/have children (stereotypes)	Cognitive psychology looks for replication and validity in research but also uses case studies	The use of measurable questionnaires; IQ tests that can be statistically analysed
Other topics/studies/evidence that you could select – depression, anxiety, eating disorders, personality, intelligence, aggression, studies from cognitive psychology and lots more!					

Perception

And finally...

Attention

You do not have to follow this example...

When comparing remember to say how/why they are similar...

And remember to say how/why they are different...

Depression

You can use any of your own examples...

Remember to always use evidence to support your key points...

Your intro and conclusion should be no more than 5% each of your word count...

Mate preference

Aggression

You do not have to select three approaches...

Two is fine as long as one is the Biological Approach...

Eating disorders

Phobias

Language

Memory

Sleep/
dreaming

Intelligence

Some examples of what you could include and which approaches you could use –

Topic or debate –	Evidence from –
MEMORY –	Biological Approach – brain structures associated with memory
	Cognitive Approach – any empirical study that supports the role of memory processing. E.g. 7+/-2
INTELLIGENCE –	Biological Approach – twin studies that show high concordance in MZ twins
	Behavioural Approach – twin studies, but the argument that they have a similar environment and are treated similarly, so will learn in the same way
DEPRESSION –	Biological Approach – the role of the neurotransmitter Serotonin
	Cognitive Approach – the cognitive triad and negative thinking styles
MATE PREFERENCE –	Biological Approach – evolutionary evidence for universal mate preferences related to sexual selection
	Behavioural Approach – societal values of attraction and beauty, reinforced by media images etc.

Some examples of what you could include and which approaches you could use –

Topic or debate –	Evidence from –
Gene – environment debate	Biological Approach – genes are responsible for our behaviour – concordance rates in MZ vs DZ twins for a number of behaviours
	Behavioural Approach – we learn everything via conditioning – born as a blank slate
PHOBIAS	Biological Approach – biological preparedness – the ability to be fearful of some species is innate
	Behavioural Approach – we learn phobias via classical conditioning
Determinism- Free will debate	Biological Approach – Biology determines who we are
	Behavioural Approach – free will is an illusion – we learn everything
Reductionist – Holist debate	Biological Approach – reductionist, reduces complex behaviours down to brain structure/hormones/neurotransmitters
	Cognitive Approach – reduces complex behaviours down to faulty thoughts
AGGRESSION –	Biological Approach – evolutionary explanation of aggression as a natural defence
	Behavioural Approach – think Bandura and Social Learning Theory