

Human Behavior



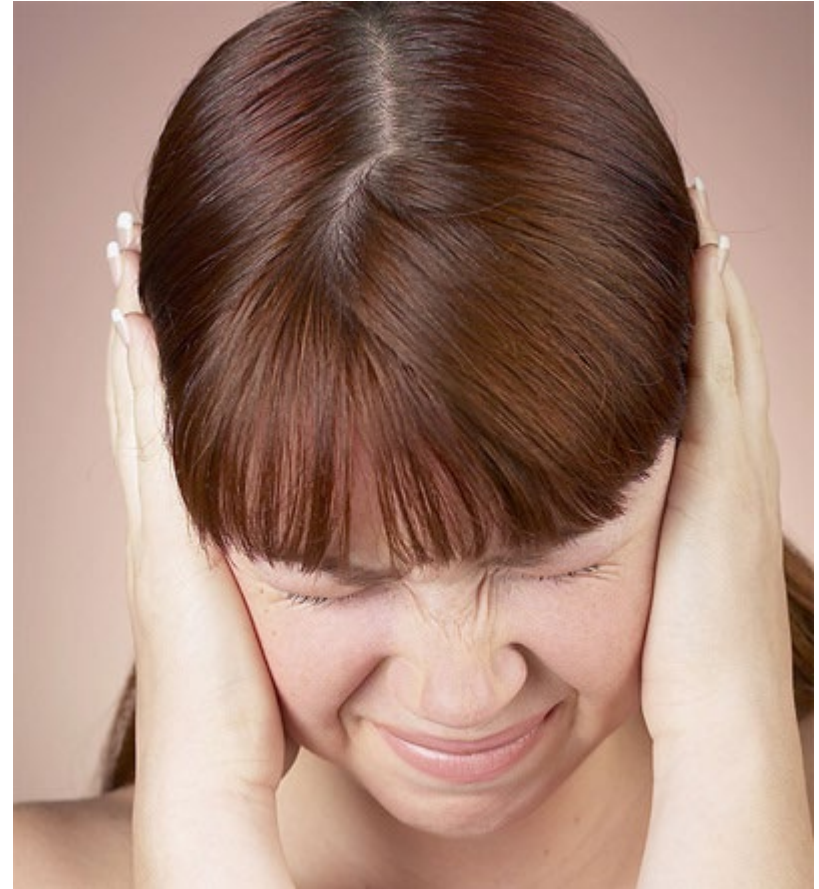
What is behavior?

Behavior is the way in which a person acts in response to a stimulus or situation. These responses can aid survival.

For example, if you hear a loud noise you put your hands over your ears. This prevents the noise from damaging your ears.

The stimulus is the loud noise. Your response is to cover your ears.

Some human behavior is much more complex.



What do we respond to?

Humans respond to both internal and external stimuli.



An **external stimulus** is a change in the environment around us. For example, the heat of an oven.

An **internal stimulus** is a change inside the body. For example, the feeling of hunger.



Are these internal or external stimuli?

internal

external

sight of a danger

?

C

solve

↶

Do humans have innate behavior?

Humans have some **innate** or instinctive behavior. This is **pre-programmed** behavior, which is not learned.

The **fight or flight response** is thought to be a human innate behavior. When humans are threatened or stressed, it can cause a chemical change in the body. This causes a person to react or retreat.

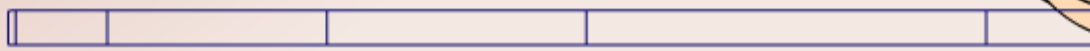
This behavior can help us to survive in dangerous situations.



What happens during the fight or flight response?

What is the fight or flight response?

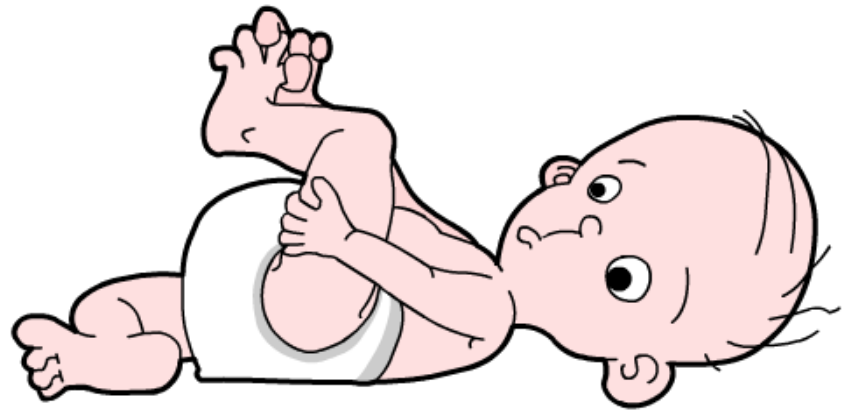
Click "**play**" to find out how the nervous and endocrine systems play a role in this response.



Learned behavior is behavior developed through experience. Experience allows us to improve or change our existing responses and develop behavior to new situations.

Learning can help humans acquire new skills for survival.

For example, from an early age babies will react to the positive responses of their parents.



If a baby displays behavior that its parents respond to, the baby will soon learn to continue the same behavior.



Animals, including humans, can learn to ignore a stimulus if it is harmless.

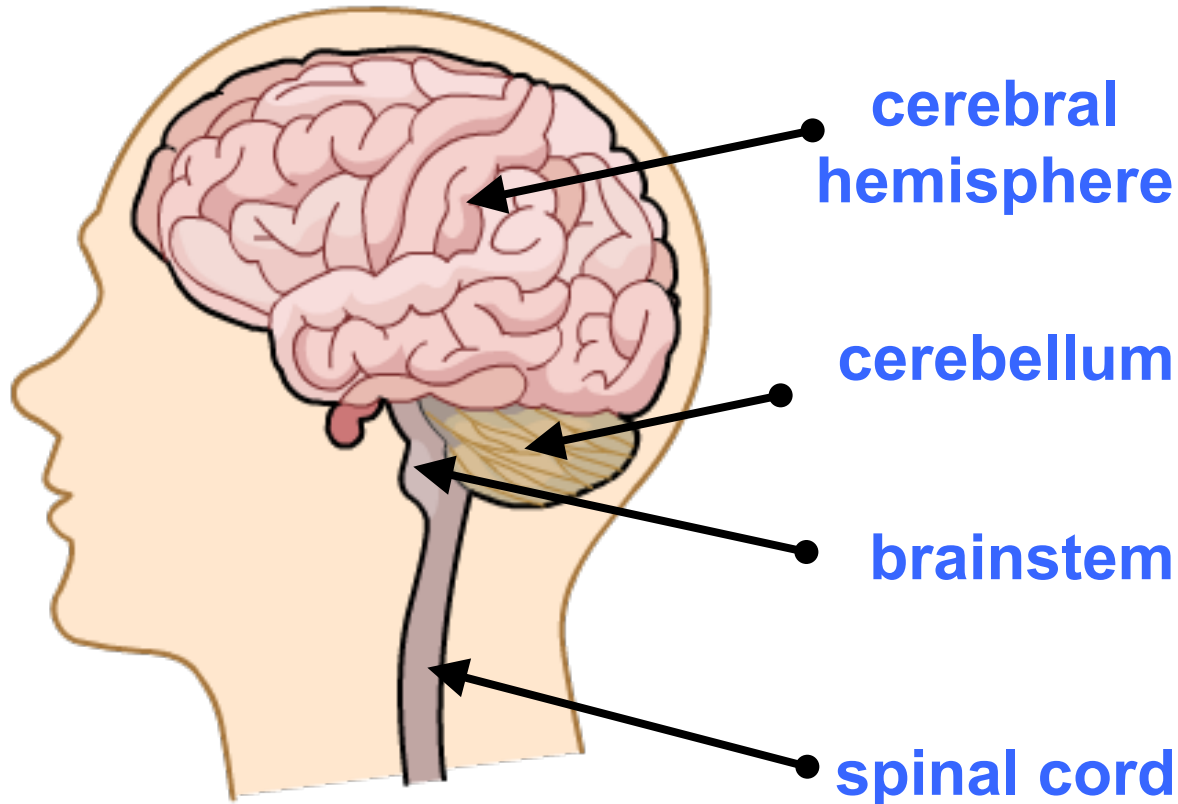
There are so many stimuli in the environment around us that we can learn not to respond to those that are unimportant.

For example, if you live near a noisy road or airport you soon stop noticing the noise. However, other people might find these noises loud and annoying.



Complex behavior

The brain is the site of your consciousness. It is the site of your thoughts, emotions, ideas, instincts and memories.



If the brain is damaged, it can cause a change in behavior.





How does behavior help us to survive?

Complex behavior, such as speech, emotion and memory, can help us to communicate and cooperate with each other.



Humans work together in many aspects of life, helping us to survive and reproduce. This is called **cooperative behavior**.

Can you think of an example of cooperative behavior in humans?



Cooperative behavior

There are lots of different examples of cooperative behavior, because humans are very social animals. Most humans choose to live together in small family groups or units.

This cooperative behavior involves parents working together to protect, feed and teach their children.



Do you think this type of behavior is innate or learned?

What determines behavior?

Some scientists think that people behave in the way they do because of instincts or innate behavior that we are born with. This is called the **nature** theory of behavior.

Others believe that people do and think certain things because they learn to do them – they are taught by others. This is called the **nurture** theory of behavior.



In reality, most behavior is likely to be a mix of both nature and nurture. Humans are influenced by both genes and the environment.