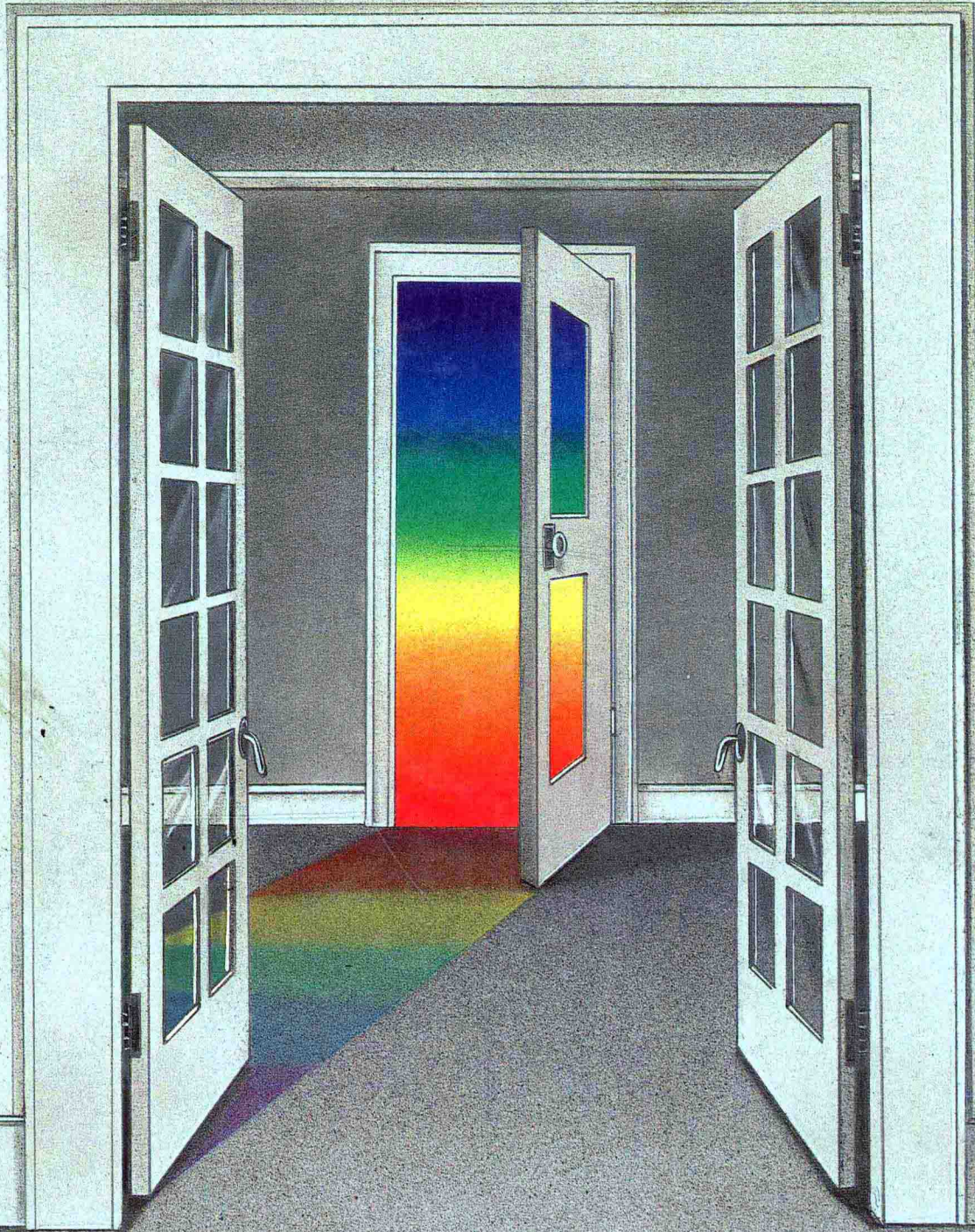


# UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

**ROBERT S. FELDMAN**





# UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

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**McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY**

NEW YORK ST. LOUIS SAN FRANCISCO AUCKLAND BOGOTÁ HAMBURG  
JOHANNESBURG LONDON MADRID MEXICO MILAN MONTREAL NEW DELHI  
PANAMA PARIS SÃO PAULO SINGAPORE SYDNEY TOKYO TORONTO



This book was set in Times Roman by Waldman Graphics, Inc. (ECU).  
The editors were James D. Anker, Rhona Robbin,  
and David Dunham;  
the designer was Joan E. O'Connor;  
the production supervisor was Phil Galea.  
The photo editor was Inge King.  
Cover illustration was drawn by Cathy Hull.  
The drawings were done by J & R Services, Inc.  
Von Hoffmann Press, Inc. was printer and binder.

## **UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY**

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 V N H V N H 8 9 4 3 2 1 0 9 8 7 6

**ISBN 0-07-020401-2**

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Feldman, Robert S. (Robert Stephen)  
Understanding psychology.

Bibliography: p.  
Includes indexes.

1. Psychology. I. Title.

BF121.F34 1987 150 86-15166  
ISBN 0-07-020401-2

To  
Jonathan, Joshua, and Sarah,  
and the memory of Mary Evans Vorwerk

## REVIEWERS

I am grateful to the following people, who reviewed all or part of the manuscript.

- Phillip L. Ackerman  
University of Minnesota
- Robert C. Beck  
Wake Forest University
- Brenda Bennett  
Vincennes University
- David Berg  
Community College of Philadelphia
- Allen E. Bergin  
Brigham Young University
- Allen R. Branum  
South Dakota State University
- David Brodzinsky  
Rutgers University
- Peter Burzynski  
Vincennes University
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Purdue University
- Robert Stern  
Pennsylvania State University
- Alfred W. Stone  
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania
- John R. Suler  
Rider College
- Robert Thompson  
Hunter College
- Carol Vitiello  
Kirkwood Community College
- Charles Weichert  
San Antonio College
- Fred Wright  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Robert S. Feldman

# PREFACE

**A**s I look out the window, the form of Mount Norwottock, an ancient glacial mountain, rises above the landscape. I can see a farmer in the valley below Norwottock methodically plowing his fields, as, closer to home, a mother walks her child to school. A crew of carpenters is building a new house on land nearby, working together and following complicated architectural plans.

At the same time as I look out on this peaceful scene, the morning newspaper lying across my desk reports another terrorist attack, a broken Mideast treaty, and a murder in a small town nearby. It tells of a march of members of a Nazi-like organization who want to expell minorities from the United States, and of the upcoming release from a mental hospital of a killer judged innocent by reason of insanity.

The varieties of behavior and thinking in the world around us defy easy explanation. We see selfishness and self-sacrifice; thoughtfulness and irrationality; cooperation and violent competition among the peoples of the world. How to explain these extremes of behavior and thought, and the myriad forms that lie in between, is the goal—and challenge—of the science of psychology.

## INTRODUCING UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

To acquaint readers with the discipline of psychology, *Understanding Psychology* has been written to accomplish three major goals. First, it is intended to provide an effective and broad coverage of the field of psychology, introducing readers to the theories, research, and applications that constitute the science. Second, it is intended to foster an appreciation for the scientific basis of psy-

chology and to provide an impetus for students to begin to think as psychologists, even after their recall of specific contents has waned. Finally, this book is designed to be engaging and interesting, by arousing students' intellectual curiosity and building an appreciation of how psychology can increase their understanding of the world around them.

These goals, of course, are interdependent. In fact, I would argue that if the text is successful in accurately communicating the nature of psychology, then an understanding of and interest in the field will follow naturally. To that end, the writing style of this book has received considerable attention. The style is intended to provide as close a facsimile to two people sitting down and discussing psychology as can be conveyed by the written word.

Moreover, this text has features in every chapter that are designed to involve students (questionnaires and demonstrations entitled Try It!), challenge them (Cutting Edge boxes with the latest research findings), demonstrate the everyday relevance of psychology (Psychology at Work boxes), and improve the quality of their own lives (Informed Consumer of Psychology sections). It is also a book that has been carefully designed to promote learning. Material is presented in rational, manageable chunks, each of which is followed by a succinct summary (called a "Recap") and a set of questions on the material (a "Review"). A reader who answers these questions—and then checks the answers, which are provided on a following page—will be able to assess the degree of initial mastery of the material and will also have a head start on long-term recall and an understanding of the information.

In sum, *Understanding Psychology* is, as I reiterate in the first chapter, designed to be "user-friendly." It is a book that is intended not merely to expose students to the content—and promise—of psychology, but to do so in a way that will capture the excitement of the field and keep that excitement alive long after readers have completed their introduction to the discipline.

## THE CONTENT OF *UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY*

*Understanding Psychology* includes extensive coverage of the traditional topical areas of psychology, including the biological foundations of behavior, sensation and perception, learning, memory, cognition, human development, personality, abnormal behavior, and social psychological foundations of behavior. Notably, however, it also includes several distinctive chapters that focus primarily on applications of psychological theory and research in nonlaboratory, field settings. For example, there are separate chapters on health psychology, organizations and the workplace, and environmental psychology—burgeoning areas in which the most important applied topics are currently undergoing investigation.

The flexibility of this text's organizational structure is considerable. Each chapter is typically divided into three or four manageable, self-contained units, allowing instructors to choose and omit sections in accordance with their syllabus. Moreover, because chapters are self-contained, it is possible to use this book in either biologically oriented or socially oriented introductory psychology courses by choosing only those chapters that are relevant to such courses. In addition, because the applications material is well integrated throughout—even in those chapters that cover the most traditional, theoretical topics—courses that omit the more applied topical chapters will still be successful in conveying the relevance of psychology to readers.

Overall, then, this book reflects a combination of traditional core topics and contemporary applied subjects, providing a broad, eclectic—and current—view of the field of psychology. It should be apparent that the volume is *not* an applied psychology text; nor is it a theories-oriented volume. Instead, it draws from both theoretical and applied approaches, and integrates the two along with objective presentations of research that illustrate the way in which the science of psychology has evolved and grown. Indeed, this book exemplifies the view that a theory-application dichotomy is a false one. Applications are not presented as devoid of theory, but rather are placed in a theoretical context, grounded in research findings. Likewise, when theoretical material is presented, practical implications are drawn from it.

An example can illustrate this approach. If you turn to Chapter 3, the chapter on sensation, you will find that it includes the traditional material on hearing and the sense of balance in the ear. But the text moves beyond a mere recitation of the various parts of the ear and explanations of hearing and balance; it also explores current work involving an electronic ear implant in the cochlea to help the deaf, as well as NASA's attempts to solve the problem of astronauts' space sickness. By providing a theoretical context for understanding the sense of hearing and balance, then, the text demonstrates how applications grow out of the theoretical and research base of the field.

## LEARNING AIDS AND FEATURES OF UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY

*Understanding Psychology* has been designed with its ultimate consumer—the student—in mind. As you can see from the following full list of elements that are common to every chapter, this text incorporates educational features, based on learning and cognitive instructional design theory and research, that make it an effective learning device and, at the same time, enticing and engaging:

■ **Chapter Outline.** Each chapter opens with an outline of the chapter structure. Not only does the outline provide a means of understanding the interrelationships of the material within the chapter, but it also serves as a form of chapter organizer, helping to bridge the gap between what a reader already knows and the subsequent chapter content.

■ **Prologue.** Every chapter starts with an account of a real-life situation that involves major aspects of the topics of the chapter. These scenarios demonstrate the relevance of basic principles and concepts of psychology to everyday issues and problems. For example, the chapter on learning starts with a description of how the behavior of an Olympic gold medalist is affected by learning processes; one chapter on social psychology begins with an account of a campus referendum; and the chapter on intelligence describes a profoundly retarded individual who produces internationally acclaimed paintings.

■ **Looking Ahead.** Following the prologue, a chapter overview is presented. It articulates the key themes, issues, and questions; and it also lists a set of chapter objectives. The chapter objectives pinpoint material on which to focus.

■ **Psychology at Work.** Each chapter includes a boxed insert that illustrates an application of psychological theory and research findings to a real-world problem. For example, the chapter on the biological bases of behavior discusses how advertisers make use of findings regarding brain hemispheric specialization to



prepare advertisements, the memory chapter includes a discussion of eyewitness identification in judicial settings, and the chapter on personality presents assessment procedures used by business firms.

■ *The Cutting Edge.* Each chapter also contains a boxed insert that describes a contemporary research program that is in the forefront of the discipline—suggesting where the field of psychology is heading. This feature helps provide a sense of the growing and developing status of the science of psychology. For instance, one of the chapters on development discusses current research on intelligence in the elderly, the memory chapter presents work on the biochemical basis of memory, and the intelligence chapter discusses artificial intelligence.

■ *The Informed Consumer of Psychology.* Every chapter presents information designed to make readers more informed consumers of psychological information and knowledge by giving them the ability to critically evaluate what the field of psychology offers. For example, this feature includes treatment for dyslexia (perception chapter), dealing with drugs and alcohol (states of consciousness chapter), evaluating computer-assisted instructional programs (learning chapter), personality/vocational testing (personality chapter), choosing a physician (health and stress chapter), and evaluating psychological therapy (treatment chapter).

■ *Try It!* In order to promote the reader's involvement, each chapter contains a Try It! box that describes a demonstration they can carry out themselves. For instance, the chapter on the biology underlying behavior provides a biofeedback demonstration, and the chapter on health and stress allows readers to assess the amount of stress in their own lives.

■ *Recap and Review.* Research clearly indicates the importance of careful organization of textual material, learning material in relatively small chunks, and actively reviewing material. Consequently, each chapter is divided into three or four sections, each of which concludes with a Recap and Review. The Recaps summarize the key points of the previous section, and the Reviews present a variety of types of questions for students to answer—including multiple-choice, fill-in, short answer, and matching questions—in order to test both recall and higher-level understanding of the material.

■ *Running Glossary.* Key terms are highlighted in bold face type where they are introduced, and they are defined in the margin of the text, accompanied by pronunciation guides for difficult words. There is also an end-of-book Glossary.

■ *Looking Back.* To facilitate the review of the material covered in each chapter and to aid in the synthesis of the information covered, there is a numbered summary at the end of every chapter. The summary emphasizes the key points of the chapter.

■ *Key Terms and Concepts.* A list of key terms and concepts, including the page numbers where they were first introduced, is also provided at the end of each chapter.

■ *For Further Research and Application.* An annotated bibliography concludes each chapter. This bibliography contains two types of selections—books and articles that deal with theory and others that are more oriented towards applications.

■ *A full-color graphic design.* To support the instructional design features of the text, a graphic design structure was developed to enhance the pedagogy of the text. For example, all Try It! boxes are in green, Cutting Edge boxes in magenta, and Psychology at Work boxes in blue. Moreover, parts and chapters

are color-keyed on every page, making the structure of the book more explicit. The beautiful design and photos make the text inviting and a book from which it is easy to learn.

## ANCILLARY MATERIALS

*Understanding Psychology* is accompanied by an extensive ancillary package that enhances the value of the text as a teaching and learning tool. The *Study Guide*, by Valerie J. Sasserath, includes an introductory section on how to study and how to use the Guide effectively with the text. Following this material are chapters (corresponding to each text chapter) which include chapter outlines and overviews, learning objectives, more than one thousand questions in a variety of formats, and application exercises. *Micro Study Guide*, a computerized version, is also available for use with the Apple and IBM PC computers.

There are two test files in this package, which together offer more than 3,700 multiple-choice and true-false questions that test both factual recall and higher-order understanding. These questions are keyed to the learning objectives in the text and are arranged under the major text headings. Answers and text page references are included for all questions. Test File A was prepared by David Arnold of St. Lawrence University, Linda Baker of the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, Frank McAndrew of Knox College, John Rosenkoetter of Southwest Missouri State University, Thomas Thieman of the College of St. Catherine, and William Zachry of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Test File B was developed by William O. Dwyer of Memphis State University. Both test files are available in computerized formats for use with mainframe and microcomputers.

The *Instructor's Manual*, prepared by the authors of Test File A, offers chapter overviews, lecture objectives and topics, key terms, discussion topics, "Take a Stand" sections (which outline issues for debate), demonstrations and projects, essay questions with answers, and an annotated bibliography of audiovisual resources.

In addition to the print supplements described above, the ancillary package includes a set of fifty overhead transparencies of illustrations in the text. These transparencies can be used in conjunction with the 110 generic overheads in the *McGraw-Hill Introductory Psychology Overhead Transparency Set*. The *McGraw-Hill Introductory Psychology Slide Set*, consisting of 110 slides which duplicate the generic overheads, McGraw-Hill/CRM Films, and a series of videotapes covering the major areas of psychology are also available to adopters.

*Psychworld* by John C. Hay of the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee is an acclaimed generic software package that contains fourteen simulations of classic psychology experiments. Professors can use it in the classroom and students can use it in the lab. Your local McGraw-Hill sales representative can explain the details of the *Psychworld* premium offer to adopters of *Understanding Psychology*.

A newsletter prepared by the text author will be issued on a twice yearly basis to adopters of the text. Although intended primarily for instructors, it may be photocopied or reproduced for students. It will discuss Cutting Edge research findings in psychology, and all material will be keyed to text pages, thus assisting professors in integrating the newsletter contents into lecture and class discussions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As the long list of reviewers on page vi attests, this book involved the efforts of many psychologists. They lent their expertise to evaluate all or part of the manuscript, providing an unusual degree of quality control. Their careful work and thoughtful suggestions have improved the manuscript many times over from its first-draft incarnations. I am grateful to every one of them for their comments.

My thinking has been shaped by many teachers along the way. I was introduced to psychology at Wesleyan University, where several committed and inspiring teachers—and in particular Karl Scheibe—made the excitement and relevance of the field clear to me. Although the University of Wisconsin, where I did my graduate work, could not have been more different from the much smaller Wesleyan, the excitement and inspiration were similar. Once again, a cadre of excellent teachers—led, in particular, by Vernon Allen—molded my thinking, and by the time I left Wisconsin to begin teaching I could envision no other career but that of psychologist.

My colleagues and students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst provide ongoing intellectual stimulation, and I thank them for making the University a very good place to work. Several people also provided extraordinary research and editorial help—Carolyn Dash, Richard Kirschen-Fleming, Kate Cleary, Janice Rose, and Kate Schildauer. I am also grateful to James M. Royer, who provided a draft of the material in the statistics appendix.

Anyone who reads this book owes a debt of gratitude to Rhona Robbin, senior developmental editor at McGraw-Hill. Her adept editing, insightful questioning, and—when necessary—prodding and pushing resulted in a level of quality that could not have otherwise been attained. Other people at McGraw-Hill were instrumental in producing the book you see before you, including David Dunham, James Anker, Joan O'Connor, Inge King, and David Serbun. I am proud to be a part of this first-class team.

Finally, I am, as always, indebted to my family. The love and support of my parents, Leah Brochstein and the late Saul D. Feldman, remain a bedrock of my life. Other family members also play a central role in my life; these people include, more or less in order of age, my nieces and nephews, my brother, various brothers- and sisters-in-law, Ethel Radler, and Harry Brochstein. My mother-in-law, Mary Evans Vorwerk, had an important influence on this book, and on me, during the last year of her life. Her example of grace, courage, and strength is suffused not only throughout this book but in the lives of those who knew her. I am grateful to her; and I miss her.

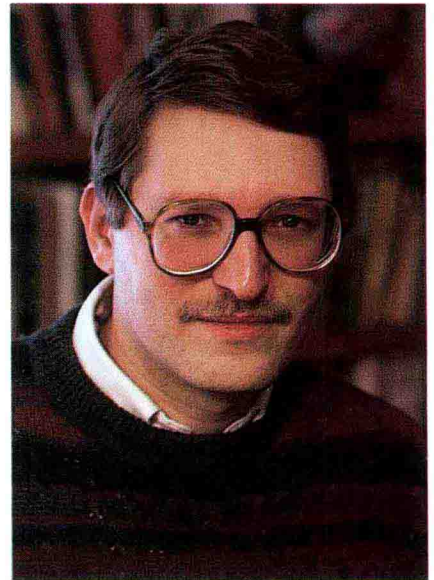
Ultimately, my children, Jonathan, Joshua, and Sarah, and my wife, Katherine, are the focal point of my life. I thank them, with love.

Robert S. Feldman

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**R**obert S. Feldman is Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. A former Fulbright Senior Research Scholar and Lecturer, he is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and author of more than seventy scientific articles, book chapters, and papers. He has also written or edited five books, including *Social Psychology: Theories, Research, and Applications* (McGraw-Hill, 1985). A committed teacher, Professor Feldman has taught the introductory psychology course for thirteen years. His spare time is most often devoted to serious cooking and earnest but inelegant piano playing. He lives with his wife, also a psychologist, and three children in Amherst, Massachusetts.



# USING **UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE STUDY**

*Understanding Psychology* has been written with the reader in mind, and it therefore includes a number of unique features that will allow you to maximize your learning of the concepts, theories, facts, and other kinds of information that make up the field of psychology. To take advantage of these features, there are several steps that you should take when reading and studying this book. Among the most important:

■ Familiarize yourself with the logic of the book’s structure. Begin by reading the Table of Contents. It provides an overview of the topics that will be covered and gives a sense of the way the various topics are interrelated. Next, review the Preface, which describes the book’s major features. Note how each chapter is divided into three or four self-contained units; these provide logical starting and stopping points for reading and studying. Also note the major landmarks of each chapter: a chapter opening outline, a Prologue, a Looking Ahead section that includes chapter objectives, Recaps and Reviews of key information following each of the major units, and—at the end of every chapter—a Looking Back section, Key Terms and Concepts, and a Further Study and Application section. Because every chapter is structured in the same way, you are provided with a set of familiar landmarks as you chart your way through new material, allowing you to organize the chapter’s content more readily.

■ Use a study strategy. Although we are expected to study and ultimately learn a wide array of material throughout our schooling, we are rarely taught any systematic strategies that permit us to study more effectively. Yet, just as we wouldn’t expect a physician to learn human anatomy by trial and error, it is the unusual student who is able to stumble upon a truly effective studying strategy.

Psychologists, however, have devised several excellent—and proven—techniques for improving study skills. By using these procedures—known by the initials “SQ3R” and “MURDER”—you can raise your ability to learn and retain information, not just in psychology but in all academic subjects.

The SQ3R method includes a series of five steps, having the initials S-Q-R-R-R. The first step is to *survey* the material by reading the chapter outlines, chapter headings, figure captions, recaps, and Looking Ahead and Looking Back sections, providing yourself with an overview of the major points of the chapter. The next step—the “Q” in SQ3R—is to *question*. Formulate questions—either aloud or in writing—prior to actually reading a section of the material. For instance, if you had first surveyed this section of the book, you might jot down in the margin, what do “SQ3R” and “MURDER” stand for? The reviews that end each section of the chapter are also a good source of questions. But it is important not to rely on them entirely; making up your own questions is critical. *Understanding Psychology* has wide margins in which you can write out your own questions. Such questioning helps you to focus in on the key points of the chapter, while putting you in an inquisitive frame of mind as well.

It is now time for the next, and most traditional, step: to *read* the material. Read carefully and, even more important, actively. For instance, while you are reading, answer the questions you have asked yourself. You may find yourself coming up with new questions as you read along; that’s fine, since it shows you are reading inquisitively and paying attention to the material.

The next step—the second “R”—is the most unusual. This “R” stands for *recite*, in which you look up from the book and describe and explain to yourself, or to a friend, the material you have just read and answer the questions you have posed earlier. Do it aloud; this is one time when talking to yourself is nothing to be embarrassed about. The recitation process helps you to clearly identify your degree of understanding of the material you have just read. Moreover, psychological research has shown that communicating material to others (even imaginary others, if you are reciting aloud to yourself and not a friend) aids you in learning it in a different—and deeper—way than material which you do not intend to communicate. Hence, your recitation of the material is a crucial link in the studying process.

The final “R” refers to *review*. As we will discuss in Chapter 6, reviewing is a prerequisite to fully learning and remembering material you have studied. Look over the information; reread the Recaps and Looking Back summaries; answer in-text review questions; and use any ancillary materials you may have available. (There is both a traditional and a computerized student study guide available to accompany *Understanding Psychology*.) Reviewing should be an active process, in which you consider how different pieces of information fit together and develop a sense of the overall picture.

An alternative approach to studying—although not altogether dissimilar to SQ3R—is provided by the MURDER system of Dansereau (1978). Despite the unpleasant connotations of its title, the MURDER system is a useful study strategy.

In MURDER, the first step is to establish an appropriate **m**ood for studying by setting goals for a study session and choosing a time and place in which you will not be distracted. Next comes reading for **u**nderstanding, in which careful attention is paid to the meaning of the material being studied. **R**ecall is an immediate attempt to recall the material from memory, without referring to the text. **D**igesting the material comes next; you should correct any recall errors, and attempt to organize and store newly learned material in memory.

You should work next on expanding (analyzing and evaluating) new material, and try to apply it to situations that go beyond the applications discussed in the text. By incorporating what you have learned into a larger information network in memory, you will be able to recall it more easily in the future. Finally, the last step is review. Just as with the SQ3R system, MURDER suggests that systematic review of material is a necessary condition for successful studying.

Both the SQ3R and MURDER systems provide a proven means of increasing your study effectiveness. It is not necessary, though, to feel tied to a particular strategy; you might want to combine other elements into your own system. If a study system results in your full mastery of new material, stick with it.

■ The last aspect of studying that warrants mention is that *when* and *where* you study are in some ways as important as *how* you study. One of the truisms of the psychological literature is that we learn things better, and are able to recall them longer, when we study material in small chunks over several study sessions, rather than massing our study into one lengthy period. This implies that all-night studying just prior to a test is going to be less effective—and a lot more tiring—than employing a series of steady, regular study sessions. If you have always had trouble with deadlines and have difficulty scheduling regular study sessions, you should also investigate formal time management techniques, discussed in Chapter 5.

In addition to carefully timing your studying, you should seek out a special location to study. It doesn't really matter where it is, as long as it has minimal distractions and is a place that you use *only* for studying. Identifying a special "territory" allows you get in the right mood for study as soon as you begin.

#### *A final comment*

By using the proven study strategies presented above, as well as by making use of the pedagogical tools integrated in the text, you will maximize your understanding of this book, and, more importantly, the field of psychology. It is worth the effort: the excitement, challenge, and promise that psychology holds for you is immense.

# PART ONE





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