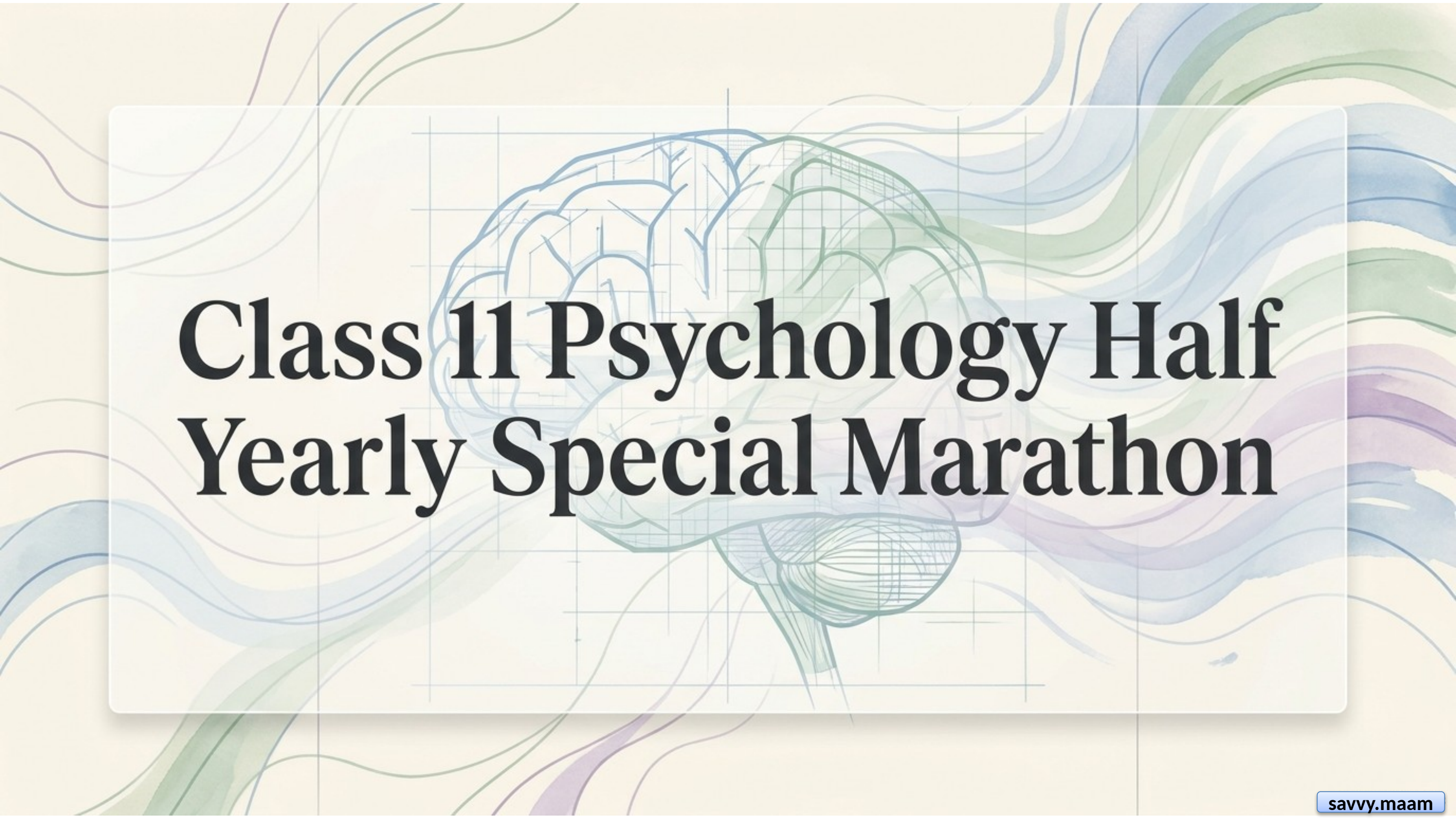




Class 11 Psychology Half Yearly Special Marathon

1

**Understanding
Psychology**

2

**Methods of
Enquiry in
Psychology**

3

**Human
Development**

4

**Sensory,
Attentional
and Perceptual
Processes**

5

Learning

Chapter 1 — Understanding Psychology

1. INTRODUCTION

Psychology is concerned with understanding **human behaviour, mental processes and experiences.**

People differ in:



The way they think



The way they feel



The way they perceive



The way they behave

Psychology helps us understand these differences and the processes underlying them.

2. UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGY / WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Definition

Psychology is the **scientific study** of mental processes, experiences and behaviour in different contexts.

It uses methods of both biological and social sciences to systematically collect and understand data.

Three Important Terms



3. PSYCHOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE

Psychology studies behaviour, experience and mental processes systematically.

How does Psychology study them?

Psychologists try to minimise personal bias by using different approaches.

- **Scientific/Objectivist approach** → Tries to make analysis scientific and objective.
- **Subjective approach** → Gives importance to the experience of the person.

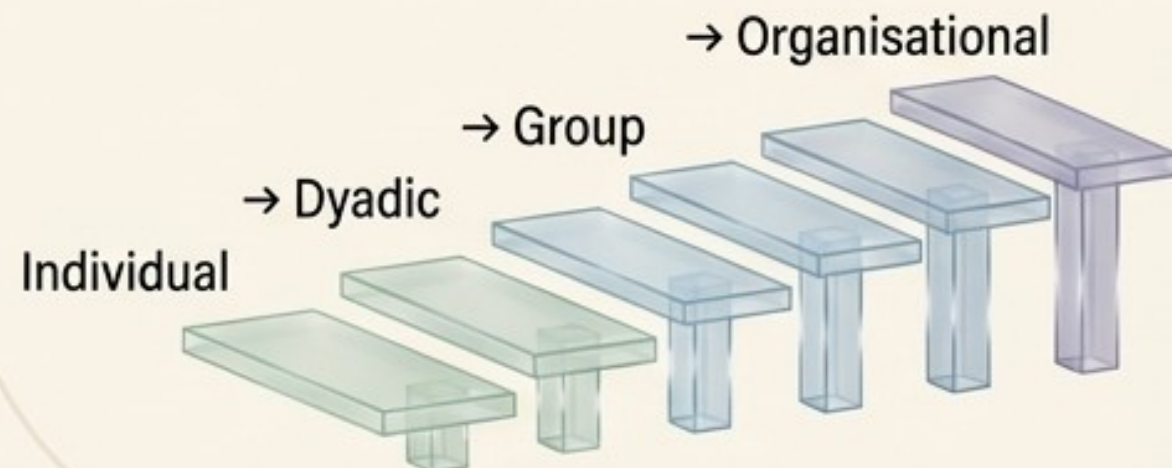
Indian Tradition

In the Indian tradition, self-reflection and analysis of conscious experiences are regarded as important sources of psychological understanding.

Important Point

Regardless of differences in approach, psychologists aim to understand and explain behaviour and mental processes in a systematic and verifiable manner.

Levels at which Psychology studies behaviour



Psychological phenomena can have both biological and social bases.

4. PSYCHOLOGY AS A NATURAL & SOCIAL SCIENCE

Psychology has two parallel streams.

Psychology as Natural Science

- Uses methods associated with physical and biological sciences.
- Focuses on biological processes underlying behaviour.
- Looks for cause-and-effect relationships.
- Uses controlled and systematic investigation.
- Examples: Biology, Physiology, Neuroscience

Psychology as Social Science

- Studies behaviour in its social and cultural context.
- Considers interactions, social relationships and experiences.
- Uses methods of the social and cultural sciences.
- Examples: Sociology, Anthropology, Social Work

Key Takeaway

Remember

Natural Science → Biological basis of behaviour

Social Science → Social & cultural context of behaviour

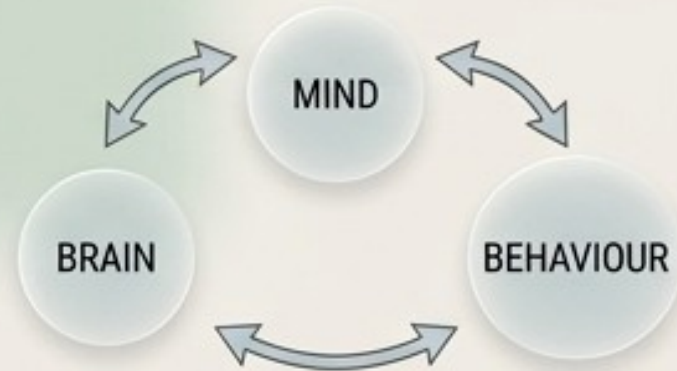
The Savvy Humanities | Savvy Ma'am

Telegram: The Savvy Humanities

Instagram: savvy.maam

5. BRAIN vs MIND

Earlier, mind and body were often treated as separate. Contemporary research shows that there is an important relationship between:



Changes in brain processes can affect behaviour, while psychological processes can also influence bodily functioning.

Psychoneuroimmunology

Psychoneuroimmunology is a developing area that studies the relationship between psychological processes, the nervous system and the immune system. It highlights the role that mental processes can play in physical health and immune functioning.

6. POPULAR NOTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is often misunderstood in everyday life.

Myth vs Fact

Some common notions are:

- ✗ Psychology is simply about giving advice.
- ✗ Psychologists can read people's minds.
- ✗ Psychology is only about mental illness.
- ✗ Psychologists can tell exactly what a person is thinking.
- ✗ Psychology and common everyday understanding are the same thing.

vs Scientific Psychology

Scientific psychology is different because it:

- ✓ Uses systematic methods
- ✓ Collects evidence
- ✓ Attempts to reduce bias
- ✓ Uses trained professionals
- ✓ Develops explanations that can be tested and verified

7. EVOLUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology developed from questions that were traditionally discussed in philosophy.

1879 — Wilhelm Wundt

Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychology laboratory at Leipzig, Germany. This is commonly considered the formal beginning of modern experimental psychology.

Wundt studied conscious experience. His approach used introspection to examine the contents/structure of the mind.

Introspection

Introspection is the method of examining and describing one's own mental processes and experiences.

8. MAJOR SCHOOLS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THOUGHT

School	Major Thinker	Main Focus
Structuralism	Wilhelm Wundt	Structure/components of conscious experience
Functionalism	William James	Functions of the mind and behaviour
Behaviourism	John B. Watson	Observable behaviour
Gestalt Psychology	Max Wertheimer and others	Behaviour/experience as an organised whole
Psychoanalysis	Sigmund Freud	Unconscious motives and conflicts
Humanistic Psychology	Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow	Free will, growth and human potential
Cognitive Psychology	Modern cognitive psychologists	Thinking, knowing and information processing

9. DETAILED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Structuralism

Focused on the structure of conscious experience and used introspection.

Functionalism

William James focused on what the mind does and how behaviour helps individuals adapt to their environment.

Behaviourism

John B. Watson emphasised the study of observable behaviour and the role of environmental stimuli.

Gestalt Psychology

Developed in Germany as a reaction to structuralism. It emphasised that psychological experience should be understood as an organised whole.

Psychoanalysis

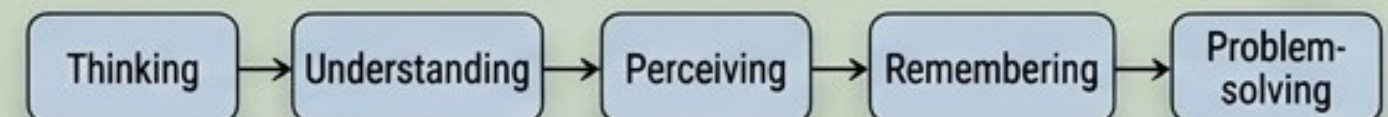
Sigmund Freud emphasised the role of unconscious desires and conflicts in human behaviour.

Humanistic Psychology

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow emphasised free will, growth and fulfilment of human potential.

Cognitive Psychology

Focuses on cognition – processes such as:



Modern cognitive psychology views people as actively constructing knowledge and understanding.

Important Overall Point

Contemporary psychology is multivocal — it has different approaches that explain behaviour at different levels. These approaches are not mutually exclusive.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY IN INDIA

Psychology has a long intellectual history in India, especially through traditions of self-reflection, consciousness and understanding the mind.

Important Developments

1916

First Psychology Department established at Calcutta University.

1922

Psychology included in the Indian Science Congress Association.

1924

Indian Psychological Association founded.

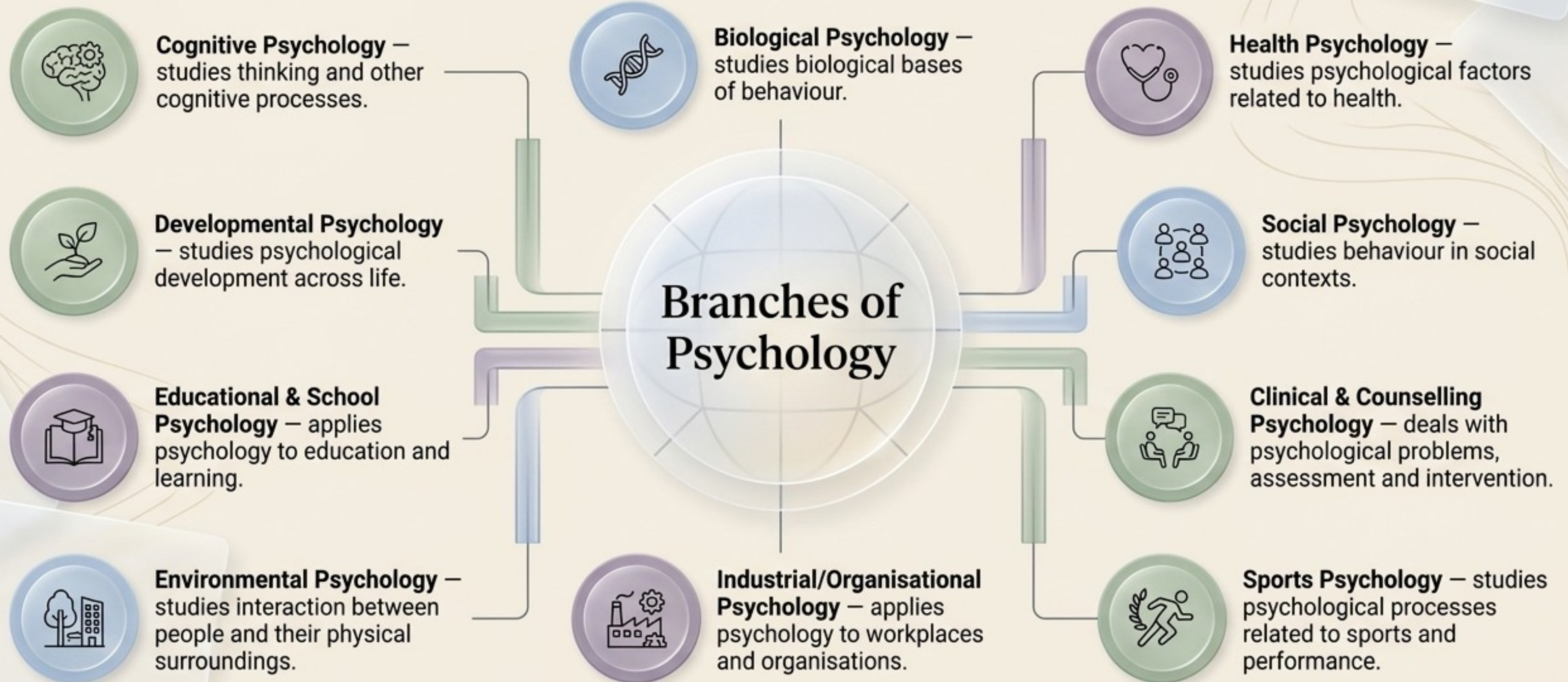
1928

N.N. Sengupta and **Radhakamal Mukerjee** published the first textbook on Social Psychology.

Later, psychological research expanded into areas such as education, defence, health and applied psychology.

10. BRANCHES OF PSYCHOLOGY

Some major branches are:



11. CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST vs COUNSELLOR vs PSYCHIATRIST

Clinical Psychologist	Counsellor	Psychiatrist
Specialised in psychological assessment and intervention Uses psychological methods and therapies Works with a range of psychological difficulties	Helps people deal with personal, educational, career and adjustment concerns Provides counselling and guidance Often deals with less severe adjustment/life concerns	Medical doctor specialising in mental health Can prescribe medication Treats mental disorders from a medical perspective

Easy Recall

Psychiatrist → Medical doctor
 Clinical Psychologist → Psychological assessment/intervention
 Counsellor → Counselling & guidance

12. PSYCHOLOGY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Psychology uses knowledge from and contributes to many other disciplines.

Natural/Biological Sciences

Neurology, Physiology, Biology, Medicine, Computer Science
 → Useful for understanding the relationship between brain, cognition and behaviour.

Social Sciences

Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work, Political Science, Economics
 → Help understand behaviour in its social and cultural context.

Humanities

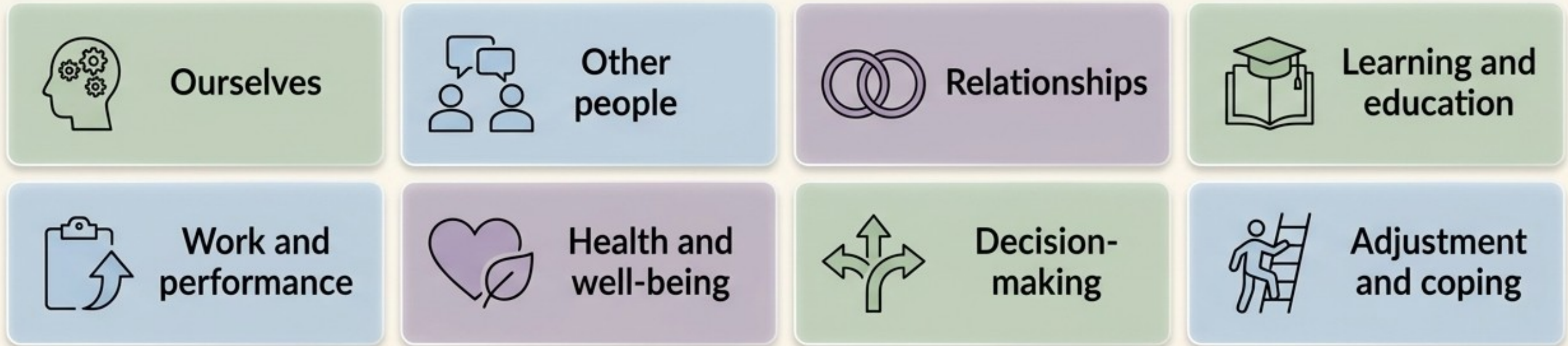
Literature, Art, Music
 → Psychology helps understand human experiences involved in creation, expression and appreciation.

Key Point

Psychology increasingly follows an interdisciplinary approach, because complex human behaviour cannot always be understood through one discipline alone.

13. PSYCHOLOGY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Psychological knowledge is useful in understanding:



Psychologists also work in settings such as:



Therefore, psychology is not only a theoretical discipline; it also helps in solving practical problems in everyday life.

QUESTION-ANSWER SECTION

A. MCQs — 7 Questions

Q1. A researcher studies how changes in brain activity influence a person's emotions and behaviour. This reflects Psychology's relationship with:

- a) Only social science
- b) Natural and biological sciences
- c) Humanities alone
- d) Political science

Q2. Which situation best represents the study of a mental process rather than directly observable behaviour?

- a) A student raising her hand
- b) A child running towards a ball
- c) A student remembering an answer
- d) A person waving goodbye

Q3. Which development is most closely associated with the formal beginning of modern experimental Psychology?

- a) Freud's theory of the unconscious
- b) Establishment of Wundt's laboratory
- c) Development of Humanistic Psychology
- d) Emergence of Cognitive Psychology

Q4. A psychologist focuses on observable responses and the role of environmental stimuli rather than studying consciousness through introspection. Which school does this approach represent?

- a) Structuralism
- b) Behaviourism
- c) Psychoanalysis
- d) Gestalt Psychology

QUESTION-ANSWER SECTION

A. MCQs — 7 Questions

Q5. Which statement best explains why Psychology is considered an interdisciplinary discipline?

- a) It studies only mental illness.
- b) It uses knowledge from different disciplines to understand complex human behaviour.
- c) It has replaced all other social sciences.
- d) It deals only with biological processes.

Q6. Which professional is a medical doctor and is therefore qualified to prescribe medication for mental disorders?

- a) Counsellor
- b) Clinical psychologist
- c) Psychiatrist
- d) Social psychologist

Q7. The study of the interaction between psychological processes, the nervous system and the immune system is known as:

- a) Cognitive Psychology
- b) Psychoneuroimmunology
- c) Social Psychology
- d) Behaviourism

MCQ ANSWER KEY

1 – b | 2 – c | 3 – b | 4 – b | 5 – b | 6 – c | 7 – b

B. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. Why is Psychology considered both a natural science and a social science?

Answer: Psychology studies the biological basis of behaviour as well as behaviour in its social and cultural context. Therefore, it uses approaches and methods associated with both natural sciences and social sciences.

Q2. What is psychoneuroimmunology?

Answer: Psychoneuroimmunology is the study of the relationship between psychological processes, the nervous system and the immune system. It shows how psychological processes can influence physical health and immune functioning.

Q3. Why can Psychology not be reduced to the study of mental illness?

Answer: Psychology has a much broader scope. It studies behaviour, mental processes and experiences and applies this knowledge to areas such as education, health, work, relationships and everyday life, apart from psychological disorders.

B. SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Q4. How did Psychology emerge as an independent discipline?

Answer:

Psychology gradually separated from philosophy and developed systematic methods for studying behaviour and mental processes. Wilhelm Wundt's establishment of the first psychology laboratory at Leipzig in 1879 is regarded as an important landmark in the emergence of modern Psychology.

Q5. How are a psychiatrist and a psychologist different?

Answer:

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor specialising in mental health and can prescribe medication. A psychologist is trained in the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes and may work in areas such as psychological assessment, research, education and counselling, depending on their specialisation and qualifications.

C. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. Explain Psychology as a discipline. Why is it considered both a natural science and a social science?

Answer:

Psychology is the scientific study of mental processes, experiences and behaviour.

Psychology as a Natural Science

- Studies the biological basis of behaviour.
- Examines the role of the brain, nervous system and other physiological processes.
- Uses systematic and scientific methods.

Psychology as a Social Science

- Studies behaviour in its social and cultural context.
- Examines relationships, interactions and experiences of individuals in society.
- Draws upon social and cultural sciences.

Thus, Psychology connects the biological, psychological and social dimensions of human behaviour.

Q2. Trace the evolution of Psychology and discuss the major schools of psychological thought.

Answer:

Psychology developed from philosophical discussions concerning the mind and human nature and gradually emerged as an independent scientific discipline.

Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychology laboratory at Leipzig in 1879, marking an important stage in the development of modern experimental Psychology.

Major schools included:

- **Structuralism** — Wilhelm Wundt: focused on the structure of conscious experience.
- **Functionalism** — William James: focused on the functions of mental processes and behaviour.
- **Behaviourism** — John B. Watson: emphasised observable behaviour.
- **Gestalt Psychology** — Max Wertheimer and others: emphasised psychological experience as an organised whole.
- **Psychoanalysis** — Sigmund Freud: emphasised unconscious motives and conflicts.
- **Humanistic Psychology** — Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow: focused on human potential, growth and free will.
- **Cognitive Psychology**: focused on processes such as thinking, memory, perception and problem-solving.

Modern Psychology incorporates multiple perspectives to understand human behaviour.

Q3. Discuss the development of Psychology in India.

Answer:

Psychology in India has roots in traditions concerned with consciousness, self-reflection and understanding the mind. Modern academic Psychology developed through institutions and scientific research.

Important developments include:

1916: First Psychology Department established at Calcutta University.

1922: Psychology became associated with the Indian Science Congress Association.

1924: Indian Psychological Association was established.

1928: N.N. Sengupta and Radhakamal Mukerjee published an important early textbook on Social Psychology.

Over time, Psychology in India expanded into areas such as education, health, defence and applied Psychology.

Q4. Explain the interdisciplinary nature of Psychology and its usefulness in everyday life.

Answer:

Psychology is interdisciplinary because human behaviour is complex and cannot be fully understood through a single discipline.

It is connected with:

Biology/Physiology → biological basis of behaviour
Neurology → brain and nervous system
Sociology → social relationships and behaviour
Anthropology → culture and human behaviour
Education → learning and development
Medicine/Health sciences → psychological aspects of health
Computer Science → cognition and information processing

Psychology in Everyday Life

Psychological knowledge helps us understand:
ourselves and others
learning and memory
relationships
decision-making
stress and adjustment
health and well-being
work and performance

Therefore, Psychology is both a scientific discipline and a practically useful field.