

COMMON SENSE PSYCHOLOGY QUIZ ANSWERS

ALL OF THE BELOW STATEMENTS ARE FALSE
AND ARE MYTHS BASED ON "COMMON SENSE" NOTIONS.

- T F 1. The titles "psychologist" and "psychiatrist" refer to the same profession.
FALSE: A "psychologist" attends "graduate school" and is trained primarily in research, statistics and talk therapy for those pursuing a "clinical" route. A "psychiatrist" attends "medical school" and is primarily trained in biology, medicine and prescribed medication.
- T F 2. Psychologists study behavior and the mind, but not biology.
FALSE: Psychologists study many things including both social (environmental) influence and biological and physiological influences on human behavior and are also interested in examining the "interaction" between biology and environment.
- T F 3. Some people never dream.
FALSE: Dreams are quite common and although many people will not remember their dreams it is impossible that someone or a particular individual has never dreamed during their sleep over the course of their life. In fact, since everyone dreams to a certain extent during their sleep, dream analysis or dream interpretation was a famous form of psychoanalysis during the early 1900's.
- T F 4. When we sleep, the brain sleeps as well.
FALSE: Sleep is categorized into REM and NREM sleep. During NREM sleep brain "delta" waves are active and brain activity is recorded during this division of sleep.
- T F 5. Negative reinforcement is the same as punishment.
FALSE: Negative reinforcement is the "removal" of a negative stimulus, which in turn rewards (reinforces) and "increases" the likelihood of a behavior to reoccur. Punishment is the "application" of a negative stimulus, which in turn "decreases" the likelihood of a behavior to reoccur.
- T F 6. We can't do much to improve our memory.
FALSE: Research shows that many mental and cognitive tasks such as rehearsal, repetition, word puzzles, etc., not only help improve memory but also keep it from degrading or getting worse.
- T F 7. Eyewitness testimony is some of the best evidence used by police and in court trials.
FALSE: Research shows that many eyewitness memories can be false, implanted, distorted or made-up. Many after the fact events and experiences can lead individuals to form new memories inconsistent with the real events or distorted ones that are not truly representative of the true events which occurred.
- T F 8. In order to be creative, a person must be very intelligent.
FALSE: According to psychological researchers like Howard Gardner, Robert Sternberg, Daniel Goleman and others, there are multiple forms of intelligence and many different to your traditional "IQ" measures of intelligence. Being "creative" is a form of intelligence considered to be "separate" from your traditional "IQ."
- T F 9. A person's intelligence is partially determined by brain size.
FALSE: Brain size and intelligence are not related.

- T F 10. Instinct determines many of our behaviors.
FALSE: Many factors determine our behaviors beyond “instincts.”
- T F 11. We can train infants to walk at an early age (e.g., 4 or 6 months of age).
FALSE: The average infant does not have the motor and central nervous system capacity to walk until they are 11-12 months old (average range 9-17 months). Although early movements, training and environmental conditions do contribute to motor development it does not eliminate the prior need for the infant to be ready physically to walk (i.e., bone growth, strength, central nervous system development, etc).
- T F 12. There is not much society can do to help the mentally retarded.
FALSE: Many types of special education programs, therapies and social skills training have been found to improve the social interactions of the mentally retarded.
- T F 13. All psychologists do is therapy.
FALSE: It is estimated that 50% or less of all psychologists have ever done therapy with a patient. Many psychologist are employed in non-clinical work such as teaching in colleges and universities, FBI, police departments, sports’ teams, research marketing firms, etc.
- T F 14. Shock treatment is often used for people with anxiety.
FALSE: This type of treatment is rare and only done in very few sever cases of “depression” and not with any other type of psychological ailments like anxiety disorders.
- T F 15. A correlation between two variables means that one of those variables causes the other.
FALSE: A correlation is a systematic “relationship” between two or more variables. You cannot infer causations from correlations. Causation can only be inferred through carefully designed and implemented “experimental” research.
- T F 16. Most of us would not follow instructions from an authority figure to hurt another person.
FALSE: A substantial amount of research beginning with the pioneering studies of Stanley Milgram during the 1960’s, shows that the majority of normal people would carry out orders to do harm onto others when explicitly ordered or instructed to do so by an authority figure (e.g., scientist, doctor, police, etc.).
- T F 17. Opposite types of people attract each other (opposites attract).
FALSE: Research shows that “similarity” along with proximity and attractiveness of individuals draws people together. The notion that “opposites” attract people to each other is a “myth” and there is an old saying that says, “opposites attract and then they attack!”
- T F 18. A person with schizophrenia has a split personality.
FALSE: Schizophrenia refers to a number of psychotic disorders with various cognitive, emotional and behavioral manifestations.
- T F 19. Most old people have some degree of senility.
FALSE: Many old people continue to work and live active and healthy lifestyles way into their 70’s and 80’s. The age of retirement and average lifespan has also dramatically increased over the years with improvements in technology, diet, medication, nutrition and medical assistance.

- T F 20. People with hypochondriasis (somatoform disorder) pretend to be sick.
- FALSE: This disorder refers to an imagines suffering of physical illness or, more generally, an exaggerated concern with one's physical health.
- T F 21. You can't change people's attitudes, opinions or beliefs.
- FALSE: Research shows that many attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, etc., are "learned" through the media, socialization, culture, etc., and can also be "unlearned."
- T F 22. If you spank or hit children when they misbehave it will make them more responsible and they will no longer misbehave.
- FALSE: Contrary to popular belief, corporal or physical punishment does more harm than good for the child's development and does not teach "responsibility" and instead teaches violence, avoidance, etc. Please visit www.stopspanking.com for more information.
- T F 23. People who rape do so because they have a strong craving for "sex."
- FALSE: Research shows that the primary reinforcing and influencing factor of rape is power, control and domination of another individual and not the "sexual" factor.
- T F 24. All your memory abilities fade and become worse with increasing age.
- FALSE: Memory comes in different types and forms and not all memory fades with age. "Episodic Memory" or memory for personal episodes or events in one's life fades or weakens with age. However, other forms of memory like "Semantic Memory" or memory for generic information like world facts and vocabulary words shows improvement and enhancement with increasing age.
- T F 25. Mutual attraction or love is the most important desired characteristic in a potential marriage partner or spouse across all cultures.
- FALSE: Although in "Western" countries like the US this appears to be true it is still not the universal truth. In fact, in many non-western countries like China, India, Pakistan, etc., "love" is given much less importance in comparison to other characteristics such as family, education, chastity, etc.
- T F 26. You are more likely to get help if there are more people around you. There is safety in numbers.
- FALSE: Research shows that the phenomenon of "diffusion of responsibility" or "bystander apathy" often occurs in large groups or crowds causing individuals in need of help (i.e., victim) to be less likely to receive the assistance they need from those around them.
- T F 27. Homeless are lazy, don't want to work and enjoy living on the streets or in cardboard boxes.
- FALSE: Many homeless suffer from mental illnesses, financial or family problems, drug addictions, gambling problems, discrimination, etc., and contrary to popular belief they really do not "enjoy" living in the streets or in cardboard boxes.
- T F 28. If someone already has a lot of money they are not going to steal your money because they don't need it.
- FALSE: Antisocial personality and other psychological disorders are some of the reasons con-artists and thieves steal and not because they necessarily need or don't need the money.

- T F 29. The elderly do not enjoy or have sex.
- FALSE: Many elderly and senior citizens continue to enjoy and have sex for many years. Elderly males have been known to father children in their seventies and eighties. In the case of elderly females their biological “menopause” status helps make sex for them more enjoyable and less stressful when the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy is removed.
- T F 30. Fantasy versus reality can be taught to children and will buffer the effects of violent cartoons, movies, etc. So it is harmless for people to be exposed to violent films, TV, etc.
- FALSE: The fantasy or reality is not the problem. The problem lies in the “dangers” of both fantasy and reality in transmitting “dangerous ideas” to both children and adults which then are often implemented into real behaviors mimicked from the “observations” (observational learning).
- T F 31. You can’t get pregnant the first time you have sex
- FALSE: You can get pregnant just about anytime you have sex and it doesn’t matter whether it is the first time or not. If you have started to ovulate as a female then you are “fertile” and can become pregnant if the male sperm enters your uterus and fallopian tubes before or during your ovulation.
- T F 32. You can’t get pregnant when you are having your period or menstruating
- FALSE: Your period or menstruation often lasts several days and sperm can survive in the uterus and fallopian tubes for up to one week. If sperm enters the vagina during the last day of the menstrual cycle and the female’s ovulation begins 5 days after the last menstrual day when the sperm entered, these sperm are still “alive” when the next ovulation is occurring which leaves the possibility for pregnancy to still occur.
- T F 33. You can’t get pregnant unless you have an orgasm.
- FALSE: Pregnancy occurs when the male sperm meets a female egg in the fallopian tubes and when implantation occurs. However, since the release of male sperm usually occurs during the “orgasm” and sexual peak phase, it is often necessary for “him” to have an orgasm but not for her.
- T F 34. Baby formula milk is just as good as breast milk. It has all the same ingredients. Thus, breast feeding is not important or advantageous.
- FALSE: Breast milk is clearly different, better, healthier and advantageous to formula milks. There are many ingredients in the natural mother’s milk like antibodies, proteins, etc., that are not present in formula milks. Research shows that infants who were breast fed compared to infants who were not breast fed clearly are cognitively and physically stronger and healthier people. Breast milk and formula milk are not the same and not equal either.
- T F 35. You can get to know someone pretty well during a long conversation with them. You don’t need to have a courtship or friendship with them to really get to know them.
- FALSE: Getting to know someone requires lots of time and observations in various circumstances and situations over long periods of time. Due to social desirability and other factors, first or limited exposures, experiences or conversations are not sufficient to get an “accurate” picture of someone’s personality. It is recommended that couples continue their courtships and friendships for at least two years before making the decision to commit or marry.
- T F 36. Taller people have more self-esteem and more of an authoritarian personality because they literally look down on people.
- FALSE: Self-esteem is influenced by many factors and not just by physical appearance. Factors such as academic, physical and social competence also play important factors. Personality types and “height” are also not related.

- T F 37. Teenager pregnancy is always a result of an “accident,” “incest” or “rape” and never a deliberate or intentional act on the part of the female.
- FALSE: Research that shows that many adolescent girls deliberately try and attempt to get pregnant by having frequent unprotected intercourse.
- T F 38. Observational learning or learning by watching others only occurs among “humans” and not among animal primates.
- FALSE: In different parts of Africa, chimpanzees show various tool-using traditions (e.g., termite fishing) that are passed from generation to generation through observational learning.
- T F 39. Those who cohabit or live with each other prior to marriage have a higher likelihood of a successful marriage because they get to “try” or “taste” a practice marriage before the real marriage.
- FALSE: Research shows a higher percentage of divorce among “cohabiting” couples as compared to couples who never cohabited. Those who cohabit have a stronger chance of divorce than those couples who never cohabited prior to marriage.
- T F 40. Dreams are the best way to measure personality. Also known as “dream analysis.”
- FALSE: Dream analysis or interpretation was one of the first techniques of personality assessment during the early 1900’s when “psychoanalysis” was the dominating force in clinical psychology. However, today the field of psychology has made many advancements in research and psychological assessment techniques that extend far beyond dream analysis like self-reports methods, interviews, experiments, etc. Dream analysis is considered to be an “obsolete” technique or method of personality assessment today.
- T F 41. Breast cancer only occurs among the elderly or post-menopausal women. You can’t get breast cancer as a young female or teenager.
- FALSE: Breast cancer is more common in women 30 or older but cases of breast cancer are also found in much younger women ranging in age from 15-29.
- T F 42. Newborns and infants have adult-like vision.
- FALSE: Infants prior to six months are very near-sighted and have weak vision. Visual acuity in infants does not develop until about six months.
- T F 43. An unborn fetus does not have hearing or audio recognition capabilities.
- FALSE: Research shows that fetuses have “audio” capacities and do recognize their mother’s voices while still in the mother’s womb.
- T F 44. If children learn or are exposed to more than one language that will make them confused and will hurt their learning and development.
- FALSE: Research shows that cognitive development is benefited and enhanced when children are exposed to and learn more than one language.
- T F 45. Mental illness does not affect the average person.
- FALSE: Mental illness is a condition that afflicts everyone, just like a cold or sore throat.

- T F 46. All mentally ill people are “dangerous.”
- FALSE: Mental illness is not marked by dangerous or violent behavior. Indeed, many psychiatric patients live and work in society; others withdraw in fear, secluding themselves from the world; and only a tiny minority exhibit violent behavior.
- T F 47. Children don’t get mental illness.
- FALSE: It is estimated that 12% of children in the US will develop a mental illness. Their illnesses include pervasive developmental disorders with learning disabilities and hyperactivity. Infants, young children and adolescents are vulnerable.
- T F 48. If I got to a mental health professional, I’ll look like a “wimp.”
- FALSE: Many people are becoming more open about emotional problems and going to mental health professionals with issues which are not, strictly speaking, mental illness. They may be experiencing problems in marriage, in a parent-child relationship, in a work situation, or due to the death of a loved one. Talking with a trained, supportive professional can lead them to think about issues in new ways and facilitate change.
- T F 49. Mentally ill people never recover.
- FALSE: Many mental illnesses are single episode illnesses. Once treated, they never recur; there is complete recovery. Other mental illnesses are recurring; there are periods of recovery or remission and periods when symptoms return. This is comparable to a physical illness such as arthritis in which symptoms come and go.
- T F 50. Mental illness is only found in certain countries or places in the world.
- FALSE: Many mental illnesses are found all over the world and in all countries. Mental illness is not geographically limited to any part of the world.
- T F 51. Race refers to the color of someone’s skin.
- FALSE: Race refers to any of the wide varieties of physical characteristics or traits humans possess (e.g., skin color, height, weight, hair and blood type, etc. Race does not just refer to skin color.
- T F 52. Race and ethnicity are the same.
- FALSE: Race refers to any physical characteristic or trait while ethnicity refers to your ancestry or country of origin. These concepts are not the same and have different meanings.
- T F 53. Ethnicity and culture are the same.
- FALSE: Ethnicity refers to your ancestry or country of origin while culture refers to the totality of the human experience. These concepts are not the same and have different meanings.
- T F 54. A “psychologist” and “psychiatrist” are the same thing and do the same work.
- FALSE: A psychologist has an advanced degree in psychology by attending graduate school. Psychologists are primarily trained in research, statistics and critical thinking. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor and primarily trained in biology and physiology by attending medical school. A clinical psychologist conducts talk therapy and treats mental disorders without prescribing medication. However, a psychiatrist prescribes drugs and treats mental disorders primarily through psychotropic medications.

- T F 55. People who commit suicide do it for “attention” getting.
- FALSE: The number one cause of suicide is untreated depression. Most individuals who show a desire or interest to end their lives, do so because they are unhappy and depressed. Most of these individuals are suffering from “learned hopelessness” and mood disorders like depression or other psychological illnesses and need professional help.
- T F 56. Dual parents are always better for children.
- FALSE: Children are worse off in cases where there is psychological and/or physical abuse in a relationship between a mother and father. Witnessing or experiencing these events may cause “trauma” and other negative adverse effects on children. Thus, divorce, separation or single-parent environments are more beneficial under these circumstances. Divorce should always be a last resort, but is not always the worse alternative either.
- T F 57. If you are “tuff,” you won’t get Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- FALSE: PTSD is a result of witnessing, experiencing or even just observing a traumatic event (e.g., killing, rape, explosion, etc.). Thus, one’s physical strength or “toughness” is irrelevant. Individuals of all types, ages, strength, etc., can and do suffer from PTSD. This is an illness and NOT a weakness.
- T F 58. Once someone is suicidal, he or she will be suicidal forever.
- FALSE: People who want to kill themselves are "suicidal" only for a limited period of time. During this time they either move beyond it, get help or die.
- T F 59. If someone tried to kill themselves once, there is a much smaller chance that they will try again.
- FALSE: As many as 80% of all completed suicides occurred after previous attempts. This is especially true for young people.
- T F 60. Suicidal people clearly want to die.
- FALSE: Ambivalence is a marked feature of a suicidal person. Many don't want to die, but simply want a way to escape an unbearable situation.
- T F 61. It is a bad idea to ask people if they are suicidal. Talking about suicide might give them the idea that they should kill themselves.
- FALSE: People might think it's safer not to talk about suicide with someone considering it. On the contrary, talking will help them deal with some of the heavy issues involved and diffuse the tension. A willingness to listen shows that people care and are willing to help.
- T F 62. If a depressed or suicidal person feels better it usually means that the problem has passed.
- FALSE: If someone who has been depressed or suicidal suddenly seems happier, don't assume that the danger has passed. A person, having decided to kill themselves, may feel "better" or feel a sense of relief having made the decision. Also, a severely depressed person may lack the energy to put their suicidal thoughts into action. Once they regain their energies, they may well go ahead and do it.
- T F 63. Young men are at the highest risk of killing themselves.
- FALSE: Males between the ages of 18 and 24 are in the group with the highest growth rate of suicide, but older men are actually at the highest risk of killing themselves.

T F 64. People who talk about killing themselves will never do it. It's a way of letting off steam. Those who kill themselves don't normally talk about it. They just go ahead and do it.

FALSE: Most people either talk about it or do something to indicate that they are going to kill themselves. There is no need to blame yourself if you didn't see it coming. If you are worried about someone you know, make sure you read all about the warning signs of suicide. Look for the signs you may see before a suicide attempt, and also find out what you could do to help.