



# Step Up to A level Psychology

## SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social Psychology can give us an insight into why we behave in certain ways around others and how we can go about understanding ourselves better in our world.



Think about how friends, family, teachers and even strangers may influence your behaviour. Consider how you and your friends probably share similar interests and wear similar clothes. Is this by chance or do others affect how you behave and feel?

How is this all explained in Psychology? Let's first look at conformity in Psychology.

What is Conformity?



## **Conformity**

**Watch the clips below and answer the questions**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8BkzvP19v4>

This is so funny, would you have stood up to the beep? Why did she?

The Elevator test

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDAbdMv14ls>

Would you have turned in the elevator? Why did she turn? Did anyone tell her to turn?

Watch the clip below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ft7mwyiPylo>

Why did they stand in ovation? Shocking - He didn't even make sense in the second half of his talk!

Examples of Conformity in Episodes of 'Friends'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gnxZF\\_mLKg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gnxZF_mLKg)

When your desire to conform with the society norms makes you almost loose a friend. What would you have done? Can you think of examples were you go along with society norms?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkFZgW42tQ8>

Do you follow the crowd? Why might you? OR why do some people? It's ok to be YOURSELF!

Conformity in Movies:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJAww5g34bE>

Have you watched the movie Mean Girls? Would you follow the 'plastics' and all the rules they have to be part of the group?



## Task 2: Studies in Psychology

Two of the most famous studies in Psychology were carried out by Social Psychologists Solomon Asch (1951, 1955) and Philip Zimbardo (1973). In Social Psychology you will study conformity and conformity to social roles. These studies highlight just how far people are willing to go to follow others, even when it goes against what they know is right.

What is conformity? Write a definition in the box below.

**Extension:** Can you think of some examples of everyday conformity?



## Task 2: Types of Conformity

**Task:** Research about the different types of conformity and write an example of each below.

**1. Internalisation** - when someone genuinely accepts the group norms both privately and publically. For e.g.

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**2. Identification** - when someone wants to be a part of a group so they change their opinions publically, even if they don't agree with everything the group stand for. For e.g.:

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**3. Compliance** - this means going along with others in public, even when we do not agree with them and there is no change to personal opinions or behaviour. For e.g.:

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## Explanations of Conformity

There are two explanations as to why people conform - **Normative Social Influence (NSI)** and **Informational Social Influence (ISI)**. Find out what each explanation of conformity is and write the definition in the table below.

<b>Normative Social Influence</b>	
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<b>Informational Social Influence</b>	
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**Asch's Line Study (1951, 1955)**

Asch conducted an experiment to investigate the extent to which social pressure from a majority group could affect a person to conform. Research 'Asch's (1951, 1955) Line Judgement Experiment' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG1suVowgAI>) in order to complete the next task.

**Task 4:** Describe the study by Asch (1951, 1955) using the following points:

- Aim – what was the aim/purpose behind this research?
- Procedure – a step-by-step method of how Asch conducted the study, along with the participants who were involved and the materials used.
- Findings - what were the results?
- Conclusion – what did Asch conclude?

**Challenge:** Can you think of any issues with this study? Write those down too!



Using your knowledge of conformity, explain how Asch's study can be both an example of NSI and ISI.

using the points below:

- Aim - what was the aim/purpose behind this research?
- Procedure – the step-by-step method used by Zimbardo to conduct the study, the participants who were involved, how they were assigned to their role etc.
- Findings - what were the results? What happened as the study progressed?
- Conclusion – what did Zimbardo conclude?



Look at the following websites. What do these show about conformity? Add your notes to the box below.

[www.lucifereffect.com](http://www.lucifereffect.com)  
<https://www.prisonexp.org>  
[www.bbcprisonstudy.org](http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org)

**If you still want to know more, take a look at the following:**

The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015) - film about Zimbardo's study available on Netflix.

#### **Task 5: Research Methods: Ethical Issues**

Both studies by Asch and Zimbardo raised a lot of questions about the ethics of the studies. How had they been allowed to carry out such unethical studies? What about the risk of harm to participants? Psychologists now have to follow a strict set of ethical guidelines set out by the BPS (British Psychological Society). Read more about ethical issues on the BPS website: [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk)

**In A Level Psychology you will study the following ethical principles. Define each one. You can research this if needed.**

- Right to withdraw
- Protection from harm (physical and psychological)
- Informed consent (adults and children)
- Privacy and confidentiality.

**Why do you think it is important that psychologists follow ethical issues when conducting**

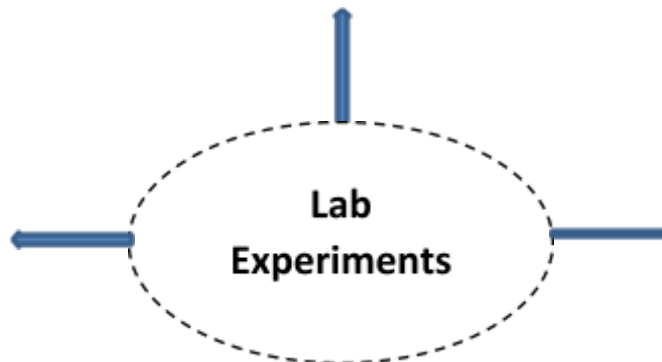


**What ethical issues can you identify in Asch and Zimbardo's studies?**

Deception		
Right to withdraw		
Psychological or physical harm		
Informed consent		

**Research Methods: Experiments**

Asch and Zimbardo's studies are examples of a laboratory experiment. Use the space below to identify features of a lab experiment.







Lab experiments can be both good and bad in helping us investigate different areas of psychology that we may not be able to research otherwise. Look at the following website and note down in your own words some of the strengths and weaknesses of lab experiments.

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/laboratory-experiments>