

Psychology: Science for the 21st Century

Instruction Booklet for *Exploring Behavior Week*

Courtesy of:
Science Directorate
American Psychological Association
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Welcome!

Thank you for participating in **Exploring Behavior Week!** Public understanding of and support for scientific research is critical. Spreading the news about psychological science is also an important way to attract talented young people into psychological science and to ensure continued and adequate funding opportunities. But public understanding does not develop without some help! When the 1990's were declared "The Decade of the Brain," people interested in promoting public awareness of neuroscience developed an outreach program called "Brain Awareness Week." The centerpiece of the program was visits to K-12 classrooms by graduate students, to introduce children to the basic ideas behind brain research. Similarly, the American Psychological Association has developed **Exploring Behavior Week**, as part of the Decade of Behavior initiative (www.decadeofbehavior.org), to advance public understanding of the behavioral and social sciences in general and of psychological science in particular. We believe that Exploring Behavior Week can have a significant impact on the future of psychology. Exploring Behavior Week is intended to benefit everyone involved. We expect that your classroom visit will enrich the students' education, be helpful to teachers, and be rewarding to you, both as a learning experience and as a way of participating in the stewardship of our field. So dive in, have some fun – and please, let us know how it goes!

Your Role: Opportunity & Tasks

You may already have extensive teaching experience, or you may just be starting out as an instructor. Moreover, even if you are a seasoned instructor, you may have had little experience teaching students in grades 8-12. This instruction booklet – and the associated Powerpoint lecture file that accompanies it – is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to give an engaging lecture for students in Grades 8-12. This instruction book offers you a few general lecturing tips and also provides you with specific instructions about the lecture that we have designed for **Exploring Behavior Week**.

In addition to using this instruction book, you can also download a complete **Powerpoint file** that contains everything you will need to give this lecture. The Web address for this file is: www.apa.org/science/ebw.html

You can also email us at: science@apa.org

The Powerpoint file for this lecture has been developed by a team of scientists with many years of collective teaching experience and many teaching awards under their belts. Thus, we think that you will find this file very useful. The Powerpoint file not only includes all the overheads (visual images) you will need for a 45 minute lecture but also includes **detailed notes and instructions** about each overhead. If you are an experienced instructor who is already familiar with a particular topic covered in these notes, you may not need the notes at all – or you may wish to adapt them in major ways. On the other hand, if you are just starting out as an instructor, the notes should make it very easy for you to get comfortable with the **Exploring Behavior** lecture. The only thing you will need to benefit from the lecture notes is a basic familiarity with Powerpoint. If you are unfamiliar with Powerpoint, we will also be happy to send you a physical set of lecture overheads.

Because this lecture is merely an introduction to the field of psychology, it does not require a detailed knowledge of any specific area of psychology. On the other hand, for those of you who are interested in learning more about some of the specific research topics covered in the lecture, there is an Appendix in this booklet (“For Further Reading”) that will provide you with references to a few classic and contemporary research articles that are relevant to each major demonstration covered in the lecture.

Your participation in **Exploring Behavior Week** is a valuable opportunity to continue learning how to communicate to nonspecialist audiences about what you do and why it is important. It also is an opportunity to be an ambassador for your field and institution. With these goals in mind, we offer you a general recipe for success:

Arrange a visit to a Grade 8-12 classroom

You may contact a school directly (see sample letter at back), with an introductory letter from the APA Science Directorate (at back), via a TOPSS member (ask us for a local contact), or through a faculty member connected with a school through research or an enrolled child. You can arrange your visit any time of the year that is convenient for you and the specific classrooms that you choose to visit. A 45-minute visit to a science class would be an ideal visit, but flexibility will be an asset. Find out what, if anything, is needed by way of written approval for your visit. Ask the teacher how much the students have been taught about psychology. Set a time and date for the visit and *confirm with the teacher a few days in advance*. Take evaluation forms for the students and the teacher. Be sure to ask about the availability of an overhead projector, as you will need one. Finally, consider partnering with another student or faculty member and giving a joint lecture.

Familiarize yourself with the hands-on demonstrations to use in Part B

The demonstration materials provided here were chosen because they quickly and reliably illustrate basic psychological phenomena in an engaging way. If you substitute other activities for these, please keep in mind that demonstrations should be quick and reliable. If you wish to learn more about the research behind these hands-on activities, consult the Appendix ("For Further Reading") included at the end of this booklet.

Select a topic of interest to you for Part C

In Part C, you will have the opportunity to talk briefly about a topic that interests you personally. Most instructors will probably wish to choose a specific topic in which he or she has a great deal of expertise (e.g., because of having conducted research in this area). Regardless of what topic you choose, try to present it in a user-friendly way, avoiding jargon and complex messages (e.g. Don't say things like "I'm interested in the convergent and discriminant validity of the neuroticism factor of the Big-5 as this relates to perfectionism versus need for approval as diatheses for major depressive episodes." Instead, say things like, "I'm interested in what makes some people more susceptible to depression than others.").

Work with the presentation outline

Review the presentation suggested here. Develop a clear idea of the specific things you personally hope to accomplish in your lecture. If you wish, edit the materials to better reflect your goals. Give a practice lecture with friends and get some helpful feedback before you give the actual lecture.

Have fun!

We hope that you will teach, learn, and enjoy yourself during your classroom visit. If you feel a bit nervous, just remember that in comparison with your audience, **you are a true expert!!** When you are done, we ask that you send us the program evaluation forms that will help us improve the program. This includes forms to be filled out by students as well as forms for you and for the instructor whose class you will visit.

Presentation Overview

Part A: Opening

- Title Slide – “Psychology: Science for the 21st century”
- Decade of Behavior – Context for your visit
- Definition of psychology
- About Psychologists – activities, workplaces, schooling
- Examples of psychological research topics

Part B: Demonstrations

- American flag color afterimage
- Titchener illusion: A contrast effect in the perception of size
- The checkerboard-shadow illusion
- The scintillating grid illusion
- Stroop task
- False memory demonstration
- Name-letter effect

Part C: A Personal Touch

- Briefly summarize one of your own research interests. Emphasize why this topic is important and how it can be studied scientifically.

Part D: Summing up

- Psychological science is...

Presentation Scripting

Perhaps the most important thing to understand about this booklet and presentation materials is that they are provided to help rather than hinder you in preparing for your visit. We ask that you ensure that the students learn (1) that **some psychologists do scientific research**, and (2) that there is such a thing as the **Decade of Behavior**. Otherwise, feel free to revise the materials in any way that you choose. As noted earlier, this could include elimination of materials that you do not find helpful as well as addition of new materials. Of course, many instructors will enjoy working from a set of materials that others have found to be successful, and so you are also free to use everything exactly as it appears. The important thing is that you feel comfortable with the materials and the outline that you actually use. Remember that you can edit the Powerpoint file, or the notes that are a part of the file, in any way you choose. In the spirit of helping you refine and shape your lecture, we offer you a few basic tips below, followed by some specific advice about each section of your lecture.

General Tips

1. **ENGAGE:** Engage students as much as possible: Whenever possible use open-ended questions to prompt discussions. Use second-person phrasing as much as possible, i.e., referring to students directly versus making abstract assertions. For example, it's better to say "If you become a psychologist you may work in a laboratory" rather than "Some psychologists work in laboratories."). Express your enthusiasm and make eye contact with your audience.
2. **SIMPLIFY:** Keep up a brisk pace, and avoid elaborating extensively on fine points as you might do in a more professional setting. You won't be able to cram a semester's worth of psychology into the visit, no matter what, so stay focused on the few points you do want students to remember.
3. **ADAPT:** People are the same everywhere – and are different everywhere. Thus, Grade 8-12 students and classes will be alike in some respects and diverse in others. This document cannot begin to address all of the developmental and sociocultural issues that will influence your lecture. For example, evolutionary theories would go over much better in some schools than in others. At any school for kids age 8-12, use of adult language is likely to cause serious problems. The generic advice, then, is to be mindful of the general developmental level of your audience and to pay attention as well to individual, local, or regional variations in school populations.

Specific Advice

PART A. With few exceptions, students in Grades 8-12 will have had no psychology

coursework and little if any exposure to psychology as a science. Part A is designed to tell them why you are visiting, what psychology is, providing a general definition and overview of the diversity of work venues and activities of psychologists. Consider beginning with an open-ended question to the students about what they think psychology is and what psychologists do. You also might ask them to name “hot topics” – things that they really care about – and assure them that psychological research can speak to some or all of them.

The slides after the title slide provide backdrop for talking about:

- Your visit as part of the Decade of Behavior initiative

This slide is a “This visit brought to you by...” announcement. Simply make the point that lots of people from many fields – economics, nursing, anthropology, etc. – are working together on important issues (like health, education, safety, prosperity, democracy), and that your visit is a part of an effort to make people aware of this. “Brand” your visit, but you needn’t belabor the point.

- What psychology is
- What psychologists do
- Where psychologists work
- What schooling leads to careers in psychology

Note that the list of venues and of activities ends with the item most directly relevant to scientific research. Students will just be beginning to understand what science is, and here is a chance to shape their understanding of it. There is no simple definition that everyone would agree on, but an example is “the creation and testing of ideas about the world, using evidence gathered and interpreted with agreed-upon rules.” For other suggestions, see *Science for All Americans*, online at

www.project2061.org/tools/sfaaol/chap1.htm

Pilot testing indicated strong interest in the “schooling” question. Thus, a slide is included. You may wish to simplify further (e.g. omit years), elaborate (e.g. how the level of teaching differs with degree), or move the slide to later in the presentation. Let your sense of the class’s interests be your guide. The key themes here are the richness of the field and the inclusion of scientific approaches.

Part B

Use these demonstrations to enable students to experience first-hand the subject matter of psychological research. Remember to point out that these are simply examples of all of the many things that psychologists study. (Additional detail is provided on Pages 11-14.)

Part C

Here you'll be in your element, talking about something specific that fascinates you (often your own research). Even if your own research is exclusively within one subdisciplinary specialty, try to say something about at least one other perspective that has been profitably used to study the same topic (e.g., "I study the role of personality in depression, but other psychologists study the role of culture in depression. They are trying to figure out why people in some countries get depressed more often than people in other countries.") Students should not come away thinking that, for example, if they are interested in drug use, they'll have to be a neuroscientist. Learning, clinical, and social psychology, among others, speak to this issue, too. An illustration below on the topic of eating may be useful as a model. After soliciting the students' interests in food (e.g. eating disorders, favorite or weird foods, being hungry if lunch time is approaching), you could briefly touch on 2-3 of the following topics:

- Learning: Pavlov showed that, through learning, salivation can be controlled by places, sights, and sounds. If you get sick after eating a new food, you'll feel disgusted the next time you smell or taste that food.
- Cognitive: Body image is related to attitudes about eating and self-esteem. People will refuse to drink lemonade stirred with a brand new fly swatter just because of the idea of connecting their drink to dirty flies.
- Clinical: There are large gender differences in susceptibility to eating disorders.
- Personality/Individual Differences: There are chemicals that some people can taste very well and other people can hardly taste at all; genes play a role in this. When stressed, some people eat more than usual and others eat less.
- Developmental: What a woman eats while pregnant influences the baby's flavor preferences; this is true for cats, too. Family meal patterns early in life influence children's later ability to regulate eating.
- Cross-cultural: What is considered "food" differs across cultures. In the U. S., we do not treat dogs as "food," but some people elsewhere eat dogs. Conversely, drinking cow's milk and eating beef are common in the U. S. but are considered disgusting or even immoral in some Asian cultures.
- Social: Someone who just had a big meal may start eating all over again, if friends order pizza. In the U. S., the female gender role includes being a "dainty eater," so some women will eat a meal before a dinner date, so that they can "make a good impression."
- Evolutionary: Many poisons are bitter-tasting, and the rejection of bitter-tasting foods by most species seems to be an adaptation to this fact. Predators tend to have differently positioned eyes and ears than do prey animals.
- Physiological: Activating a specific part of a rat's brain can turn eating "on" and

“off.” People with tumors in that area cannot control their eating behavior.

Think about whether to use examples that relate to one another (e.g., how gender roles and body image contribute to the development of an eating disorder) or that cross very different domains. Either approach can convey the importance of using many approaches.

The biggest keys to a successful lecture in this section are probably your enthusiasm and your ability to frame your research in a language that is understandable to kids in grades 8-12. As we noted before, it’s also very useful to ask your audience questions to keep them involved (e.g., by asking students whether they have ever experienced or observed the kind of thing you are discussing.)

Part D

Just wrapping up here. The photos in the “Psychological Science is...” slide come from APA’s Summer Science Institute 2000 at the University of California at Berkeley, in which a diverse group of 32 talented undergraduates participated. Feel free to mention this to the students. The key themes are that psychological science is exciting and is part of a big effort to improve our lives in important ways.

Technical notes

If you received the presentation template electronically, there is a chance that you will encounter some technical glitches. For instance, the size of the file will be a problem for some users (e.g., it will not fit on a single floppy disk). If you have trouble receiving, opening or using the presentation and would like us to send you the presentation as a series of smaller files or as a set of transparencies, just say so. If you want color transparencies for the Stroop or afterimage demonstrations, check with any faculty member who teaches Introductory Psychology, or request them from us. Also, if your PowerPoint software does not include the font, “Copperplate Gothic Light,” some of the text may be in mixed case or otherwise look funny. Check through the presentation carefully for this and any other anomalies, and edit it so that it looks the way you want it to.

Help is available

If you have questions at any time, please feel free to contact APA’s Science Directorate (202-336-6000, scistudent@apa.org). Also, consider consulting with your colleagues, whether student or faculty. Increased collaboration among students and faculty, even in different departments, who otherwise wouldn’t get to know each other would be a wonderful “side effect” of this program! Our mailing address: American Psychological Association, Science Directorate, Attn: Exploring Behavior Week, 750 First St NE, Washington DC, 20002-4242.

Guidelines for Demonstrations

Afterimages

Objectives

- Demonstration of a psychological science research method.
- To demonstrate opponency in the human color vision system
- To stimulate thinking about seeing things that aren't "there"

Ideas for Set-up

- How many colors can we see? Is there a separate part of the eye or brain for each one? Or are there just a few special colors?
- How does the visual system work? Is it like a camera?

Instructions

- Place overhead on projector in darkened room.
- Instruct to stare continuously at the center of the overhead for **one minute**.
- Instruct to continue staring at the screen when picture is removed.
- Remove overhead.
- After 5-10 seconds, ask students to describe what they see. (Helpful Hint: Blinking often strengthens the afterimage.)

Possible Discussion

- Point out pairings (red where green was, blue/yellow, black/white).
- Ask how they could make someone see yellow without using yellow (show them blue for awhile).
- Ask what this might mean for choosing paint for a room, making a neat poster, what happens when you see a camera flash, etc.

Supplemental Information

The mechanisms for color vision have been worked out far better than for many other phenomena due to the use of multiple methods. Also, opponency is a great example of "efficiency": We don't need receptors for every color, just a few types to code the visible spectrum. Finally, color blindness may come up, and students may be interested to know that true color blindness is quite rare but that anomalous color vision (especially red/green confusion) is fairly common, especially among men.

General Lesson About Research

In psychological research, we explore how the brain turns what is "out there" into

personal experience. We do this by using different colors or shapes, and sometimes by measuring brain activity directly. Understanding how the brain and experience are related is a big challenge to scientists.

Visual illusions

Objectives

- Further demonstrations of psychological science research methods.
- To stimulate thinking about seeing things that aren't "there"
- To stimulate thinking about adaptive and maladaptive aspects of visual judgment

Possible Set-up

- Ask students if they think they ever see things that "aren't really there"
- Ask them if they have ever seen "spots before their eyes"?

Instructions

- Each visual illusion is self-explanatory.
- The first is the **Titchener illusion** (a contrast effect involving size).
- The second illusion (the **checkerboard**) is particularly dramatic because it relies on more than one principle.
- The third illusion is the **scintillating grid** – a variation on the Hermann illusion.

Discussion

- How much of what we "see" is really in our heads?
- Do visual illusions illustrate what is wrong with our vision? Or do they illustrate how it works and why it works so well?
- What aspects of this demonstration are instances of the scientific method?

Supplemental Information

See the articles included in the Appendix of these instructions for further reading.

General Lesson About Research

In psychological research, we explore how the brain turns what is "out there" into personal experience. This is particularly true of research on visual illusions.

The Stroop Effect

Objectives

- Demonstration of a psychological science research method.
- To demonstrate automatic information processing
- To stimulate thinking about cognitive efficiency, role of prior knowledge, and sources of error

Set-up

- Ask students if they “know their colors”
- Put the first (easy) Stroop overhead up, and ask for volunteers to read the words and name the colors
- Point out how easy that is

Instructions

“Do not read the words but say the ink colors in which they're printed. Do this as fast as you can.”

Discussion

- Ask volunteers to describe what it was like
- Ask volunteers to explain what was going on
- What aspects of this demonstration are instances of the scientific method?
- Choose 1-2 of the following: What would happen if you –
 - tried this with a young child who had not yet learned to read?
 - tried this with someone who was just learning to speak English?
 - used the same order of ink colors but wrote non-color words?

Supplemental Information

From the APA website: “When you look at one of the words, you see both its color and its meaning. If those two pieces of evidence are in conflict, you have to make a choice. Because experience has taught you that word meaning is more important than ink color, interference occurs when you try to pay attention only to the ink color.”

General Lesson About Research

In psychological research, we ask questions about what happens when we try to do more than one thing at a time. Because in real life we often try to do many things at once (like driving and talking on a cell phone), figuring out when we can do this well and when problems occur is very important.

False Memory Demonstration

Objectives

- Demonstration of a psychological science research method.
- To demonstrate the active, reconstructive nature of memory
- To stimulate thinking about the role of prior knowledge and sources of error in memory of the past

Set-up

- Ask students to remember something that happened earlier in the day – like what they had for breakfast, who was on the bus, etc.
- Ask them if they have a “good memory”
- Ask them to take out some scrap paper; have some notebook paper to distribute if they don’t have any handy

Instructions

- Read aloud the words in the list at a rate of about one word every two seconds.
- Ask them to count backward from 42 to 0, by threes.
- Show them the six test words on your word test slide. Ask them to circle the words they heard.
- Ask for a show of hands for EACH of the SIX test words. Make a special note of how many people circled the word “sweet.” Show the list while they check their work. Point out that sleep was NOT on the list.

Discussion

- Are the errors surprising? Interesting? Troubling? Why?
- Are they still sure about what they had for breakfast, or who was on the bus (or whatever else they reported remembering)?
- Why is memory “imperfect”? (efficiency of schematic processing)
- What aspects of this demonstration are instances of the scientific method?

Supplemental Information

False memory research has been at the center of high-stakes debates about eyewitness testimony and sexual abuse. Understanding memory is key to being able to sort out what really happened and making important decisions on that basis.

General Lesson About Research

Psychological research can lead to weird, unsettling or uncomfortable conclusions. Sometimes we get answers that we don’t expect or even want – like people clearly

“remembering” something that never happened, or not remembering something that did – but it is the things we don’t understand that makes the research worthwhile.

Name Letter Effect

Objectives

- Demonstration of a psychological science research method.
- To demonstrate the role of the self-concept in shaping judgment and preferences
- To stimulate thinking about real world applications of a basic psychological effect

Set-up

- Inform students that the final activity is about personal preferences. Emphasize that students must “trust their gut feelings and intuitions.”
- It is important that students write their preferences down; as for the memory demonstration, have some paper to distribute if they don’t have any handy

Instructions

- Students are asked to list their six favorite and six least favorite letters
- After they finish both lists, ask students to circle all letters, in either list, that occur in their first names (e.g., Jenny would circle the letters J, E, N, and Y).
- Ask students to compare the two lists. For the large majority of students, the favorite list will include more of their (circled) name letters than the least favorite list.

Discussion

- Is this an error, like the memory error – or is it merely a preference? Is it irrational? Is it troubling? (Most would say no.)
- Would this preference be irrational if it influenced people’s daily judgments and decisions (e.g., where people choose to live)?

Supplemental Information

As noted in the Appendix, name letter preferences do appear to influence major life decisions, and researchers are currently debating whether this is rational or irrational. They are also using laboratory experiments to try to determine the basis of the effect (e.g., is it classical conditioning?)

General Lesson About Research

Psychological research can be applied to daily judgments and decisions. Experiments are usually needed to figure out the basis of a psychological effect.

Summing Up

Emphasize that psychological research is science. Point out that psychologists are using science to improve our lives. Point out that it can be really fun!!

A Note About Professionalism

Remember that you are serving as an ambassador for APA and for the entire science of psychology. The impression you make on these students and their regular instructor will say a lot to them about psychology. This means that you should behave professionally and politely even if, for some reason, your audience does not. In addition, remember that this is a teaching activity and should be used only for this purpose (e.g., instructors should not collect any data during their visits).

Evaluation Forms

The future success of **Exploring Behavior Week** will depend on the feedback we receive from you and the classes you visit.

We are starting with simple forms that focus on a few essential issues. Please allow 5 minutes at the end of your presentation for students to complete these forms.

The following pages include forms to be completed by:

- each student in the class you visit
- the teacher and aides in the class you visit and
- you

Notice that students are NOT asked to evaluate you as an instructor. Instead, they are asked to help us evaluate this program. When you have collected up the evaluations, please send the evaluations, along with your own feedback to:

American Psychological Association
Science Directorate
Attn: Exploring Behavior Week
750 1st Street NE
Washington DC 20002-4242

THANK YOU!

Exploring Behavior Week Evaluation

Please tell us what you learned today by answering each question on the rating scale below, where ONE (1) is the lowest rating and SEVEN (7) is the highest rating. For each question, circle the **one specific number** (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7) that best describes what you think.

Were you surprised to learn that some psychologists do scientific research?

not at all somewhat very much
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How much did you learn about psychological research today?

very little somewhat a great deal
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In comparison with how you felt yesterday, do you now feel any more or less interested in studying psychology someday? My personal interest in studying psychology someday is:

much lower about the same much higher
than it was as it was than it was
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Your ideas are important to us! Please describe what you found most and least valuable in today's presentation.

Most valuable:

Least valuable:

Are there any topics in psychology that you would like to know more about?

Exploring Behavior Week Evaluation

Dear Instructor:

Thank you very much for inviting psychology into your class today. We look forward to continuing and improving the **Exploring Behavior Week** project, and your feedback will be invaluable to us as we proceed. Please take a moment to let us know:

1. How understandable the presentation was for your students:

2. How valuable the presentation was for your students:

3. What was best about the presentation:

4. How the presentation could be improved:

To You, The Volunteer Instructor

Please share your thoughts about Exploring Behavior Week.

Your Name: _____ (optional, for acknowledgement)

Visited: _____ (school, city/state, type of class)

1. Overall, how do you feel about your presentation? Include your sense of impact on the students.
2. How can the instruction booklet be improved?
3. How can the presentation template/slides be improved?
4. What was most valuable and/or most difficult about the presentation?
5. Would you recommend participation in this activity to peers? Why or why not?

Other comments:

Sample Letter to School Principal

Dear Principal Skinner:

I am writing to you as a graduate student in the psychology department at Fordstan University. We are participating in a program called **Exploring Behavior Week**, and we hope to involve students in your school. We recognize the importance of increasing public understanding of scientific research, especially if we hope to attract talented young people into science. To do this, we would like to talk with students in grades 8-12 about psychological science – what it is, what questions researchers ask, and how they attempt to answer them. This program is modeled after an outreach program “Brain Awareness Week” that was part of the “The Decade of the Brain” initiative in the 1990s. Like this program, the current *Exploring Behavior Week* program is designed to introduce students to the scientific method. Our program involves both information about psychological research and information about career opportunities and training for psychologists.

Graduate students from our university would like to come visit one of your classrooms to do a lively, interactive presentation. Our outreach program is designed to tell students what psychology is, and provide an overview of the diversity of work venues and activities of psychologists. The key themes that we hope to convey are that psychological science is exciting and is part of an effort to improve our lives in important ways. We emphasize the richness of the field and the inclusion of scientific approaches to demonstrate that psychology is life – it is about what we all do, feel, and think – and that psychological research can reveal some of life’s secrets.

Ideally, we would like to talk in a Grade 8-12 science class for approximately 45 minutes, but we would be happy to present to any class (e.g., a history or social studies class). We are also flexible in terms of the day and time of day that we visit. We hope that this will be a great learning opportunity for everyone involved, and we would be happy to answer any questions you have about this program. We would appreciate it if you would forward this letter along to any teachers, science educators in particular, who might be interested in talking with us to arrange a class visit. Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. The graduate students who are interested in visiting your school are myself, Albert Bandura, and B. F. Skinner. We can be reached by email at socool@fordstan.edu or by phone at 555-5555. Thank you for your assistance. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jonas Salk, MA

Introductory Letter from APA Science Directorate

If it would facilitate your visit to have us send an introductory letter to the school principal, we will be happy to do so. Please send us an email including: your name, institution, position (undergraduate student, graduate student, faculty) and telephone number; the principal's name; and the school's name and address. We will send the following to the principal, and email you when it has been mailed so you will know when to make your follow-up call to the principal.

Dear Principal Skinner:

I am writing to you from the Science Directorate at the American Psychological Association in Washington DC about an exciting outreach program called **Exploring Behavior Week**. We recognize the importance of increasing public understanding of scientific research, especially if we hope to attract talented young people into science. To do this, we would like to talk with students in grades 8-12 about psychological science – what it is, what questions researchers ask, and how they attempt to answer them. This program is modeled after an outreach program “Brain Awareness Week” that was part of the “The Decade of the Brain” initiative in the 1990s. Like this program, the current *Exploring Behavior Week* program is designed to introduce students to the scientific method. Our program involves both information about psychological research and information about career opportunities and training for psychologists.

Jonas Salk, a PhD student from Fordstan University would like to come visit one of your classrooms to do an interactive presentation. Our outreach program is designed to tell students what psychology is, and provide an overview of the diversity of work venues and activities of psychologists. The key themes that we hope to convey are that psychological science is exciting and is part of an effort to improve our lives in important ways. We emphasize the richness of the field and the inclusion of scientific approaches to demonstrate that psychology is life – it is about what we all do, feel, and think – and that psychological research can reveal some of life's secrets.

Ideally, Jonas would like to talk in a grade 8-12 science class for approximately 45 minutes, but he would be happy to present to any class (e.g., a history or social studies class). He is also flexible in terms of the day and time of day that he visits. We hope that this will be a great learning opportunity for everyone involved, and we would be happy to answer any questions you have about this program. We would appreciate it if you would forward this letter along to any teachers, science educators in particular, who might be interested in talking with us to arrange a class visit. Please do not hesitate to contact us for more information. You can expect a phone

call soon from Jonas, but you should also feel free to contact us if you have any questions. We can be reached by email at science@apa.org or by phone at 202 336-5925. Thank you for your assistance. We hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Kurt Salzinger
Executive Director for Science

Appendix: For Further Reading

Here are some classic and contemporary research articles that are relevant to each of the four topics covered in the demonstrations section of the *Exploring Behavior Week* lecture.

I. Visual Afterimages and Visual Illusions:

Coren, S. (1992). The moon illusion: A different view through the legs. *Perceptual & Motor Skills*, 75, 827-831.

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