The Simple AP® Psychology Unit 4 Cheat Sheet

4.1 Attribution Theory & Person Perception

Attributions

Dispositional = internal cause (traits); **situational** = external cause (circumstances).

Bias	Pattern
Fundamental attribution error	Others' acts → traits
Actor/observer	Me → situation; you → traits
Self-serving	Wins → me; losses → situation

Explanatory style: optimistic (bad = temporary) or pessimistic (bad = permanent, my fault).

Locus of Control

Internal: my effort decides outcomes → more persistence. **External**: luck or others decide.

Person Perception

Mere exposure: seeing something again & again → liking it more (songs, faces, brand logos).
Self-fulfilling prophecy: expectations change how we act toward others → the belief comes true.
Social comparison: upward (vs better-off) or downward (vs worse-off) comparisons.
Relative deprivation: feeling deprived compared w/ others, even when you're well off.

⚠ FAE = judging OTHERS; self-serving bias = explaining your OWN success & failure.

✓ FRQ: name the attribution type AND link it to the exact behavior in the scenario.

4.2 Attitude Formation & Attitude Change

Stereotypes & Prejudice

Term	Type	Ex
Stereotype	Belief	"All X are lazy"
Prejudice	Attitude	Disliking X
Discrimination	Behavior	Not hiring X

Stereotypes save mental effort, but they often lead to prejudice (feelings) & discrimination (acts).
Implicit attitudes: biases you hold w/o knowing; measured by reaction-time tests.

Biases Behind Prejudice

Just-world phenomenon: "people get what they deserve" → blaming victims for bad luck.
Out-group homogeneity: "they're all alike." **In-group bias**: favoring your group.
Ethnocentrism: judging other cultures by your own culture's standards & seeing yours as best.

Changing Attitudes

Belief perseverance: keeping a belief after it's disproven; helped by **confirmation bias**.
Cognitive dissonance: actions & beliefs clash → discomfort → change one of them.
Ex: a smoker who knows smoking is harmful either quits or decides "the risks are overblown."
Ex: paid only $1 to lie that a dull task was fun → later rated it more fun (Festinger, 1959).

⚠ Prejudice = attitude; discrimination = action. Feeling alone isn't discrimination.

✓ Dissonance scenario: find the clash between what someone DOES & what they BELIEVE.

4.3 Social Situations: Norms & Influence

Norms & Social Influence

Social norms: expected rules & roles; roles can change behavior (Stanford Prison study).
Normative influence: conform to fit in.
Informational: conform b/c others seem right.

Persuasion

Route	Works through
Central	Strong arguments
Peripheral	Cues: looks, fame, halo

Halo effect: 1 good trait (like looks) → assume other good traits; a peripheral persuasion cue.
ELM: the central route (careful thinking about evidence) leads to longer-lasting attitude change.
Foot-in-the-door: small ask → bigger ask. **Door-in-the-face**: huge ask refused → smaller ask.

Conformity & Obedience

Asch: people often matched a group's obviously wrong answer on a simple line-length task.
Conformity ↑ w/ a unanimous group of 3+, public answers, an unclear task & a collectivist culture.
Milgram: 65% obeyed an experimenter's orders to give the max "shock" to another person.
Obedience ↑ w/ a nearby, legitimate authority, a distant victim & no one else defying.
Ethics: Milgram & Stanford Prison caused stress; studies now need consent & debriefing.

⚠ Conformity = following a GROUP; obedience = following an AUTHORITY's order.

✓ Persuasion Qs: small → big = foot-in-the-door; big → small = door-in-the-face.

4.3 Groups, Culture & Prosocial Behavior

Culture

Individualism: personal goals & independence; **collectivism**: group goals, harmony & duty.

Group Effects

Effect	Meaning
Group polarization	Views get more extreme
Groupthink	Harmony > good decisions
Social loafing	Less effort in groups
Deindividuation	Anonymity → less restraint
Social facilitation	Audience helps easy tasks

False consensus effect: thinking more people agree w/ your views & habits than really do.

Conflict, Work & Helping

Superordinate goals: shared goals that need both sides unite rival groups (Robbers Cave camp).
Social trap: each person acts in self-interest → the whole group loses (overfishing a lake).
I/O psychology: studies people at work, including management, teamwork & job burnout.
Altruism: selfless helping; also explained by reciprocity & social responsibility norms.
Bystander effect: more people present → less likely anyone helps (diffusion of responsibility).

⚠ Social loafing = less EFFORT; diffusion of responsibility = less HELPING.

✓ Scenario cues: anonymity → deindividuation; audience → facilitation; team → loafing.

4.4 Psychodynamic & Humanistic Personality

Psychodynamic (Freud)

Core idea: hidden, unconscious processes & conflicts drive personality & everyday behavior.

Part	Role
Id	Wants pleasure now
Ego	Balances reality
Superego	Conscience, morals

Defense Mechanisms

Mechanism	Example
Denial	Ignoring a problem
Displacement	Mad at boss → yell at dog
Projection	Blaming others for your urge
Rationalization	"Didn't want it anyway"
Reaction formation	Extra nice to a rival
Regression	Adult tantrum
Repression	Blocking a painful memory
Sublimation	Anger → sports or art

Projective tests: ambiguous inkblots (Rorschach) & picture stories (TAT) to reveal the unconscious.

Humanistic (Rogers)

Self-actualizing tendency: drive to grow, helped by unconditional positive regard.

⚠ Out of scope: Freud's psychosexual stages & Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Skip them.

✓ Repression = forgetting; denial = refusing reality; displacement = safer target.

4.5 Social-Cognitive & Trait Theories

Social-Cognitive (Bandura)

Reciprocal determinism: behavior, thoughts & environment all shape each other.
Self-efficacy grows from past success, watching similar people succeed & encouragement.
Ex: a shy student avoids parties → gets fewer invites → feels even more shy (a loop).

Term	Meaning
Self-concept	How you see yourself
Self-efficacy	Belief you can do a task
Self-esteem	Overall sense of worth

Trait Theories

Traits: stable characteristics that shape how you usually respond across situations & time.

Big Five (OCEAN)	High scorers are…
Openness	Curious, creative
Conscientiousness	Organized, careful
Extraversion	Social, outgoing
Agreeableness	Kind, trusting
Emotional stability	Calm, secure

Inventories: long self-report questionnaires; factor analysis groups related items into traits.
Limit: traits predict average behavior over time better than behavior in 1 specific situation.

⚠ Self-efficacy = confidence for a specific TASK; self-esteem = overall sense of WORTH.

✓ Match the test to the theory: projective = psychodynamic; inventory = trait theory.

4.6 Motivation

Theories of Motivation

Theory	Idea
Drive-reduction	Fix needs → homeostasis
Arousal	Seek best arousal level
Self-determination	Intrinsic vs extrinsic
Incentive	Pulled by rewards
Instinct	Fixed behaviors (animals)

Yerkes-Dodson law: performance is best at moderate arousal; easy tasks allow more.
Intrinsic = doing it for enjoyment; **extrinsic** = doing it for rewards like grades, pay or praise.

Conflicts & Sensation Seeking

Approach-approach: choosing between 2 good options. **Avoidance-avoidance**: 2 bad options.
Approach-avoidance: 1 option w/ both good & bad parts, like a great job far from home (Lewin).
Sensation seeking: need for new, exciting or thrilling experiences; also boredom susceptibility.

Eating & Belonging

Ghrelin (stomach) → hungry; **leptin** (fat cells) → full; the hypothalamus regulates both.
External cues: the time of day, seeing food & social meals can trigger eating w/o hunger.
Belongingness: the need for close relationships motivates behavior; rejection really hurts.

⚠ Leptin = full; ghrelin = hungry. Memory trick: ghrelin makes your stomach "growl."

✓ FRQ: name the theory & explain how it drives the specific behavior in the scenario.

4.7 Emotion

What Emotion Is

Emotion: a mix of body arousal, expressive behavior (faces, voice) & the conscious feeling.
Ex: a racing heart + a dark alley → fear; emotions mix body states & the situation.

How Theories Differ

Sequence	Claim
Body → feeling	Arousal first
Simultaneous	Arousal & feeling together
Arousal + label	Need a cognitive label

Exam rule: theory names are out of scope; know the sequences & apply them to scenarios.
Facial feedback: smiling may make you feel happier (body → feeling); results are mixed.
Broaden-and-build: positive emotions widen thinking & action; negative emotions narrow it.

Culture & Expression

Universal emotions: anger, disgust, sadness, joy, surprise & fear; evidence is mixed.
Display rules: cultural norms for when & how to show emotions; vary by gender, age & class.
Elicitors: events that trigger an emotion; what triggers disgust or shame differs by culture.
Ex: in some cultures, people hide anger in front of elders but show it freely w/ friends.

⚠ On the exam, describe the sequence (arousal, label, feeling) instead of naming a theory.

✓ AAQ: identify the variables (expression → mood) & whether results support facial feedback.