

# ACTIVITIES



## ACTIVITY 1.1

### Activities From the Society for the History of Psychology Website

Compiled by

**Ken Keith, PhD**

University of San Diego



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The Society for the History of Psychology (APA Division 26) has an excellent website of teaching resources: <http://www.historyofpsych.org/teacher-studentresources/teaching.html>. This site includes, among other resources, an excellent set of teaching activities assembled by Dr. Jim Goodwin, with a complete description of each activity and how Dr. Goodwin has used it in the classroom (as of early 2013, this was the first document listed under “Document Library;” posted directly at [http://www.historyofpsych.org/images/Activities\\_HistoryofPsych\\_Goodwin.pdf](http://www.historyofpsych.org/images/Activities_HistoryofPsych_Goodwin.pdf)). These activities provide good ideas for acquainting students with psychological perspectives and prominent psychologists, and most can be readily adapted for use in the high school classroom. The activities include:



1. The minilecture
2. The newspaper assignment
3. Annotated bibliography
4. The poster assignment(s)
5. Summarizing journal articles
6. The historiography scavenger hunt
7. The genealogy assignment
8. Identifying resource materials
9. Teaching about introspection
10. Slideshow contest
11. Becoming Darwin
12. Recognizing presentism
13. Comparing text editions
14. Tracking journal content
15. Toasting the greats
16. Creating a departmental history
17. Creative writing assignments
18. Hiring William James and speed dating
19. Incorporating historical context
20. The automatic sweetheart

Comments and suggestions on some of these activities:

1. The **hiring William James** activity involves evaluating William James as a job applicant. An effective variation on this activity is to have students, either individually or in pairs, prepare job applications for a number of famous psychologists.
  - First, prepare a job ad that might be typical for your school inviting applications for the position of psychology teacher.
  - Second, provide students a list of prominent psychologists. The list should include prominent psychological scientists, living or dead, and should represent a variety of perspectives.



- Third, ask each student (or pair) to prepare an application packet as if they were the psychologist whom they have chosen (or that you have assigned them). The application should include a brief résumé, including important publications and experience, a statement of research philosophy or expertise, and a statement of teaching philosophy.
- Fourth, after students have prepared their materials (probably a couple of class meetings after you have given the assignment), form small groups, ask them to discuss each of the “applicants” represented in their group and then to select the one applicant they consider the best for the job.
- Finally, ask the best applicant from each small group to make a brief presentation (in front of the whole class) of his or her experience and credentials. The class, serving as the selection committee, then will vote to choose the candidate whom they would like to hire for the job.

This is an activity that can generate much good discussion about the various points of view in psychological science as well as bring to life important figures in the field.

This activity aligns with the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* Scientific Inquiry Domain, Content Standard 1: Development of psychology as an empirical science, Performance Standard 1.2: Describe the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline.

2. The **newspaper assignment** activity is another way to bring to life people and perspectives and has the added advantage of helping students place important developments in psychology in the context of other significant events in the world. Again, variations are possible from the specific procedure described by Goodwin. For example:

- First, ask students, individually or in small groups, to choose an important contribution, event, publication, or phenomenon (contemporary or historical) in psychological science.
- Second, ask the students to identify the psychological scientist(s) identified with the contribution or event they have chosen and the year of its occurrence.
- Third, ask the students to create a newspaper reporting their identified event in as much detail as they can. In addition, the newspaper should include reports of other important happenings from the same year—perhaps wars, political conventions, major business events, national disasters, or anything else that made news in the selected year. You can encourage students to use not only available reference material, but also other science teachers, history teachers, parents, or others, as possible sources of ideas.



- Fourth, arrange for display and discussion of the newspapers. Some students may use sophisticated software, and others may use their artistic talents to produce posters or other formats. You may choose to have a day for students to move about the room to view all the posters, or you might post them in a school hallway for class members or other students and teachers to see.

This activity aligns with the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* Scientific Inquiry Domain, Content Standard 2: Major sub-fields within psychology, Performance Standard 1.2: Describe the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline.

3. The **slideshow contest** also allows for any number of interesting variations. The basic format here requires forming teams (two, four, or whatever class size and dynamics allow) for a game show-type contest. This activity is useful for a review or as a check on reading assignments.

- First, prepare PowerPoint slides visually depicting the relevant material (people, perspectives, laboratory photos, diagrams of learning models, etc.) that you wish to teach/review.
- Second, prepare a question to accompany each visual (e.g., “Which type of conditioning does this diagram illustrate?” “Who is this developmental theorist?” “What process does the graph illustrate?” etc.).
- Third, organize the groups (e.g., one on each side of the room).
- Fourth, present the slides one at a time, either: (a) allowing members of both (all) groups to shout out the answers, awarding points to the first group answering correctly; or (b) directing each question to a particular group, awarding points if they answer correctly, and giving another group a chance to answer if the first group cannot.

This activity aligns with the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* Scientific Inquiry Domain, Content Standard 1: Development of psychology as an empirical science, Performance Standard 1.2: Describe the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline.

