



## AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology 2001 Sample Student Responses

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pg. 1

In Psychology a set is described as an expected result to a situation. In human perception a set might hinder one's ability to detect errors in their own written paper. If they expect it to say "Person" when it actually says "persn" they might still see it how it should have been. A set is also effective with use of drugs, or more correctly with the absence of them. If a placebo is given to a person and they expect certain results it is possible to see those results ~~due~~ due to the psychological expectations. Classroom performance can also be affected by sets. If a student has a previous record of underachieving, and the teacher reads his record or consults past teachers, that would give them a bias toward that student. If the teacher expects a student to score poorly then they might treat or grade the student differently and cause lower grades. Problem solving can also be affected or hindered by sets. If, for example, I was doing calculus problems and all of the problems deal integrating by parts, but a question comes up that says  $\int_0^1 x\sqrt{x^2+1} dx$ . This would be very difficult to do by parts but if I ~~only~~ only expect one type of solution I wouldn't think to set  $u = x^2+1$  and follow the "u" method to an easy answer. Memory can be affected by sets to an extent where being a witness would not be a good thing.

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Say a rape victim is sleeping to find her attacker hovering over her. It is pitch black outside and she really can't see. When trying to recall the color of the attacker's skin she ~~may~~ might say black when in fact they could have been the opposite. ~~Without light~~ without light the attacker probably was ~~just a shadow~~ just a shadow. She also might have a set that all rapists are black which could alter her memory.

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pg. 1

The psychological concept of expectancy is that when we expect or anticipate an outcome, result or change, our behavior and perception is altered in order to attempt to fill that expectation. This is similar to the concept of set where we view things in only one way and are pretty set in your way.

Expectancy and set affect human perception greatly. For example if an experimenter is interviewing a subject about something he was involved in with the experiment, the experimenter may expect or anticipate certain answers from the subject. This expectation may ~~also~~ influence how the experimenter words his question or how s/he may react to answers, ~~which can change~~. This could result in the subject not answering questions fully and truthfully (this may not be intentional). This is experimenter bias and affects the reliability of the experiment results.

When a person takes a psychoactive drug, s/he may expect to feel better and ~~and~~ symptoms will be relieved. The patient may feel better only because s/he expects the medicine will relieve his symptoms or cure the disease. ~~but~~ This is the placebo effect. In experiments to study the effectiveness and side effects of <sup>new</sup> medications, a control group may

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be given a placebo pill which is just a sugar pill. If their symptoms get better or they suffer side effects the experimenters know this is due to the ~~patient's~~ placebo effect. These results are compared to the experimental group's results (who received the real medicine) to ~~see~~ uncover the effectiveness and side-effects of the real medicine.

If a student ~~is~~ expects to do poorly in class, the student will do poorly. This is self-fulfilling prophecy. The student expects to do poorly so, whether consciously or unconsciously, his behavior is changed that will eventually lead to failure. Also, if the student constantly makes a whole-hearted effort to do well in a particular class but doesn't achieve any success, the student will always assume he'll fail and stop trying even if a situation comes up where he could do well if he tried. This expectancy to fail leads to learned helplessness which was just described.

In ~~problem~~ problem solving, humans don't always use divergent thinking and become ~~set to~~ see that there is only one set way to solve ~~the~~ a problem. This is called functional fixedness. We see the only use of a

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Straw as a device to drink with rather than seeing it as a possible antenna to a cardboard building.

~~Set also affects memory in a way that we remember~~

Expectancy can affect our memory. ~~When~~ If we expect a certain result of an experiment, later on when we recall the results we may remember what we expected to happen as the results rather than what really happened. Also, the results may be completely opposite of what we expected and we were so surprised by that, we'll always remember the results since emotions help form long-term memory.

Set and expectancy affect greatly many different psychological and behavioral experiences humans have.