TEST YOURSELF QUESTIONS

1. Why are different approaches to psychology necessary?

Different approaches are necessary because at present no single theory or orientation can explain the complexity of human behaviour. Personal factors, as well as cultural and historical factors influence how we view the world and how we interpret behaviour. There is no standard of a 'right' or 'wrong' way to view the world, so examining different ways of interpreting the world adds to our understanding of the range of possibilities that may account for behaviour.

2. How does perception affect the study of psychology?

Perception involves more than simply processing information that comes into our sensory organs. First, we show selective attention in determining which pieces of information we will process, and then, based on our personal experience and other personal factors, we interpret or give meaning to the information which we have selected. Over time, we develop schemata for interpreting situations. Psychologists too use their own schemata to select which psychological phenomena they will study, how they will study it, and how they will interpret and make sense of the observations they make. In doing this, individual biases may enter in; but overall, more information and insights are derived from different approaches, which have been based on differences in perception.

3. Why does psychology use the scientific method?

Psychology uses the scientific method in order to gain information about behaviour in a way that can be understood and repeated by others (i.e., a public endeavour that can be

verified by different observers). In this way, individual biases (such as assuming that everyone thinks and responds in the same way) can be minimized and definite information about the relationships between factors and causal agents of responses can be determined.

4. What are the differences between correlational methods and experiments?

Correlational methods observe the relationships between factors. They do not change or control any factors: they simply observe them. For this reason, correlational studies cannot determine causal relationships. Experiments manipulate or change factors in a controlled manner to observe how other factors may change in response to this. In this way, causality can be determined.