

# Comparing & Contrasting Approaches



- Identify where different approaches to psychology stand with reference to some important philosophical debates.
- Use this knowledge to identify points of comparison (similarity) and contrast (difference) between the different approaches to psychology.

## How to Compare & Contrast

‘Compare & contrast’ is one of the most difficult exam skills. It requires you to identify ways in which psychological approaches and theories are similar and different to each other. In order to do this, we need some criteria for making comparisons between the approaches. We can use a number of important philosophical debates to supply these criteria.

<p><b>Nature or Nurture?</b></p>	<p><b>‘Nature’</b> approaches emphasise the influence of innate factors on behaviour, whereas <b>‘nurture’</b> approaches emphasise the influence of the environment.</p>	<p><b>Your Approach</b></p>	<p><b>Others</b></p>
<p><b>Freedom or Determinism?</b></p>	<p><b>‘Freedom’</b> approaches suggest that people choose their own behaviour whereas <b>‘determinist’</b> theories suggest behaviour is controlled by factors outside the person’s control.</p>	<p><b>Your Approach</b></p>	<p><b>Others</b></p>
<p><b>Scientific or Person-Centred?</b></p>	<p><b>‘Scientific’</b> approaches try to work out the general laws of behaviour, whereas <b>‘person-centred’</b> approaches are interested in understanding individual uniqueness.</p>	<p><b>Your Approach</b></p>	<p><b>Others</b></p>