
The following projects are intended for high school and undergraduate classrooms to help your students explore ethical principles and their practical application to psychological research. Students should have basic knowledge of psychological research in order to think critically about the evolution of ethical research designs. These projects are to be used in combination with the contents of the Before Belmont online exhibit.

Before Belmont: Ethics in Experimental Psychology

Level: high school, undergraduate college students

Time: 20 minutes (in class); 60-75 minutes (independent work)

Objectives: By the end of this activity, students will:

1. have a general understanding of informed consent, quality of consent, and the use of deception in experimental psychology
2. have a general understanding of how to identify violations of ethical standards in psychological and experimental contexts
3. have a general understanding of how historical events and key experiments have impacted the development of ethical standards

These objectives contribute to outcomes 1.2C, 3.1b, 3.1c, and 5.1 of the [ACCE](#) and Research Methods, Measurement, and Statistics Standards 2.1 and 2.2 of the [AEB](#).

BEFORE the exhibit [5 minutes]

Ask your students how they feel about conducting psychological research with human participants. What are some challenges of working with human participants?

DURING the exhibit [60-75 minutes]

Students will independently open and read through the full Before Belmont exhibit at <https://uakron.edu/chp/education/beforemont>. While navigating through the exhibit, students



Before Belmont: Ethics in Experimental Psychology



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Answer Sheet

SCAVENGER HUNT

1: Who conducted the “Little Albert” classical conditioning study?

John B. Watson and Rosalie Rayner

2: According to Stanley Milgram, why was deception necessary for his obedience study?

Milgram argued that the deceptive nature of the experiment was necessary to ensure that subjects behaved authentically.

3: Which study is Philip Zimbardo best known for?

The Stanford Prison Experiment

4: In 1-2 sentences, what was the “Cook Committee?”

The “Cook Committee” was the APA ad hoc Committee on Ethical Standards in Psychological Research formed in 1966 to develop a new code of ethics for psychological research. It was led by Stuart Cook and thousands of psychologists were surveyed via the critical incident approach.

5: Which psychologist studied rhesus monkeys to understand how love, attachment, and physical contact can impact the development of infants?

Harry Harlow



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6: In 1-2 sentences, why was the critical incident approach necessary for developing psychology's ethical code?

Little to no prior ethical standards had been established for the field of psychology. The collection of case studies was necessary to fully document and analyze the wide range of potential ethical considerations that psychologists might face in their research and practice.

7: Who conducted the Robbers Cave study?

Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Wood Sherif

CRITICAL THINKING PROMPTS

Briefly explain some of the criticisms directed at the Stanford Prison Experiment both in its immediate aftermath and in the present day. Why do you think Zimbardo and his research team chose to carry out this experiment as a simulation?

Students should note that early ethical criticisms of the Stanford Prison Experiment centered around the quality of consent attained from participants, who may not have fully understood the "severe" nature of the experiment, and the lack of recognition for participants' right to withdraw from the experiment. They may reference the fact that one participant asked to be released but was convinced to return to his cell. They should further reference modern criticisms related to the experiment's scientific rigor, applicability to real life situations, and the extent to which guards were coached by the research team.



