AP PSYCHOLOGY | UNIT 4

TOPIC 4.6

Motivation

Motivation energizes and directs behavior through interacting needs, arousal, rewards, choices, biological signals, and social connection.



A MULTI-SYSTEM VIEW

ENERGIZE

needs, incentives, and optimal arousal

CHOOSE

conflicts and intrinsic or extrinsic motives

REGULATE

hunger, satiety, cues, and belonging

BY THE END, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO...

1. Compare drive-reduction, arousal, self-determination, and incentive theories.
2. Identify choice conflicts and major forms of sensation seeking.
3. Explain biological and external influences on eating and belongingness.

BIG IDEA

No single theory explains every motivated action. First identify whether a scenario emphasizes internal balance, stimulation, interest, reward, conflict, biology, or social connection.

1 Theories, conflicts, and sensation seeking

Different theories explain whether behavior is pulled by rewards, pushed by needs, or guided by optimal stimulation and personal interest.

FOUR MOTIVATION THEORIES

DRIVE-REDUCTION

A physical need creates a drive; behavior restores homeostasis.

AROUSAL

People seek an optimal level of stimulation for performance.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Intrinsic interest differs from extrinsic reward or pressure.

INCENTIVE

External rewards pull behavior toward desired outcomes.

YERKES-DODSON LAW Performance is often best at an optimal arousal level; too little or too much arousal can reduce performance.

THREE CHOICE CONFLICTS

APPROACH-APPROACH

Choose between two desirable options.

APPROACH-AVOIDANCE

One option has both desirable and undesirable features.

AVOIDANCE-AVOIDANCE

Choose between two undesirable options.

SENSATION SEEKING

EXPERIENCE

new experiences

THRILL

exciting or risky activity

DISINHIBITION

reduced restraint

BOREDOM

low tolerance for repetition

INSTINCT An instinct is an innate, fixed behavior pattern in animals. Human motivation is usually explained through more complex interacting influences.

2 Eating and belongingness

Eating combines biological regulation with external cues, while belongingness motivates connection, acceptance, and relationships.

BIOLOGICAL EATING SIGNALS

GHRELIN
hunger signal

→

HYPOTHALAMUS
integrates signals

→

EATING
behavior changes

→

LEPTIN
satiety signal

REGULATION The hypothalamus and pituitary participate in hormonal regulation; hunger and satiety reflect a coordinated system, not one chemical alone.

EXTERNAL EATING CUES

AVAILABILITY
Visible or convenient food can prompt eating.

TIME OF DAY
Meal timing can become a learned cue.

SOCIAL SETTING
Gatherings can change when and how much people eat.

BELONGINGNESS MOTIVATION

CONNECTION
seek contact

→

ACCEPTANCE
feel included

→

RELATIONSHIPS
maintain bonds

APPLY THE SYSTEM Eating at a celebration may reflect hunger signals, visible food, time cues, and belongingness at once. Separate the influences before choosing an explanation.