Social Experiments to Help Educate Yourself

***Disclaimer:*** *This list of experiments are only some of the bigger and well known one and not the only ones. Many of these listed experiments are older and first performed before the 2000s; however, they have since been performed many times after their first appearance well into the modern time frame of research. Also, many of these experiments were considered unethical many years after they were performed, but have since been revisited and evolved into different ethical experiments over the years.*

Social Experiments about Racism

* The Doll Test (1940s) By Kenneth and Mamie Clark
  + This first became a significant study to look at during the Brown vs the Board of Education Supreme Court case. This experiment was set up to highlight the effects of segregation on black elementary age children. It gave the participants identical dolls with the exception of skin color, then the children were asked a series of questions regarding which doll was nice, pretty, bad, ugly, ect. The results showed that the white doll was given the majority of the positive traits listed. This experiment has been recreated many times and with both white and black children since, with similar results each time. It is also important to note that this experiment was conducted by a black couple who were psychologists.
    - Read more here: [https://www.naacpldf.org/doll-test](https://www.naacpldf.org/ldf-celebrates-60th-anniversary-brown-v-board-education/significance-doll-test/)
    - Videos of the Experiment
      * [The Doll Test Compilation Video (2016)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loqzXCvazOI)
      * [The Doll Test with College Students (2018)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iGghoLg4eg)
        + Some offensive language present
* Segregation based on Eye Color (1968) By Jane Elliott
  + This experiment took place in a third grade classroom promptly following the murder of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. She divided the class based on eye color-blue and brown- then told the class that the blue eyed children were all around better than the brown eyed children, then gave the blue eyed children certain privileges throughout the school day while the brown eyed children were marked by collars and met with harsh humiliation and criticism. The next day the roles were reversed. Whichever group was inferior that day were quick to take on the role of less-than--like performing poorly during the day-- while the superior group of the day was equally quick to be meant to the inferior group and push the inferior group away from them. Elliott still performs this experiment in group settings but with adults.
    - Read more here: [https://www.pbs.org/jane-elliott-eyes](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/introduction-2/)
    - Videos of the experiment:
      * [Jane Elliott’s Third Grade class in 1970](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGvoXeXCoUY)
        + Some offensive terms are used
      * [Jane Elliot with Adults in 2013](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MYHBrJIIFU)
        + Some offensive language present

Social Experiments on Authority

* Obedience Study (1963) by Stanley Milgram
  + Milgram’s interest was sparked after the Eichmann trial in 1961 (more information about this trial can be found [here](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/eichmann-trial)). He was interested in studying how far participants would follow orders given to them by an authority figure to cause harm or as it can be referred to, destructive obedience. He had a man with a lab coat instruct participants to administer electric shocks to a human in another room who was meant to repeat a line of words back to the participant each time they got it wrong. . The person administering the shocks was asked to increase the voltage upon receiving a wrong answer. The person meant to be ‘receiving’ the shocks were not actually being shocked. They were asked to pretend to be in pain at a certain voltage point. There is much more that went into this experiment, but this is a very brief explanation. The results showed that all participants would administer volts up to 300 with roughly ⅔ ‘s of the participants going up to the highest voltage (450 volts) as well. He then went on to conduct this experiment with many different types of variables being changed or tested like the location and who was actually pressing the button for years following the original experiment. Milgram’s experiments are a hot topic of debate today just as much as they were then. It has sparked many ‘spin-off’ experiments since its publication in 1963.
    - Read more here: [simplypsychology.org](https://www.simplypsychology.org/simplypsychology.org-milgram.pdf), or [MilgramOriginalWork.pdf](https://www.demenzemedicinagenerale.net/pdf/MilgramOriginalWork.pdf), or [Rethinking Milgram's Study](https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/01/rethinking-one-of-psychologys-most-infamous-experiments/384913/)
    - Videos of the Experiment
      * Khan Academy on Milgram’s Experiment
        + [Events that Sparked the Study](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/behavior/social-psychology/v/events-that-inspired-the-milgram-studies-on-obedience)
        + [The Actual Experiment set up](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/behavior/social-psychology/v/milgram-experiment-on-obedience)
        + [What we can Learn from it](https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/mcat/behavior/social-psychology/v/what-can-we-learn-from-the-milgram-experiment)
      * [A clip from the original experiment](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOUEC5YXV8U)
      * The movie *Experimenter (2015)* on Hulu
        + This is a dramatized version as it is a movie
* The Stanford Prison Experiment (1971) by Philip Zimbardo et al.
  + This experiment was designed to study how power influences an individual’s behavior and attitude. This experiment had 24 college men separated into two groups--the guards and the prisoners. Zimbardo created a mock jail in the basement of Stanford University and in the quest to make this as real as possible he even recruited an ex-con to help create the experience. He had the ‘prisoners’ arrested and taken to the mock jail where they were given prison attire. They were also given numbers which were to be referred to. The guards were made to wear sunglasses with uniforms and had actual shift rotations set into place so the prisoners were under constant guard supervision. This experiment was supposed to last two weeks, but had to be cut short on the sixth day as it was quickly getting out of hand--one ‘prisoner’ had to actually be let out early due to a mental breakdown because of guard treatment. This experiment showed on both sides they were fast to settle into the roles they were assigned. The guards became aggressive and the prisoners began to bow to the aggression and believe that they had to summit to the humiliation. There was a lot that occurred in these 6 days, so it would be to your benefit to really investigate the links below.
    - Read more about it here [Cassette tape Transcript](https://web.stanford.edu/dept/spec_coll/uarch/exhibits/Narration.pdf), or [apa.org](https://www.apa.org/research/action/prison)
    - Videos about the Experiment
      * [Zimbardo Documentary](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUZpB57PfHs)
        + Offensive language used
      * [Post Interviews with the Participants](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUZpB57PfHs) 
        + Offensive language used
      * The Movie *The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015)* on Netflix
        + Offensive language used and dramatized but it portrays the experiment and its effects fairly well

Bonus: Social Experiments on Learned Behaviors

* The Bobo Doll Experiments (1961 & 1965) by Albert Bandura
  + This experiment was designed to study how children (ages 3 to 6) learn behavior patterns by watching role models or observational learning. The children were observed in their natural nursery play and given an aggression score for a baseline reading. The children were placed into one of three groups of 24. One group was shown both a male and female role model being aggressive towards the Bobo doll, another group was shown a male and female role model being non-aggressive action regarding the Bobo doll like just ignoring the doll completely, and the last group was not given a role model interaction at all. The children were then taken to a room with fun toys but as soon as they began to play they were told that those toys were for other children, then they were taken to a room with toys like a tea set and a mallet with a Bobo doll present. They were observed in that room for 20 minutes. The kids shown an aggressive model were more aggressive especially physically to the Bobo doll, and the boys were more likely to imitate the male role model shown.
    - Read more here [simplypsychology.org](https://www.simplypsychology.org/bobo-doll.html), or [Bandura’s paper](https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Bandura/bobo.htm)
    - Videos about the experiment
      * [Aggressive Behaviors](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqNaLerMNOE)
      * [Bobo Doll Crash Course](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=128Ts5r9NRE)
* The Little Albert Experiment (1920) by Watson and Raynor
  + This experiment was aimed to show how classical conditioning can affect human response to certain things or objects. An 11 month old was introduced to a non threatening stimulus like a white rat and showed no fear for the stimulus. He was then shown to cry at the loud banging of a pipe behind him. They then showed him the rat promptly followed by the loud bang. Within two weeks the baby began to cry when shown the rat even without the bang. But even beyond that, he was shown to have developed fear of things that even had an ounce of resemblance to the rat like a white wig or a pet dog--this is called generalization. However, about a month of no conditioning Little Albert’s phobias began to fade away, meaning that without the reinforcing conditioning and ‘prompting’ he unlearned his fear association of the rat. That being said this experiment does have some ethical holes but there have been more ethical recreations of this conditioning experiment.
    - Read more here [simplypsychology.org](https://www.simplypsychology.org/little-albert.html), or [Classics in Psychology History](https://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Watson/emotion.htm)
    - Videos about the experiment
      * [A brief overview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hBfnXACsOI&t=186s)
      * [How to Train a Brain Crash Course](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG2SwE_6uVM)

Bonus: Let’s Discuss the Bystander Effect!

* The Bystander Effect is something that came out of a study in 1964 sparked by the case of Kitty Genovese. She is a woman who was chased, sexually assaulted, then murdered just across the street from her house. There were reportedly roughly 38 witnesses/neighbors that did not insert themselves directly into the situation. This sparked the curiosity of John Durley and Bibb Latané who conducted the Bystander Apathy experiment (please read the original paper [here](https://www.truthaboutnursing.org/research/orig/latane_and_darley/bystander_apathy.pdf)!). The results of this experiment were that the more people who are present when an individual needs help, the less likely someone is to help that individual. With more people around, one tends to take on the mentality that ‘it’s okay if I don’t help as someone else around will probably be better help to the situation then myself.’ People are also less likely to take action if no one else is as people read the behaviors and social interactions around them to understand how to conduct themselves. This experiment has been recreated a lot and the Bystander Effect can be seen in what is called The Good Samaritan experiment as well (please read the original paper [here](http://faculty.babson.edu/krollag/org_site/soc_psych/darley_samarit.html)!). This experiment showed that depending on how busy or in a hurry an individual is can have an effect on how willing that person will stop to help someone in need.
  + Read more here [The Bystander Effect](https://sites.psu.edu/dps16/2016/04/07/the-bystander-apathy-experiment/), or [biologydictionary.net](https://biologydictionary.net/bystander-effect/)
  + Videos about The Bystander Effect
    - [The Bystander Effect (2011)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4S1LLrSzVE)
    - [Khan Academy (2014)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=175ig2I9rt0)
    - [Kelly Charles-Collins Ted Talk (2018)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45qZei0iw3k)
      * Mentions of blood, death, and sexual assault