

## **Our experiment into informational social influence**

Read the standardised procedures to yourself. Make sure you understand them before moving on.

- 1) Before you approach the participants. Flip a coin to decide whether the first participant will be in the control condition or the experimental condition, the second participant that agrees will take part in the other condition. (random allocation to conditions)
- 2) Approach potential participant and politely say, "Hello, would you be prepared to take part in a brief psychological experiment about reflection? It will take no longer than 5 minutes"
- 3) If the participant says no, thank them for their attention, and find another participant
- 4) If they ask for further information, say, "it will involve you answering 5 simple general knowledge questions, with a period of time for reflection, you will not be harmed, all results are kept strictly confidential and you have the right to stop the experiment at any time for any reason"
- 5) If they refuse, go to point 3, if they agree, go to point 6
- 6) Read the standardised instructions for the designated condition and check that the participants understand. Do NOT tell them they are in the control or experimental condition. Answer any questions they may have unless this would prejudice the experiment. Make sure the participant is happy to continue and ask them to sign the consent form. To save you printing the consent form just ask them to 'sign' verbally when they have read it / you have read it to them.

### **Read these standardised instructions to your participant in the control condition (quiet reflection)**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this investigation into the role of reflection when answering questions. You will not be harmed in anyway throughout the study, and although we will withhold some information during the experiment, you will be fully debriefed upon conclusion. In a moment, I will hand you a piece of paper with 5 questions on, which you should answer as quickly as you can. I will then allow a short period of time when you can reflect on the answers that you have given. After this period, you will be invited to change any of the answers you have given. Please answer all the questions, even if you have to guess any of the answers. At any time during the investigation, and for any reason, you may withdraw. We assure full confidentiality of your results by not recording any details that will link you to the study. We will ask if you will volunteer information about your age and gender. At the completion of the study, we will give you a full debriefing, and you are within your rights to withhold your data if you so wish. Do you understand the instructions or have any further questions? (allow pause) Please read and sign the consent form before we begin.

## **Read these standardised instructions for the experimental condition (sheet with group estimates)**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this investigation into the role of reflection when answering questions. You will not be harmed in anyway throughout the study, and although we will withhold some information during the experiment, you will be fully debriefed upon conclusion. In a moment, I will hand you a piece of paper with 5 questions on, which you should answer as quickly as you can. I will then allow a short period of time when you can reflect on the answers that you have given, and given some information about the answers during this reflection. After this period, you will be invited to change any of the answers you have given. Please answer all the questions, even if you have to guess any of the answers. At any time during the investigation, and for any reason, you may withdraw. We assure full confidentiality of your results by not recording any details that will link you to the study. We will ask if you will volunteer information about your age and gender. At the completion of the study, we will give you a full debriefing, and you are within your rights to withhold your data if you so wish. Do you understand the instructions or have any further questions? (allow pause) Please read and sign the consent form before we begin.

### **Consent form**

I give my consent to take part in this A level psychology experiment. I understand that I have not received all the information required to give fully informed consent, but I have received assurances that I will not be harmed during the experiment and that I can stop participating at any time during the procedures without having to offer justification. I understand that I will be fully debriefed at the end of the experiment, and after this, can withdraw my data if I wish. I understand that my identity will not be made public to protect my confidentiality.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) Give the participants the question sheet to write their answers on (there is a code on the top right. QR is for the 'quiet reflection' condition, and GA is for the 'group answer' condition. If you don't have a printer show the participant your phone or laptop and get them to record their answers on paper.
- 8) Allow 45 seconds for the control group to quietly reflect on their answers. Give / show the experiment group the group estimate answers.

- 9) After 45 seconds, invite the participants to change their answers if they wish. If they wish to change answers ask them to write these down next to their original answers.
- 10) Ask if they want to know what the answers are and give/ show them the answers if they wish.
- 11) Debrief the participant. Do this by reading this statement:

Thank you for taking part in this experiment. Although we were asking you to reflect on your answers, our aims are to see whether people will be influenced by a group answer and change their answer in light of this information. Half the participants were asked to complete the questions, then have 45 seconds quiet reflection, then invited to change their answers if they wish (the control condition). The other half of the participants were given a sheet of paper which had group answers for each question during the reflection time. The important question is question 4, which, in pilot studies, was rarely answered correctly. If we have more participants changing their answer in the experimental condition, we can support the hypothesis that "Participants given a group estimate to a question about road length are more likely to change an initial answer than participants who are given no group estimates to the question on road lengths."

Thank you for taking part. Do you have any further questions? Are you happy for us to use your data for analysis?

- 12) Thank them once again, and ask them not to speak about the study for 3 days
- 13) Do not talk about the study until data analysis back in class.

Keep scrolling for the materials that you will need to show you participants..

Please answer all five questions to the best of your ability, please do not leave any questions unanswered. Some of the answers may require you to guess the answer. At any point during this investigation you are free to discontinue.

**Question 1: Geography**

What is the capital city of Belgium?

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**Question 2: Politics**

What is the name of the last Labour Prime Minister?

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**Question 3: Biology**

Which elephants have bigger ears, African or Asian?

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**Question 4: Transport**

To the nearest 10,000 miles, how long is the total road length in the UK (all motorways, main and paved roads)?

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**Question 5: Technology**

Which popular social media site was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2006?

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Below are the answers given so far from 10 specialists for you to consider during reflecting on your answers.

### **Question 1: Geography**

What is the capital city of Belgium?

- 9 out of 10 geography degree students have answered “Brussels”

### **Question 2: Politics**

What is the name of the last Labour Prime Minister?

- 8 out of 10 politics degree students have answered “Gordon Brown”

### **Question 3: Biology**

Which elephants have bigger ears, African or Asian?

- 10 out of 10 zoology degree students have answered “African”

### **Question 4: Transport**

To the nearest 10,000 miles, how long is the total road length in the UK (all motorways, main and paved roads)

- 9 out of 10 engineering degree students have answered between 245,000 miles and 255,000 miles

### **Question 5: Technology**

Which popular social media site was launched by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 and now has 2.2 billion users?

- 10 out of 10 information technology students have answered “Facebook”

## Actual answers

### **Question 1: Geography**

What is the capital city of Belgium?

a) Brussels

### **Question 2: Politics**

What is the name of the last Labour Prime Minister?

a) Gordon Brown

### **Question 3: Biology**

Which elephants have bigger ears, African or Asian?

a) African

### **Question 4: Transport**

To the nearest 10,000 miles, how long is the total road length in the UK (all motorways, main and paved roads)?

a) 250,000

### **Question 5: Technology**

Which popular social media site was launched by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 and now has 2.2 billion users?

a) Facebook