

The Cognitive Approach. Cognitive psychologists assert that our behavior is influenced by our values, by the ways in which we interpret our situations, and by choice. For example, people who believe that aggression is necessary and justified—as during wartime—are likely to act aggressively, whereas people who believe that a particular war or act of aggression is unjust, or who think that aggression is never justified, are less likely to behave aggressively.

One cognitive theory suggests that aggravating and painful events trigger unpleasant feelings. These feelings, in turn, can lead to aggressive action, but *not* automatically. Cognitive factors intervene. People *decide* whether they will act aggressively or not on the basis of factors such as their experiences with aggression and their interpretation of other people’s motives. Supporting evidence comes from research showing that aggressive people often *distort* other people’s motives. For example, they assume that other people mean them harm when they do not.

8. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage? Incorrect answer choices change the meaning in important ways or leave out essential information.
- People who believe that they are fighting a just war act aggressively while those who believe that they are fighting an unjust war do not.
 - People who believe that aggression is necessary and justified are more likely to act aggressively than those who believe differently.
 - People who normally do not believe that aggression is necessary and justified may act aggressively during wartime.
 - People who believe that aggression is necessary and justified do not necessarily act aggressively during wartime.
9. According to the cognitive approach described in paragraphs 7 and 8, all of the following may influence the decision whether to act aggressively EXCEPT a person’s
- moral values
 - previous experiences with aggression
 - instinct to avoid aggression
 - beliefs about other people’s intentions
10. The word “*distort*” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- mistrust
 - misinterpret
 - criticize
 - resent

The Psychodynamic Approach. Theorists adopting the psychodynamic approach hold that inner conflicts are crucial for understanding human behavior, including aggression. Sigmund Freud, for example, believed that aggressive impulses are inevitable reactions to the frustrations of daily life. Children normally desire to vent aggressive impulses on other people, including their parents, because even the most attentive parents cannot gratify all of their demands immediately. (1) Yet children, also fearing their parents’ punishment and the loss of parental love, come to repress most aggressive impulses. (2) The Freudian perspective, in a sense, sees us as “steam engines.” (3) By holding in rather than venting “steam,” we set the stage for future explosions. (4) Pent-up aggressive impulses demand outlets. They may be expressed toward parents in indirect ways such as destroying furniture, or they may be expressed toward strangers later in life.

11. **Directions:** Look at the part of the passage that is displayed above. The numbers (1), (2), (3), and (4) indicate where the following sentence could be added.

According to Freud, however, impulses that have been repressed continue to exist and demand expression.

Where would the sentence best fit?

- Choice 1
- Choice 2
- Choice 3
- Choice 4

12. **Directions:** Complete the table below by matching five of the six answer choices with the approach to aggression that they exemplify. **This question is worth 3 points.**

Approach to Understanding Aggression	Associated Claims
Biological Approach	• _____
Psychodynamic Approach	• _____ • _____
Cognitive Approach	• _____ • _____

Answer Choices

- 1. Aggressive impulses toward people are sometimes expressed in indirect ways.
- 2. Aggressiveness is often useful for individuals in the struggle for survival.
- 3. Aggressive behavior may involve a misunderstanding of other people’s intentions.
- 4. The need to express aggressive impulses declines with age.
- 5. Acting aggressively is the result of a choice influenced by a person’s values and beliefs.
- 6. Repressing aggressive impulses can result in aggressive behavior.