



**O'level  
Foundation  
Week 9**

**The Write Tribe**

## **COMPO PLANNING**

### **Composition Topic**

**”You Are Easily Influenced by The People Around you.”** What are your views?

Yes

No



The Write Tribe

YES! We are influenced by people around us.

Have you found yourself imitating a famous Youtuber after watching a few of his or her videos?



## 1. We absorb moods of people around us

Or doing 'THE DAB' just because your friends do it?

### MIRROR NEURONS

Through biological programming, we imitate other people's emotional displays—facial expressions, bodily gestures—and in doing so, we come to adopt their internal feelings. The biological mechanism is **the mirror neuron system** in the human brain. Our brain practices doing actions we merely observe in others, as if we were doing them ourselves. A good example of mirror neurons is a baby crying in a day care because it hears another baby cry.

We developed this for an evolutionary advantage. By mimicking one another, we formed bonds. Humans started hanging around in groups so we won't get eaten.

To protect yourself from catching other people's bad moods, choose wisely the company you keep.



Mark Twain  
Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.

AZ QUOTES

### WE CAN ABSORB PEOPLE'S MOODS?

For example, evidence shows that the emotions others express on Facebook influence our own moods. Reducing positive words in people's Facebook newsfeeds appeared to make them sadder, and vice versa. When college freshmen received a random assignment to live with mildly depressed roommates, they became increasingly depressed themselves over a three-month period.



**YES! We are influenced by people around us.**

## **The neighbourhood effect**

is an economic and social science concept that puts forward the idea that neighbourhoods have either a direct or indirect effect on individual behaviours



## **2. Your neighbourhood can determine your life choices**

In the book, *The Truly Disadvantaged* by William Julius Wilson in 1987, suggests that living in a neighbourhood seriously affected by poverty affects a wide range of individual outcomes, such as economic self-sufficiency, violence, drug use, low birthweight, and cognitive ability.

**Residents of a poor neighborhood** are likely relatively poor to begin with; in addition to having to get by with limited money, they suffer the disadvantages of living in a poor neighborhood:

- ✓ Overcrowded, understaffed schools
- ✓ Public spaces and parks that are not as accessible or well-maintained as those in wealthier areas of town, and that may sometimes play host to dangerous or criminal activities
- ✓ Roads and sidewalks that are poorly maintained
- ✓ A police presence that may be inadequate, hostile, or so overwhelmed with serious crimes that isn't very responsive to ordinary residents' concerns
- ✓ A depressed business community, with few job opportunities and limited shopping options

**Residents of expensive neighborhoods**

don't just get the nice, expensive house or apartment they're paying for; they also get everything that goes with living in that neighborhood:

- ✓ Good schools
- ✓ Well-kept public spaces and parks
- ✓ Well-maintained roads and sidewalks
- ✓ Good police protection
- ✓ A thriving business community, with multiple shopping and dining options

Those things make easier the lives of people who already live in relative comfort.

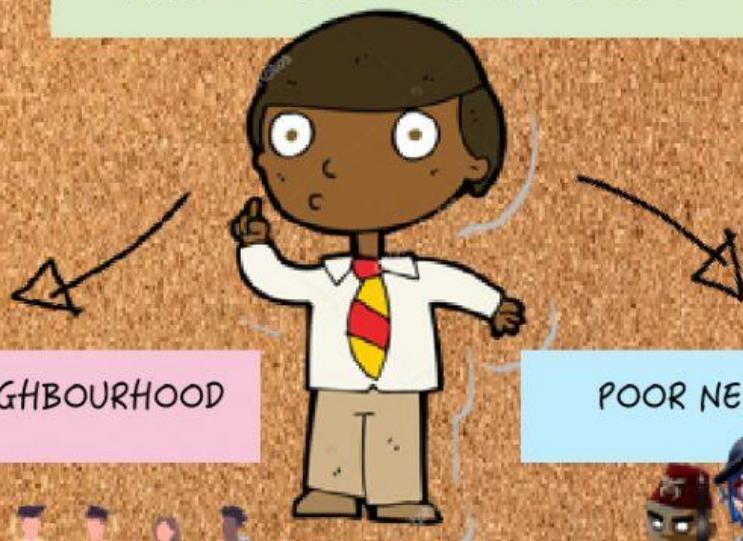
In theory, these things should all be available to all residents of a city — but in reality, poorer neighborhoods tend to lack those amenities.



YES! We are influenced by people around us.

## 2. Your neighbourhood can determine your life choices

THIS WOULD BE JEFF'S LIFE



His classmates



His future

If a child is surrounded by other children who aspire to become politicians, scientists or doctors, the chances of them wanting the same aspirations are high.

For example, if your kids go to a bad neighbourhood school which have a bad reputation, chances of them picking up bad habits like drugs or smoking become high.



His classmates



His future

**YES! We are influenced by people around us.**

### **3. We are wired to seek social proof**

Have you ever wondered why you always hear laugh tracks in sitcoms? Researchers have found that laugh tracks make people laugh more often and longer, especially at mediocre jokes. This phenomenon takes place due to the

#### **PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL PROOF**

**Social proof is a psychological phenomenon where people copy the actions of others thinking it is the correct way to behave in a given situation.**

Church ushers use this dynamic very often by putting a few bills from their own pockets in the collection baskets before the service. This will make people think that everyone else is donating money.



To make the customers think that others are buying certain products, companies also use this technique when they advertise products with lines like “fastest-growing” and “best-selling”.

**In other words - MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO!**

**GROUPTHINK** means if a group of people are doing a behaviour, whether it's bad or good, we begin to think it's normal. Remember before 1863, owning slaves was considered *normal*. Imagine that!



**YES! We are influenced by people around us.**

## **QUIZ TIME!**

### **1. What is the mirror neuron system responsible for?**

- a. imitate the person in front of us unconsciously
- b. helps us reflect about our own behaviour

### **2. Why is the mirror neuron system helpful?**

- a. It helps us memorise facts better
- b. Mimicking one another helped us form social bonds

### **3. We absorb the moods of people we surround ourselves with.**

- a. True
- b. False

### **4. The neighbourhood you choose to live in can affect your life choices**

- a. Yes
- b. No



**5. What is social proof?**

- a. People of the same group think and act alike
- b. The phenomenon where we copy actions of others thinking it is the correct way to behave in a given situation

**6. Advertisements showing a celebrity recommending a product is an example of \_\_\_\_?**

- a. Groupthink
- b. Social Proof

**7. Groupthink means \_\_\_\_\_**

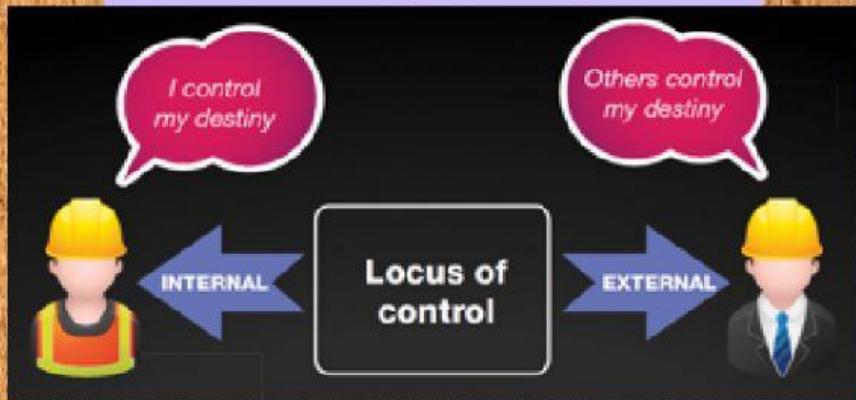
- a. We think a behaviour is abnormal if everyone is doing it
- b. We think a behaviour is normal if everyone is doing it



NO! We are NOT influenced by people around us.

## 1. Not everyone conforms to Social Influence

In some cases people can resist the pressure to conform or obey because of their personality.



### INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

People with an internal locus of control believe that what happens in their life is largely the result of their own behaviour and that they have control over their life.

### EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL

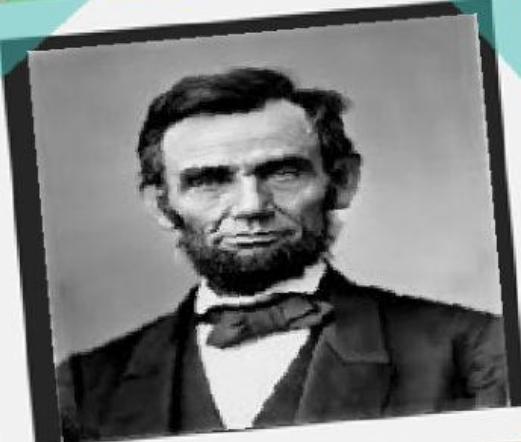
People with an external locus of control believe that what happens to them is controlled by external factors and that they do not have complete control over their life.

Individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to resist the pressures to conform or obey, in comparison to individuals with an external locus of control.

Research supports the idea that individuals with an internal locus of control are more likely to resist the pressure to obey. **Oliner & Oliner (1998)** interviewed non-Jewish survivors of WWII and compared those who had resisted orders and protected Jewish people from the Nazi's, in comparison to those who had not. Oliner and Oliner found that the 406 'rescuers', who had resisted orders, were more likely to have a high internal locus of control, in comparison to the 126 people who had simply followed orders.



NO! We are NOT influenced by people around us.



Abraham Lincoln, fought for the freedom of African slaves in an era (1863) where racism was normal. In fact, slave labour was cheap and there was no need for Abraham to go out of the way to help the slaves!

## 1. Not everyone conforms to Social Influence



Oskar Schindler was a German industrialist and a member of the Nazi Party who is credited with saving the lives of 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust. He put his own life at risk!

## REBELS

Rebels defy groupthink—they share five traits: novelty, curiosity, perspective, diversity, and authenticity.

