

Applying Psychology to Real World Issues

Psychological theories and studies are only useful if we can use them to understand human behaviour in the real world. Research into social influence grew out of interest in real world events (e.g. the Nazi atrocities, the My Lai massacre) and one test of its usefulness is whether we can use the results to explain other instances of destructive behaviour.

We are going to watch a video called '5 Steps to Tyranny', which attempts to apply psychological ideas to examples of destructive behaviour. Following on from this, and possibly drawing on some of the ideas in the film, you will be writing a report in which you use the psychology you have learned recently to understand an example of destructive human behaviour.

In your report you need to do the following:

- Chose an example of destructive behaviour that involves conformity, obedience or both. Suitable examples would include the My Lai massacre, the Nazi atrocities or the Rwandan genocide, but others are possible. Talk to me if you are unsure.
- Give a brief outline of what happened in the incident you have chosen.
- Explain the psychological processes that were involved (e.g. conformity)

Use the psychology you know to give an account of why the incident you have chosen was able to happen. Which factors contributed to destructive human behaviour? What (if anything) could have prevented it?

You **must** (E-D):

- Outline a suitable example of real-world behaviour
- Briefly explain the psychological processes involved in it

You **should** (C-B):

- Clearly relate the real world events to the psychological processes you have identified
- Use evidence from psychological studies to back up the points you make, for example, by explaining how the real-world event resembled the research findings

You **could** (B-A):

- Highlight any problems with the research (NB. *Not* ethical ones) that prevent you from applying it fully to the real world situation.

Your report should be **approximately 500 words** long but some flexibility is allowed.

This task can count towards your **Key Skills Level 3** evidence portfolio. If you wish to use it this way, bear in mind the following:

- Spelling, punctuation and grammar must be carefully checked.
- ICT should be used to present your report
- It should contain at least **one** image that is *referred to* at some point in the text.