

Perception – UG Psychology Notes

1. Meaning of Perception

- * *Perception* is the process by which individuals organize, interpret, and give meaning to sensory information.
- * It goes beyond sensation (raw data) and involves interpretation.
- * It is a cognitive as well as psychological process.

Definition:

Perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory input to form a meaningful understanding of the world.

2. Characteristics of Perception

1. Subjective – Influenced by experience, expectations, culture.
2. Active & Dynamic – Mind continuously organizes information.
3. Selective – We attend to certain stimuli and ignore others.
4. Organized – It follows rules (Gestalt principles).
5. Meaningful – It gives significance to sensory data.

3. Stages of Perception

(i) Sensation

- * Reception of physical stimulus through sense organs.

(ii) Attention

- * Focusing mental resources on specific stimuli.

(iii) Selection

- * Choosing which information to process deeply.

(iv) Organization

* Grouping of sensory input → patterns (Gestalt rules).

(v) Interpretation

* Assigning meaning based on experience, memory, emotions.

4. Types of Perceptual Processes

A. Bottom-Up Processing

* Data-driven.

* Perception starts with *sensory input* → brain organizes.

* Example: Reading letters to understand a word.

B. Top-Down Processing

* Concept/expectation-driven.

* Past experience, beliefs influence perception.

* Example: Reading a scrambled sentence easily.

5. Gestalt Principles of Perceptual Organization

Gestalt = “Whole is greater than the sum of its parts.”

1. *Figure–Ground*

* Differentiating main object (figure) from background (ground).

2. *Law of Similarity*

* Objects that look alike are grouped together.

3. *Law of Proximity*

* Objects close to each other appear as a group.

4. *Law of Closure*

* Mind fills in gaps to perceive complete forms.

5. *Law of Continuity*

* We follow smooth, continuous patterns.

6. *Law of Prägnanz (Good Form)*

* Mind prefers simplest, most stable organization.

6. Depth Perception

Ability to perceive *distance* and *three-dimensionality*.

A. Monocular Cues (one eye)

* *Relative size*

* *Interposition (overlap)*

* *Linear perspective*

* *Aerial perspective*

* *Texture gradient*

* *Light and shadow*

* *Motion parallax*

B. Binocular Cues (two eyes)

* *Retinal disparity*

* *Convergence*

7. Perceptual Constancies*

Perceiving objects as constant despite changes in sensory input.

1. *Size constancy*
2. *Shape constancy*
3. *Color constancy*
4. *Brightness constancy*
5. *Location constancy*

*8. Perceptual Illusions

Misinterpretations of external stimuli.

Types:

- * *Optical (visual) illusions*
 - Müller-Lyer, Ponzo illusion
- * *Auditory illusions*
- * *Tactile illusions*

Illusions highlight how perception uses *rules and expectations*.

9. Factors Influencing Perception

A. Personal Factors

- * Motivation & needs
- * Experience
- * Expectations
- * Personality
- * Learning
- * Emotions

B. Environmental Factors

- * Intensity of stimuli
- * Size, movement, contrast
- * Novelty

C. Social/Cultural Factors

- * Cultural norms
- * Social learning
- * Values & beliefs

10. Perceptual Disorders (Brief)

1. *Agnosia* – Inability to recognize objects despite intact senses.
2. *Prosopagnosia* – Difficulty recognizing faces.
3. *Synesthesia* – Blending of senses (e.g., seeing colors for sounds).
4. *Hallucinations* – Perceptions without external stimuli.

11. Application of Perception

- * *Clinical psychology:* Understanding hallucinations, delusions
- * *Education:* Learning effectiveness
- * *Human factors:* Product design, ergonomics
- * *Advertising:* Consumer perception
- * *Social psychology:* Impression formation, stereotypes