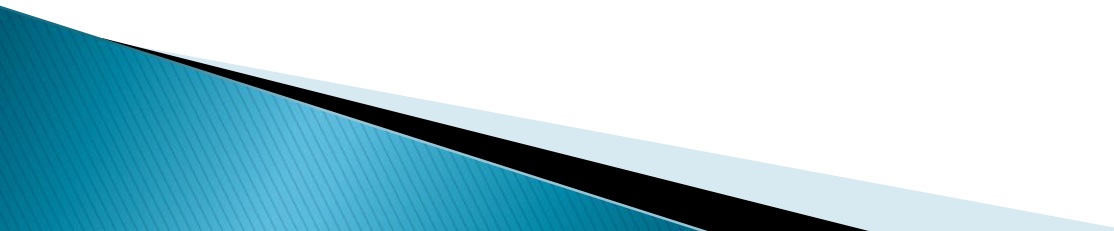
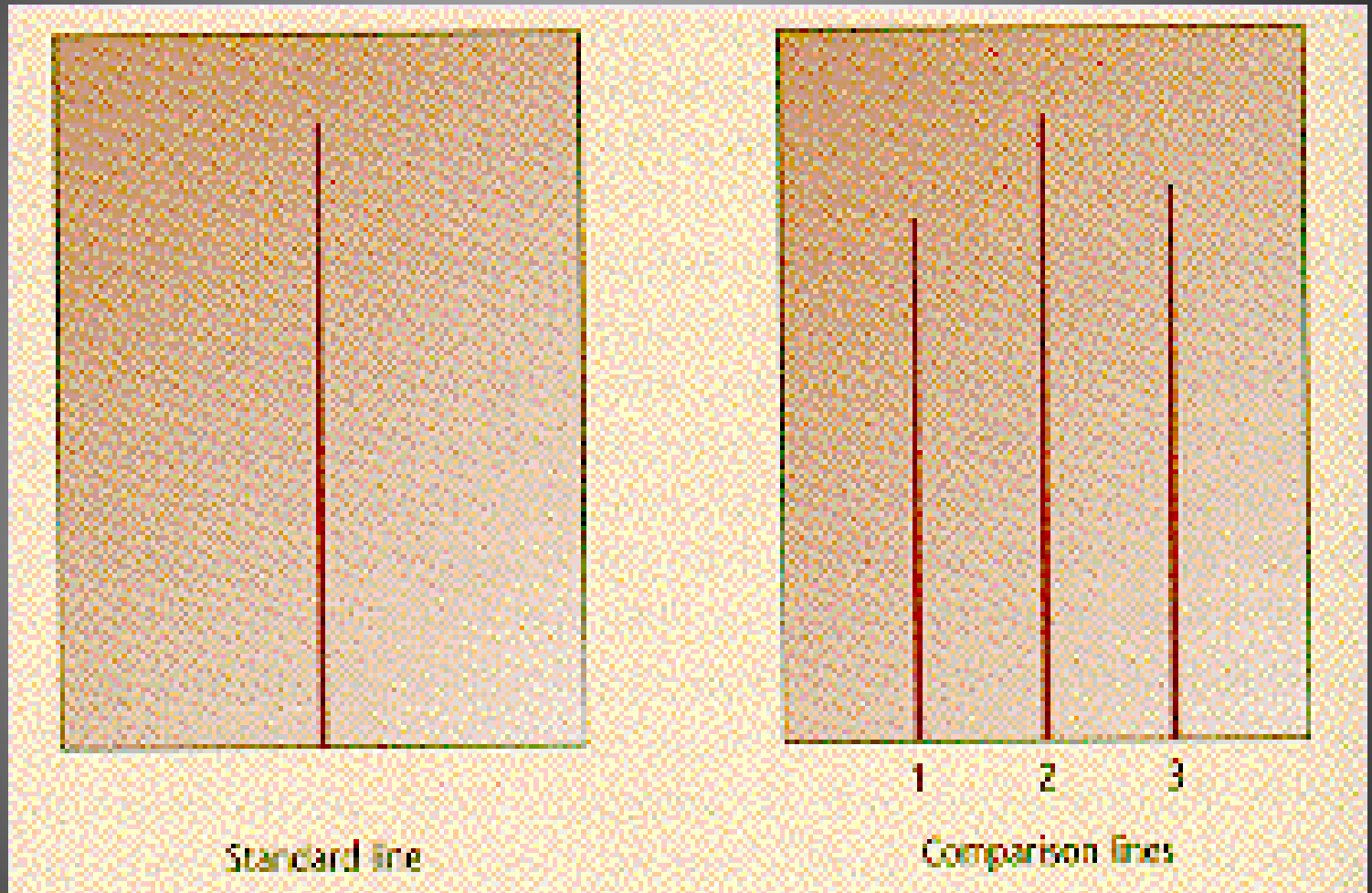


# Experimental Studies

- ▶ Asch (1951) found that participants would even give answers which they knew to be untrue, rather than ones which deviated from the views being expressed by others.
  - ▶ The task in Asch's studies involved judging which line from a set of three was the same length as a stimulus line; and it was clearly apparent what each correct answer was.
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# Asch Experiment



# Solomon Asch – Conformity Study

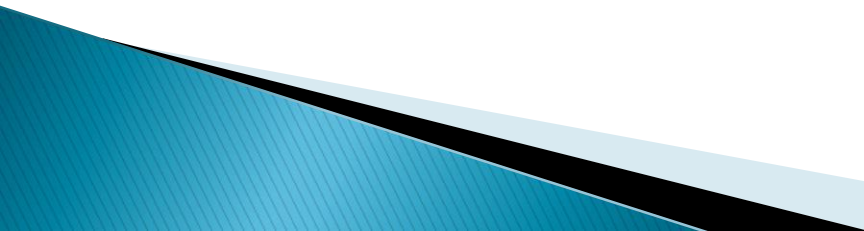


# Asch



- ▶ Subject is seated next to last
- ▶ In 12 of 18 trials confederates provide the wrong answer – DV is whether subject follows
- ▶ Ordinarily subjects make mistakes <1% of the time, in this experiment 37% of the time!
- ▶ Remember, this is in the absence of explicit rewards for conformity.

# Asch: Other Variables

- ▶ Size of group: as group size increases to 3 others, conformity increases. After that, little change
  - ▶ Presence of one dissenter decreases conformity immensely
  - ▶ If dissenter disagrees with both it still reduces conformity
  - ▶ The more wrong the majority was, the less influence
  - ▶ The greater the privacy, the less conformity
    - Accuracy versus approval issue
- 

# Key Study - Majority Influence

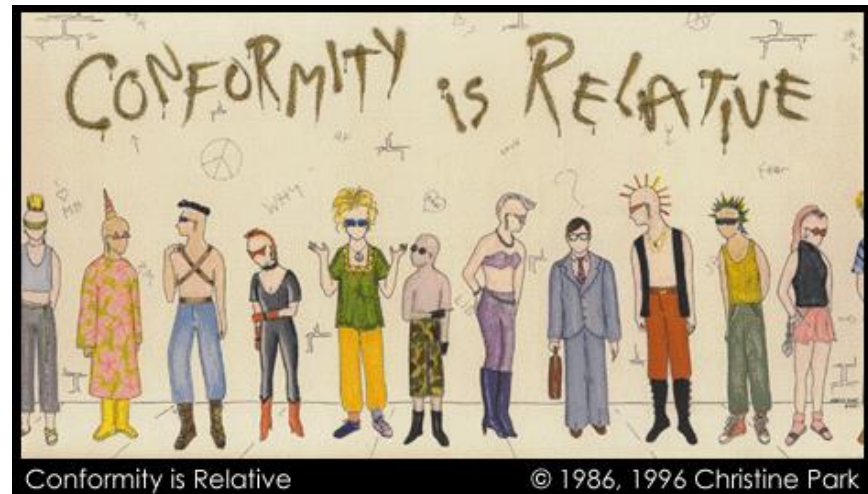
## Asch (1951, 1952, 1956)

- ▶ **Aim** – To investigate whether people conform to a majority's incorrect answer in an unambiguous task.
- ▶ **Method** – Participants in groups of 7 or 8, judged line lengths by saying out loud which comparison line (1, 2, or 3) matched the standard line. Each group had only one real participant, the others were confederates of the experimenter. Real participant always went last but one so had heard rest of the answers. Each participant did 18 trials, on 12 of these (the critical trials) the confederates all gave the wrong answer.
- ▶ **Results** – In control trials participants gave wrong answer 0.7% of the time. In critical trials participants conformed to majority 37% of time. 75% conformed at least once. Afterwards, some said they didn't believe their answers but didn't want to look different.
- ▶ **Conclusion** – Task was easy to get right (shown by control group). Fact that 37% were wrong on critical trials showed they conformed to fit in.
- ▶ **Evaluation** – supports normative social influence theory. Low ecological validity (an artificial task).



# Conditions Affecting Conformity

1. Unanimity of the majority
2. Attraction to the group
3. Commitment to future interaction with the group
4. Level of competence relative to other group members



# Conformity vs. Individuality

- ▶ Due to our upbringing in American culture, individuality has a certain allure
- ▶ But
  - Another word for individualist is “deviant”
  - Another word for conformist is “team player”
- ▶ Obviously, there are times where conformity, and obedience, are crucial
- ▶ Despite Hollywood’s depiction, research shows that the conformist is liked more.





**JUSTICE**  
**FOLLOWING**  
**ORDERS**  
**FOLLOWING**  
**GORDENS**



# The Milgram studies (1963)

Aim: To investigate how obedient people would be in a situation where following orders would mean breaking participants' moral codes and harming another person

# Key Study – Obedience

## Milgram (1963)

- ▶ Aim – To investigate how far people will obey authority (even when it means hurting someone)
- ▶ Method – 40 men volunteered for a study about learning and memory. Participant and confederate drew lots to see who would be teacher or learner = fixed – participant was always the teacher. Learner = apparently wired to electric shock generator in next room. Participant taught them word pairs. Every time they gave an incorrect answer, participant to administer an increasing level of shock from 15 volts to 450 volts. (Confederate received no shocks but acted as if did). Above 300 volts the learner did not respond. If participant stopped, the experimenter in a lab coat ordered them to continue.
- ▶ Results – Psychologists predicted about 1% would administer the highest shock. 65% of participants administered 450volts, none stopped before 300volts. Many participants showed signs of stress during the experiment.
- ▶ Conclusion – Ordinary people obey orders even when they are acting against their conscience and hurting someone else.
- ▶ Evaluation – Experimental validity (some argue participants didn't really believe giving electric shocks, just going along with experimenter's expectations (shows demand characteristics), Low ecological validity (unlikely to face this situation in real life!), Ethical issues (no informed consent, used deception, not informed of right to withdraw, may have caused psychological distress).



***Milgram (1974) wrote 'Gas chambers were built, death camps were guarded, daily quotas of corpses were produced with the same efficiency as the manufacture of appliances.'***

### **Public Announcement**

**WE WILL PAY YOU \$4.00 FOR  
ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME**

#### **Persons Needed for a Study of Memory**

\*We will pay five hundred New Haven men to help us complete a scientific study of memory and learning. The study is being done at Yale University.

\*Each person who participates will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) for approximately 1 hour's time. We need you for only one hour: there are no further obligations. You may choose the time you would like to come (evenings, weekdays, or weekends).

\*No special training, education, or experience is needed. We want:

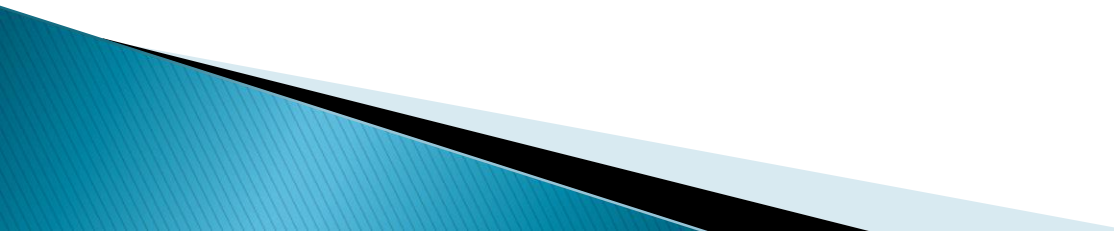
Factory workers	Businessmen	Construction workers
City employees	Clerks	Salespeople
Laborers	Professional people	White-collar workers
Barbers	Telephone workers	Others

All persons must be between the ages of 20 and 50. High school and college students cannot be used.

\*If you meet these qualifications, fill out the coupon below and mail it now to Professor Stanley Milgram, Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven. You will be notified later of the specific time and place of the study. We reserve the right to decline any application.

\*You will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) as soon as you arrive at the laboratory.

# Procedure

- ▶ Milgram advertised for male volunteers to take part in a memory experiment for a fee of 4\$.
  - ▶ 40 participants were involved.
  - ▶ The experiment took place in a university
  - ▶ The participants were told they would be either a teacher or a learner.
  - ▶ Participants were introduced to “Mr Wallace”, a fellow participant (actually an actor working for Milgram).
  - ▶ Participants were always the teacher, “Mr Wallace” was always the learner.
  - ▶ “Mr Wallace” was strapped on a chair and asked to complete a memory task.
  - ▶ Every time Wallace made a mistake, Milgram ordered the participant to give him an electric shock.
  - ▶ The level of the shock to be given increased at each mistake.
  - ▶ The shock levels were labelled from 0 to 450 volts and were labelled “danger! Severe shock” and at 450 volts “XXX”.
  - ▶ The learner (the actor) screamed and shouted at the increasing of the shocks and eventually collapsed.
  - ▶ When participant protested, Milgram told them “the experiment requires that you continue”.
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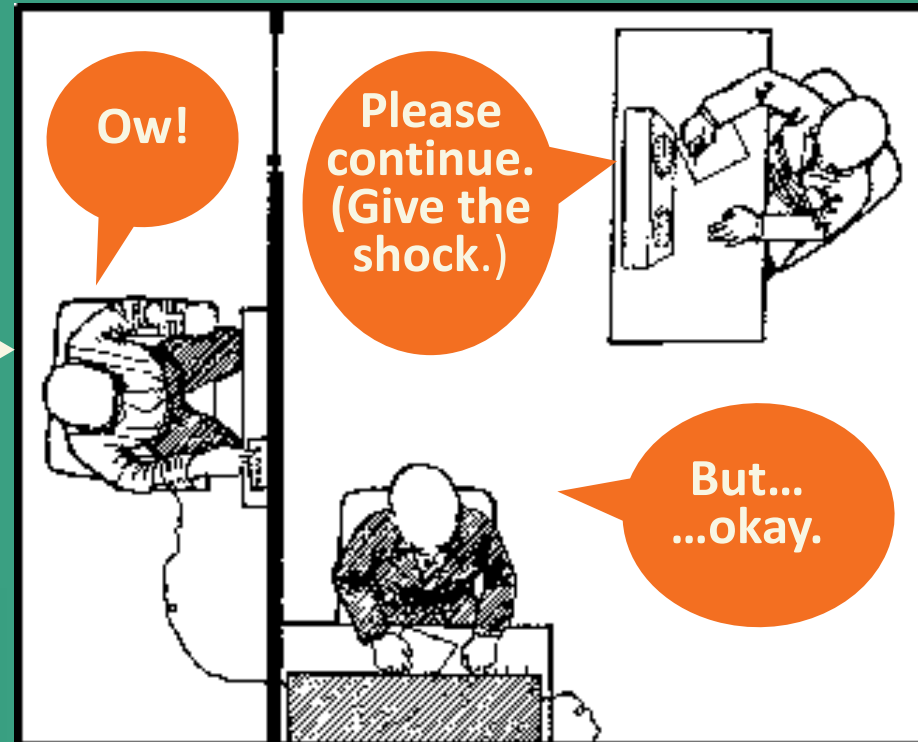


# The Design of Milgram's Obedience Study

*One layout of the study*



← The “Learner”  
(working with  
researchers) →



Shock levels in volts that participants thought they were giving

Slight (15–60)	Moderate (75–120)	Strong (135–180)	Very strong (195–240)	Intense (250–300)	Extreme intensity (315–360)	Danger: severe (375–420)	XXX (435–450)
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