



# The Asch Conformity Experiments: Lesson Plan

Topic	
<p>Dr. Solomon Asch’s groundbreaking experiments evaluated a person’s likelihood to conform to a clearly wrong standard when there is group pressure to do so. He did this by having his control group participants pair up matching lines on their own. In the experimental condition, participants would have to verbally give their answers after a group of actors gave the same wrong answer. The results showed that while a majority of test subjects’ responses remained correct in the actor pressure condition, a significant minority of over one third conformed to the actors’ wrong answers. Further investigation found that only 25% of subjects always defied majority opinion, 5% were always swayed by the group, and the remaining 70% conformed on some trials.</p>	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychology</li> <li>• Sociology</li> <li>• Government/Politics</li> </ul>	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
<a href="https://academy4sc.org/topic/the-asch-conformity-experiments-the-line-between-independence-and-conformity/">https://academy4sc.org/topic/the-asch-conformity-experiments-the-line-between-independence-and-conformity/</a>	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>By the end of this lesson, students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the details of the initial Asch Conformity Experiment.</li> <li>• Articulate the various reasons why people conform to wrong standards.</li> <li>• Identify the implications of Asch’s findings.</li> </ul>	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
conformity	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet	



## The Asch Conformity Experiments: The Line Between Independence and Conformity

### Before you watch

On the attached worksheet are two different sets of Introductory Worksheets recreating Asch's line test. Give two thirds of the students Introductory Worksheet A and the remaining third Introductory Worksheet B. Make sure you pass these out yourself so that students do not notice that there are two different worksheets being handed out.

Ask students to complete the worksheet in about a minute or two. Once all students are finished, have students read the answers allowed. You could do this under the guise of, "They didn't come with answer sheets, so we'll have to figure out the correct answers together. It shouldn't be too hard." For trials one and two, students should get the same answers (C, B). For Worksheet A students, the correct answer to trial three is A; students with Worksheet B however have B. Answer A is clearly incorrect on Worksheet B.

When you're having students read their answers allowed, make sure at least three or four students with Worksheet A read off their answers before a student with Worksheet B reads theirs. Have everyone read their answers allowed for each trial. You should get in to a relatively fast rhythm since for the first two trials everyone has the same obvious answer. Try to keep up this fast pace for the third trial.

After everyone has given their answers for the third trial, reveal the trick of the experiment. Discuss the results: who conformed to the obviously wrong majority? Who didn't? Why?

### While you watch

1. What is conformity?
2. How did Asch test whether humans conform to a group?

### After you watch/discussion questions

1. How did students with Worksheet B feel during trial three when they heard the wrong answer being confidently called out? How would you feel?
2. Why might you conform to a group majority?
3. What are some ways you might be able to minimize the persuasiveness of group conformity?

### Activity Ideas

1. Complete the corresponding worksheet and discuss answers in groups or as a class.



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2. Ask students to think of a time that they conformed to a group opinion or action. If you could go back, would you change how you acted? Why or why not? Was the group decision/opinion correct/ moral? What can you learn from that experience going forward? This activity could be a discussion or written activity.

### Sources/places to learn more

1. Bond, Rod & Peter B. Smith. "Culture and conformity: A meta-analysis of studies using Asch's (1925b, 1956) line judgment task." *Psychological Bulletin*, vol 119, issue 1, Jan 1996, pp. 111-137. Doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.119.1.111.
2. Friend, Ronald, Yvonne Rafferty, & Dana Bramel. "A puzzling misinterpretation of the Asch 'conformity' study." *European Journal of Social Psychology*, vol 20, issue 1, Jan/Feb 1990, pp. 29-44. Doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2420200104.
3. Mori, Kazuo & Miho Arai. "No need to fake it: Reproduction of the Asch experiment without confederates." *Internal Journal of Psychology*, vol 45, issue 5, 2010, pp. 390-397. Doi: 10.1080/00207591003774485.
4. Perrin, Stephen & Christopher Spencer. "Independence or conformity in the Asch experiment as a reflection of cultural and situational factors." *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol 20, issue 3, Sept 1981, pp. 205-209. Doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.1981.tb00533.x.
5. Rock, Irvin. *The Legacy of Solomon Asch: Essays in Cognition and Social Psychology*. Psychology Press, Taylor & Francis Group, 2014. ISBN: 13: 978-0-805-80440-9.