

# Research Activity 1

## Name your choice

Make a list of 20 people you know (and have the required information about) and list their names. Next list their home town, their profession, and the street they live in, and then write down the name of their partner. Do you see a similarity in the names?

This exercise demonstrates the tendency people have to choose cities, jobs, partners, and streets with names that resemble their own names (SP p. 108).

# Research Activity 2

## I've got the funnies

Research on the facial feedback hypothesis by Strack, Martin, and Stepper (1988) showed that people who shape their faces into an expression of a smile actually feel happier than participants who purse their faces into a scowl. How on earth did they test this hypothesis? Well, it was pretty clever, and you can do it too!

As described in your text, Strack et al. (1988) had their participants make ratings of cartoons while holding a pen between their teeth or between their lips. Try it yourself and you will see that placing a pen in between your teeth makes you look like you're smiling, whereas a pen between your lips makes you appear to be scowling. The researchers found that the participants who held the pen between their teeth rated the cartoons as funnier than the participants that held the pen between their lips.

First, find a set of ~10 cartoons to use as stimuli. You can collect them from a newspaper, or find them online (e.g., <https://www.facebook.com/Bestfunnycartoons>). Second, gather a group of friends and ask them, just for fun, to make ratings of cartoons while holding a pen in their mouth in one of the two ways mentioned above (you can assign one group of friends to be in the "teeth" condition and the other group to be in the "lips" condition—but don't tell them about their facial expression or about your hypothesis). Warn your friends that they may look a little silly writing with a pen in their mouth, but you are their friend so you won't judge. In terms of the ratings, ask your friends to rate each cartoon on a 1 (not at all funny) to 7 (very funny) scale. After the cartoons have been rated, find the average score for your friends in the "teeth" condition and your friends in the "lips" condition. Did you find support for the facial feedback hypothesis? Wouldn't that be funny if you did?

## Reference

- Strack, F., Martin, L. L., & Stepper, S. (1988). Inhibiting and facilitating conditions of the human smile: A nonobtrusive test of the facial feedback hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54, 768–777.

# Research Activity 3

## Let it go

Research by Pennebaker (1997) shows that students who write down their thoughts and feelings about stressful events in a journal experience an increased physiological response in the short run, but better health in the long run.

The next time you're going through something stressful, try writing down your thoughts and feelings and see if it helps you to feel better. In addition to feeling better, the processes of writing things down may also have given you greater clarity and closure regarding the issue.

For more information on the power of journaling, see the following sources:

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/the-health-benefits-of-journaling/000721>

## Reference

- Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8, 162–166.

## Research Activity 4

### **Attribution of success and failure**

Make a list of success and failure experiences of the last couple of months. Then write down the cause of every single success and failure. After doing this, rate the causes as internal (i.e., you are the main cause) or external (i.e., the situation is the main cause). How many success events did you recall, and how many failures? Can you see differences in attribution of success and failure?

This exercise demonstrates the self-serving bias that most people have a better memory for success than for failure, and that they attribute success to themselves (internal causes) and failure to other reasons (external causes) (SP pp. 130–131).