



# The Psychologist as Detective

**An Introduction to Conducting  
Research in Psychology**

**Fifth Edition**

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We dedicate the fifth edition of this text to the loving memory of Corliss Smith (1952–2009). Her support made this book possible. Please consider a donation to the ALS Association ([www.alsa.org](http://www.alsa.org)) to fight this cruel disease.

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# Preface

Because our objectives and goals and the specific features we've included in *The Psychologist as Detective* remain unchanged in this fifth edition, our original Preface follows.

---

## Note to the Instructor

Margery Franklin (1990) quoted former Clark University professor and chair Heinz Werner's views on psychological research. Werner indicated:

I got rather apprehensive at finding that students were frequently taught that there was only one acceptable way of conduct in the laboratory—there has to be an hypothesis set up, or a set of hypotheses, and the main job of the experimenter is to prove or disprove the hypothesis. What is missed here is the function of the scientist as a discoverer and explorer of unknown lands. . . . Hypotheses . . . are essential elements of inquiry, but they are so not as rigid propositions but as flexible parts of the process of searching; by the same token, conclusions drawn from the results are as much an end as a beginning. . . . Now . . . academic psychologists [are beginning] to see research not as a rigid exercise of rules of a game but as a problem solving procedure, a probing into unknown lands with plans which are not fixed but modifiable, with progress and retreat, with branching out into various directions or concentration on one. (p. 185)

Clearly Werner's views are as applicable in the 21st century as they were during the heyday of behaviorism; they reflect perfectly the intent of this text.

From our vantage point, research in psychology is like a detective case; hence the title we have chosen, *The Psychologist as Detective*. A problem presents itself; we discover clues; we must evaluate bits of evidence that compete for our attention and accept or discard them; and finally, we prepare a report or summary of the case (research) for consideration by our peers.

When presented in this light, the research process in psychology will, we believe, be an interesting and stimulating endeavor for students. In short, our goal is to attract students to psychological research because of its inherent interest.

To accomplish this goal, we have incorporated several pedagogical features in this text:

1. To provide a sense of relevance and continuity, the theme of "psychologist as detective" runs throughout the text.
2. **Interactive Style of Writing.** Because we believe that the experimental psychology/research methods text should be lively and engaging, we employ an interactive, conversational style of writing that we hope will help draw students into the material.
3. **The Psychological Detective Feature.** The questions or situations posed by these sections that appear throughout each chapter will encourage students to engage in critical thinking exercises. These sections also serve as excellent stimulants for productive class discussions.

4. **Marginal Definitions.** Key definitions appear in the margin, close to the introduction of the term in the text.
5. **Review Summaries.** To help students master smaller chunks of material, each chapter contains one or more review summaries.
6. **Check Your Progress.** A Check Your Progress feature follows each Review Summary. Students can use these sections to test their mastery of the material they have just completed. These study breaks should be especially helpful to your students when they prepare for quizzes and examinations.

We hope that these special features will provide your students with a positive experience as they learn the fundamentals of research methodology in psychology.

---

## Note to the Student

Welcome to the world of psychological research! Because the two of us have taught this course for over 60 years (combined!), we have seen the excitement that research can generate in student after student. As you will learn, conducting psychological research is very much like being a detective on a case.

Throughout this text we have tried to make it clear that research is something that you can (and should) become involved in. We hope you will enjoy reading about the student projects that we use as research examples throughout this text. Student research projects are making valuable contributions to our field. We hope to see your name among those making such contributions!

At this point we encourage you to stop immediately to review the list of pedagogical features highlighted in the “Note to the Instructor.”

Did you humor us by actually looking at that list? If not, please do so now. To make full use of this text, you need to become actively involved; these pedagogical features will help you. Active involvement means that you need to stop and think about The Psychological Detective sections immediately when you encounter them, refer to figures and tables when directed to do so, and complete the Check Your Progress sections when they appear. Becoming actively involved in this course helps the material come alive; your grade and your future involvement in psychology will thank you.

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## What’s New for the Fifth Edition?

We are excited about the continuing evolution of *The Psychologist as Detective: An Introduction to Conducting Research in Psychology*. We have implemented several major changes and additions for the fifth edition:

1. Based on feedback from adopters, we have:
  - A. Streamlined the first chapter and sharpened the focus to deal with the general topic of research methods.
  - B. Devoted a complete chapter (Chapter 3) to the coverage of Qualitative Research Methods and combined our coverage of other nonexperimental research methods into one, separate chapter.
  - C. Created a separate chapter to introduce students to the basics of using the scientific methods in psychological research (Chapter 5).

2. An updated and expanded Instructor's Manual and Electronic Test Item File are also available to accompany *The Psychologist as Detective*. Please contact your local Prentice Hall representative or log onto [www.pearsonhighered.com](http://www.pearsonhighered.com).

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