

1. In 1961, Yale psychology professor Stanley Milgram designed an experiment  
2. to measure the extent to which people were prepared to obey authority, even  
3. when it meant ignoring their conscience. Milgram hoped to understand how  
4. ordinary Germans could have participated on such a large scale to bring about  
5. the Holocaust. One notion at the time of the experiment was that the Germans'  
6. culture prized deference to power above all else, and may have made them  
7. capable of carrying out orders that would be morally unthinkable to other  
8. cultures. Milgram's hypothesis, though, was that all people are predisposed to  
9. suppress their own moral instincts in favor of obedience to authority figures.



10 (32) The aim of Stanley Milgram's 1961 experiment was to

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22. 2) What was Milgram's hypothesis?

23. *Milgram's hypothesis was that all people are predisposed to suppress their*

24. *own moral instincts.*

25. Milgram recruited 40 people to assist a stern, white-coated scientist as he  
26. supervised a "study of memory." Seated at a control panel, recruits were to  
27. test an unseen learner in the next room. They were instructed to press a  
28. switch to administer an electric shock to the learner each time he answered  
29. incorrectly, increasing the voltage with each wrong response. Dials, lights, and  
30. buzzers on the control panel gave every indication of delivering painful shocks  
31. to the learner, who responded with screams, please to stop, and eventually,  
32. dead silence. Unknown to the recruits, the entire setup was fake—the learner  
33. and the scientist were, in fact, actors, and no shocks were actually transmitted.

### Further Questions

34. 3) What were the people instructed to do?

35. *They were instructed to press a switch to increase the voltage with each wrong*  
36. *response.*

37. **4) Was the setup real?**

38. *No, the entire setup was fake—the learners and the scientists were, in fact,*  
39. *actors.*

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40. All 40 recruits administered what they thought were a series of shocks up to  
41. 300 volts—labeled “Extreme Intensity Shock” on the control panel—without  
42. refusing. Despite expressing mounting concern for the learner, as well as their  
43. own deepening discomfort, most proceeded after the scientist accepted  
44. responsibility for the learner’s safety and instructed them to continue.  
45. Sixty-five percent of the recruits even went on to administer the maximum  
46. 450-volt shock. Although they displayed signs of extreme stress—trembling,  
47. hysterical laughter, weeping, and even seizures—their discomfort never  
48. overrode their obedience to the scientist’s authority, even when they believed  
49. the learner had been rendered unconscious.

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61. *to 300 volts.*

62. **6) What sort of signs of discomfort did the recruits show?**

63. *They showed trembling, hysterical laughter, weeping, and even seizures.*

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64. Milgram’s conclusion was that the drive to comply with authority is stronger  
65. than even our deepest-held personal morals. Other scientists, however,  
66. questioned the experiment’s validity. In 1968, psychologists John Holland and  
67. Martin Orne suggested Milgram’s study was flawed, ironically, by the recruits’  
68. respect for authority. Trusting the scientist would not let the learner be  
69. harmed, recruits had likely doubted the shocks were real, instead suspecting  
70. that the recruit’s discomfort resulted from feeling compelled to play along with  
71. a troubling but artificial scenario.

### Further Questions

72. **7) Why did John Holland and Martin Orne suggest Milgram’s study was**  
73. **flaws?**

74. *Trusting the scientist would not let the learner be harmed, recruits had likely*

75. *doubted the shocks were real.*

76. A 1966 experiment by psychiatrist Charles Hofling, however, replicated  
77. Milgram's findings in a real-life setting. In Hofling's experiment, 21 of 22  
78. hospital nurses, instructed by a doctor they had never met to administer a  
79. clearly unsafe dosage of medicine to a patient, obediently prepared to do so.  
80. Numerous other experiments have since shown that power differences in  
81. social situations are capable of leading ordinary people to commit extremely  
82. cruel or harmful acts.

83. **(34) What was argued by John Holland and Martin Orne?**

84. **1** Milgram's recruits may have behaved as they did because they felt pressure  
85. to perform in a manner that suited the experiment.

86. **2** The results of the experiment should be considered invalid because Milgram  
87. failed to inform recruits that their own behavior would be analyzed.

88. **3** Milgram had intentionally planned and set up the experiment in such a way  
89. that only one result could possibly have emerged.

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