Holt et al. Psychology: the Science of Mind And Behaviour

* Solomon Asch (1946) found that the person who is first described positively and then negatively is perceived to be more positive than the person who is described first negatively then positively
* Primacy effect refers to our tendency to attach more importance to the initial information that we learn about a person. New information can change our opinion but is has to “work harder” for two reasons:
  + We tend to most alert to information we receive first
  + Initial information may shape how we perceive subsequent information
* First impression also carry extra weight because they influence our desire to make further contact with a person (Sunnafrank et al, 2004. It is difficult to overcome someone’s negative first impression of you if that person subsequently avoids or ignores you
* We seem to have a remarkable capacity for forming snap judgements based on small amount of initial information
* Ambady & Rosenthal (1992) Meta-analysis. After investigating 44 published studies turned out that snap judgements were just as accurate as longer-term judgements. They showed that a perception of a person after observing him or her for as less than half a minute was just as accurate as after an observation period of four to five minutes.
* Some evolutionary psychologists propose that evaluating stimuli quickly (such as rapidly distinguishing friend from foe) was adaptive for our survival (Krebs & Denton, 1997)
* However, we are not slaves to primacy. Primacy effects decrease and recency effects may occur when we are asked to avoid snap judgements, reminded to consider the evidence clearly, and made to feel accountable for our judgements (Webster et al, 1996)

Myers. Social Psychology

* Controlled processing – explicit thinking that is deliberate, reflective, and conscious
* Automatic processing – implicit or intuitive thinking that is effortless, habitual, and without awareness
* Schemas – mental templates – guide our perceptions and interpretations of our experience
* Emotional reactions are nearly instantaneous, before there is time for deliberate thinking
* Simple likes, dislikes, and fears typically involve little analysis. Although our intuitive reactions sometimes defy logic, they may still be adaptive
* Given sufficient expertise, people may intuitively know the answer to a problem. The situation cues information stored in memory
* Heuristic – a thinking strategy that enables quick, efficient judgement. Adaptive
* Representativeness (typicalness) heuristic – The tendency to presume, sometimes despite contrary odds, that someone or something belongs to a particular group if resembling (representing) a typical member of a certain category. May lead to discounting other important information
* Availability heuristic – a cognitive rule that judges the likelihood of things in terms of their availability in memory. If instances of something come readily to mind, we presume it to be commonplace. However, overweighting vivid instances and thus, for example, to fearing the wrong things
* Our use of the availability heuristic highlights a basic principle of social thinking: people are slow to deduce particular instances from general truth, but they are remarkably quick to infer general truth from a vivid instance

Eysenck & Keane. Cognitive Psychology

* Harvey (2001, p. 104): ‘Judgements are assessed in terms of how accurate they are whereas decisions are assessed in terms of their potential consequences.. judgements have no direct consequences but they can have indirect ones via the decisions that they inform... all one has to do to change judgements into decisions is to add consequences to different types of outcome’
* We often change our opinion of the likelihood of something in the light of new information
* Representativeness heuristic. When people use this heuristic, ‘events that are representative or typical of a class are assigned a high probability of occurrence. If an event is highly similar to most of others in a population or class of events, then it is considered representative’ – Kellogg, 1995, p. 385
* You would probably estimate the probability mostly in terms of the similarity between the individual’s description and your stereotype.
* Conjunction fallacy 🡪 a mistaken belief that the conjunction or combination of two events (A and B) is more likely than one of the two events alone
* Availability heuristic 🡪 involves estimating the frequencies of events on the basis of how easy or difficult it is to retrieve relevant information from long-term memory
* Take-the-best strategy vs weight-of-evidence strategy

Braisby & Gellatly. Cognitive Psychology