# Unit 1 – What is Psychology?

### Lesson Summary – Lesson 1 (Introduction to Psychology)

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### ****Lesson Summary (Explore + Practice)****

Psychology is the science of the mind and behavior. That means psychologists try to understand what people think, how they feel, and why they act the way they do. Sometimes psychology looks at things we can see on the outside, like actions. Other times it studies things on the inside, like thoughts and emotions that we cannot see directly.

One way psychologists do this is through experiments. An experiment is a way to test an idea about how people behave. A famous example is the **Marshmallow Test**. In this experiment, young children were given one marshmallow. They were told that if they waited and did not eat it, they would get a second marshmallow later. Some children ate the marshmallow right away, while others waited for the bigger reward.

The Marshmallow Test showed how people’s thoughts and decisions (like wanting more later) affect their actions (waiting or eating). It also taught us that self-control—being able to wait for a reward—is an important part of psychology.

In class, students discussed simple everyday examples:

* Why do we feel nervous before a test?
* Why do we laugh at funny videos?
* Why do we sometimes make good choices, and other times act on impulse?

Psychology helps answer these questions by studying the connection between thinking, feeling, and acting.

Watch the video: **marshmallow-test.mp4** (or “Marshmallow Test” on YouTube). As you watch, notice what choices the children make and how those choices show their self-control.

### ****Comprehension Questions****

1. What is psychology the study of?
2. In the Marshmallow Test, what choice did the children have to make?
3. What does the experiment teach us about self-control?
4. Can you think of a time when you had to choose between a reward now or a bigger reward later?
5. Why is it useful for psychologists to study things like thoughts and feelings, even though we can’t see them directly?