

# The gestalt psychologists

Psychology



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Gestalt Psychologists The term Gestalt is a German word that translates as the “ shape of an entity’s complete form.” The term Gestalt is well suited to this theory because Gestalt theory views the whole, rather than the parts. It is analogous to a person who sees the big picture rather than the detail-oriented person. The Gestalt psychologists base their work on the principle that the brain is self-organizing and perceives the whole before perceiving the individual parts of the entity.

Gestalt psychologists studied the organization of the visual world through a set of principles they called the “ laws of perceptual organization.” These laws state that the mind groups items into their simplest and most recognizable forms. In this way, our brains comprehend the whole more effectively.

Four key principle of Gestalt psychology are:

1. Emergence: This principle states that we perceive objects as a as a whole, not by recognizing the objects parts and piecing the object together. Many negative images have surfaced where the recognizable picture is in the negative space rather than in the drawing itself. According to Gestalt theory, our minds recognize the negative object first, rather than deducing the presence of the negative object by noticing the parts of the drawing that are missing.
2. Reification: This principle, best illustrated in the area of illusory contours, states that our minds fill in missing information when a “ picture” in incomplete.
3. Multistability: This principle states that our minds tend to vacillate back and forth when two alternative perceptions are possible. A classic example is Rubin’s Vase illusion.

4. Invariance: This principle explains that simple geometric shapes are recognizable despite minor variations in rotation, color, shading, size, etc.