

Define, describe and  
give examples of  
classical and operant  
conditioning



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Classical conditioning is a type of behavioral modification developed initially by Ivan Pavlov in his experiments about digestion patterns in dogs. During the experiments, Pavlov put meat powder in the mouths of dogs and measured their bodily responses. After repeating, the dogs began to salivate before the meat powder was administered. Eventually, the dogs would even salivate when the experimenter entered the room. This phenomenon demonstrated that the dogs had learned to anticipate the food being presented. Classical conditioning became defined as the presentation of a neutral stimulus along with a stimulus of some significance (the "unconditioned" stimulus). If the neutral and unconditioned stimuli are repeatedly paired together, according to the classical conditioning model, the association will produce a behavioral response, which is the "conditioned response". Classical conditioning supports the idea that organisms develop responses to particular stimuli that are not naturally occurring but instead generalized from one stimulus onto a neutral stimulus that is paired with it. For instance, in the case of Pavlov's dog, the meat powder was good, the experimenter was associated with the meat powder, and therefore, the experimenter was associated with good. This syllogistic relationship is a natural and very powerful concept. When Pavlov began pairing a bell sound with the meat powder, he discovered that even when the meat powder did not come, the dogs still responded with salivation. This finding indicated that the dogs prepared for food, even though there was no actual food being presented to them. Operant conditioning is different because it describes a situation in which an individual modifies the content of its behaviors due to an association of that behavior with a stimulus. The classic example involves placing a cat in a box with only one way out. When the cat discovers the way out, and is placed in <https://assignbuster.com/definedescribe-and-give-examples-of-classical-and-operant-conditioning/>

the box again, it will achieve freedom faster consecutively because it will remember how it achieved the reinforcing factor. Operant condition thus represents a kind of learning about how to interact with our environment. It is best thought of as learning due to the natural consequences of one's actions; learning from one's mistakes and achievements is a similar situation and represents operant conditioning.