

# [B. was a stenographer and a secretary,](https://assignbuster.com/b-was-a-stenographer-and-a-secretary/)

B. F. SkinnerBurris Frederic Skinner was born on March 20th, 1904 in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. His mother, Grace M. Burrhus, was a stenographer and a secretary, in a law office and later in a railroad chief executive’s office. His father, William A.

Skinner, was an attorney, who studied law with another local attorneyat a New York Law School. Skinner’s parents were both good students. His fatherhad bought several sets of books, so there was a lot of reading material theirchildren. Skinner said that his parents never used physical punishment, exceptfor the time they washed his mouth out with soap for bad language. (Ulrich, 1997) B.

F. Skinner was very adventurous child. He lead a 300 mile canoe tripdown the Susquehanna River when he was only 13 years old. He was a naturalinventor and he loved build things. One of his inventions included a device thatautomatically reminded him to hang up his pajamas in the morning. He played thesaxophone in a jazz band during high school and played piano until his failingeyesight made it hard for him to read the music.

In college, he was veryindependent, and sometimes even a prankster. He graduated from Hamilton Collegein 1926 and later received his P. h. D. in psychology at Harvard University.(Ulrich, 1997)John B. WatsonJohn Broadus Watson was born in Greenville, South Carolina on January9th 1878.

He went to college at Furman University and the University of Chicago. Watson created “ Psychological behaviorism” in 1912. He told the world about histheory of behaviorism in a 1913 paper entitled “ Psychology as the BehavioristViews It.” In the paper he described Behaviorism as the part of psychology thatshows behavior as “ a series of observable movements in time and space”. (Turner, 1997) He rejected both conscious and unconscious mental activities and definedbehavior as a response to a stimulus. A few of John B.

Watson’s literary worksinclude the following books and papers: Animal Education, Behavior, Psychologyfrom the Standpoint of a Behaviorist, Behaviorism, and Psychological Care ofInfant and Child. (Turner, 1997)Along with his own theories of behaviorism, Skinner developed the theoryof operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is based on the idea that “ webehave the way we do because this kind of behavior has had certain consequencesin the past.” (Demar, 1996) For example, if your parents give you a present whenyou do what your told, you will be likely to behave when you want to get apresent.

This means that basically- you do something to get a reward. LikeWatson, Skinner denied that feelings play any part in determining behavior. Instead, he claimed that the drive to be rewarded determines our behavior.(Demar, 1996)Some critics feel that operant conditioning was a dangerous techniquebecause Skinner was controlling people and could have manipulated them. In replyto their criticism, Skinner argued that control is not wrong. Control is veryimportant and sometimes unavoidable in education, government, and therapy.(Bijou, 1994) What Skinner objects to is the fact that control is usually usedin negative ways which include the use of threat, punishment or to use otherpeople. Skinner argues that because of this, people are against control, becausethe people in control use their power it in a negative way.

For instance, Inthe family, a child is controlled by the fear of punishment from his parents. In school, the students are placed in a threatening environment in which theycan escape only by learning. Our government controls us through laws, rules, andregulations. Skinner claims that what is needed is not less control but bettercontrol. Better control could be used if society had adopted his psychologicaltheories.

If this where to happen there would be better ways of teaching, betterworking conditions, and a better system of government. (Skinner, 1938) Skinnerhad many inventions that pertained to behaviorism. One of his most famousinventions was called a “ Skinner box.” A Skinner box is a chamber made bySkinner which helps control animal behavior in laboratory experiments. In oneexperiment using the skinner box, he made it so if the chicken pecks on theyellow, green, or red buttons, he gets nothing.

But if he hits the blue button, a small amount of food comes down the chute; therefor, the chicken is reinforcedwith food for hitting the correct button. He also created other inventions, including an air-crib for babies and the first cumulative recorder. (Bjord, 1990) Skinners experiments with rats and pigeons raise the following