

# Critical thinking



**ASSIGN  
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**Positive Reinforcement Definition** Positive reinforcement, in operant conditioning, is a motivational technique that encourages a positive behavior by way of a positive outcome. When a certain action is followed by a reward, a gift, a surprise, an encouraging comment, or positive feedback, it results in the encouragement of the person, which makes him repeat his good action again and again.

#### Example

When a parent tells his child that, if he comes back from school with full marks in his class test, he will be allowed to go over to a friend's place to watch a movie, this anticipated reward makes him perform at his best. This is the best motivational technique that a parent can use, because it is natural for children to behave in a certain way when their behavior is appreciated with a reward.

#### Negative Reinforcement

##### Definition

The term coined by B. F. Skinner, negative reinforcement is a kind of motivational technique that aims at repetition of a certain behavior, by the removal of aversive stimuli. An aversive stimulus is some sort of physical or mental discomfort. A response or behavior is strengthened when an individual knows that he will escape a negative outcome.

##### Example

My mother has always told me to clean up the mess in my room before I leave for school. She has, at times, yelled at me when I left my room untidy. So, I knew that I have to clean up my room in order to escape the anger of my mother. In this example, my mom's anger was the negative reinforce or the negative outcome, which I avoided by correcting my behavior.

## Positive Punishment

### Definition

Positive punishment involves adding a negative outcome after a negative behavior is shown, with the aim to lessen down the frequency of that negative behavior in future.

### Negative

Consider a student whose mobile phone rings up when he is attending his favorite math class. His teacher reprimands him in front of his classmates, and gives a lecture on bad effects of using mobile phones during lectures. Since the student feels ashamed in front of his peers, he powers off his phone, and makes up his mind to always switch it off during lectures. This way, his negative behavior is weakened by positive punishment.

## Negative Punishment

### Positive

Negative punishment involves taking away of some expected and desired outcome after a negative behavior is shown. Negative punishment is also intended for weakening the negative behavior, so that it does not happen again in future.

### Negative

I remember myself fighting with my little brother over a video game. He wanted to play it first, while I was saying that since it was my idea, so I should play it first. We started yelling at each other, while each of us snatching the DVD from the other. My mom came in, and with an angry look, took the DVD away with her in the kitchen, and hid it somewhere. This is an example of taking away a desired object with the intention of correcting a negative behavior, through negative punishment.