

Answers to Chapter 6: Comprehension Questions

1. Why are optical illusions a good way to stimulate discussion about perceptions?

Because optical illusions are usually morally neutral, they allow students to easily acknowledge the truth of a perception different from their own. This allows them to freely discuss both their own and others' perceptions, and it visually illustrates the idea that two people can hold different perspectives and both be right (or wrong).

2. What are the important differences between the growth mindset and the fixed mindset?

The growth mindset states that any individual is able to get smarter by working harder. It emphasizes effort over innate talent. The fixed mindset states that everyone is born with a certain amount of intelligence, and an individual cannot change that intelligence, no matter what. The differences between the theories are important because they affect how students approach challenging or difficult tasks. A student who believes that she can increase her intelligence is more likely to take on a challenging task because she sees it as an opportunity to learn. A student who believes that her intelligence is fixed may hesitate to take on a difficult task because she sees no benefit from it and is afraid of failing. For a student with a fixed mindset, if a task is not easy, then he explains it by saying that he is not smart enough. For a student with a growth mindset, difficult tasks are simply opportunities to gain intelligence.

3. How can teaching students about resiliency help them to cultivate a sense of self-efficacy?

Resiliency emphasizes the ability of a person to be successful in spite of his or her circumstances. Students with low self-efficacy see their circumstances as beyond their control. By learning about resiliency, these students will realize that one's circumstances do not always determine one's outcomes, and bad circumstances do not always need to lead to bad outcomes.

4. Why is emotional thinking a negative way of thinking?

Because involuntary processes in the brain largely control emotions, people who are operating under the influence of emotions often describe themselves as *not thinking*. This lack of control can lead to inappropriate behavior and bad choices. While emotions are unavoidable, students should understand that reacting before they mentally process an event and decide on an appropriate response can be harmful to themselves and others.