

Important Definitions

Cognitive bias: A mistake in reasoning, evaluating, remembering, or other cognitive process, often occurring as a result of holding onto one's preferences and beliefs regardless of contrary information, or simply being lax in one's thinking. Psychologists study cognitive biases as they relate to memory, reasoning, and decision making.

If-then planning: After you identify a goal, predict the obstacles you might encounter and decide on an action you will take to keep you on track. (Everyday example: I want to do a weightlifting routine on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If I don't feel motivated to do it on one of those days, then I will still put on my workout clothes and jump rope while watching a favorite show, and see if I want to do more once I'm warmed up.)

One way we can avoid succumbing to cognitive biases is to first try to be more aware of narrow, problematic thinking. If-then planning can also push us to pursue alternative trains of thought. Learn how recognizing and resisting the cognitive biases of the **overconfidence effect**, **black-and-white thinking**, and **sunk-cost fallacy** can help you get better prepared for assessments in school.

Upcoming Assessment: _____

Follow these directions for each cognitive bias:

1. Read the description of the cognitive bias, the example of how it could interfere with everyday living, and the example of how if-then planning could help someone avoid the bias.
2. Provide your own example of how the cognitive bias could interfere with how you prepare for the upcoming assessment your teacher described.
3. Write an if-then planning statement that could help you avoid the cognitive bias in that situation.

Cognitive Bias: Overconfidence Effect

What does the overconfidence effect look like?

Being overly certain about judgments or predictions (which becomes apparent when the facts are revealed or we get a result of some sort)

What causes the overconfidence effect?

- Wishful thinking
- Overlooking the facts and nuances of a situation
- Failing to imagine the possible outcomes
- Protecting our egos

	How the overconfidence effect could interfere with the situation	If-then planning statement that could help you avoid the overconfidence effect
Everyday living example	Failing to budget enough time to get ready for, travel to, and park at an important event	If I have an important event to attend, then at least a day in advance I will find out how long it takes to get there, identify a good time to start getting ready, and set a reminder about it on my calendar app.
Preparing for the upcoming assessment	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Cognitive Bias: Black-and-White Thinking

What does black-and-white thinking look like?

Judging a situation in an extreme way (like terrible or great, ugly or beautiful, or enemy or friend)

What causes black-and-white thinking?

- Wanting to resolve uncertainty
- Trying to understand ourselves and our world

	How black-and-white thinking could interfere with the situation	If-then planning statement that could help you avoid black-and-white thinking
Everyday living example: Navigating a new relationship	Getting overly hopeful or upset about developments in a friendship or new romantic relationship that has a lot of uncertainty	If I realize I'm making assumptions about how a new friend or romantic interest feels about me, then I will resist making statements or plans that may cause misunderstandings or overstep their boundaries.
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Cognitive Bias: Sunk-Cost Fallacy

What does the sunk cost fallacy look like?

Continuing an endeavor only because you invested time, money, and/or effort in it

What causes the sunk-cost fallacy?

- Not wanting to be wasteful
- Feeling like it's wrong to quit
- Optimism that things will improve
- Thinking it'll be hard to start something new

	How the sunk-cost fallacy could interfere with the situation	If-then planning statement that could help you avoid the sunk-cost fallacy
Everyday living example: Shopping	Buying something you don't really want or need just because you're already at the store on a shopping trip with friends and feel like that's what you came to do	If I find myself making a purchase just because I'm in a store, then I will ask myself what I'd rather save my money for.
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