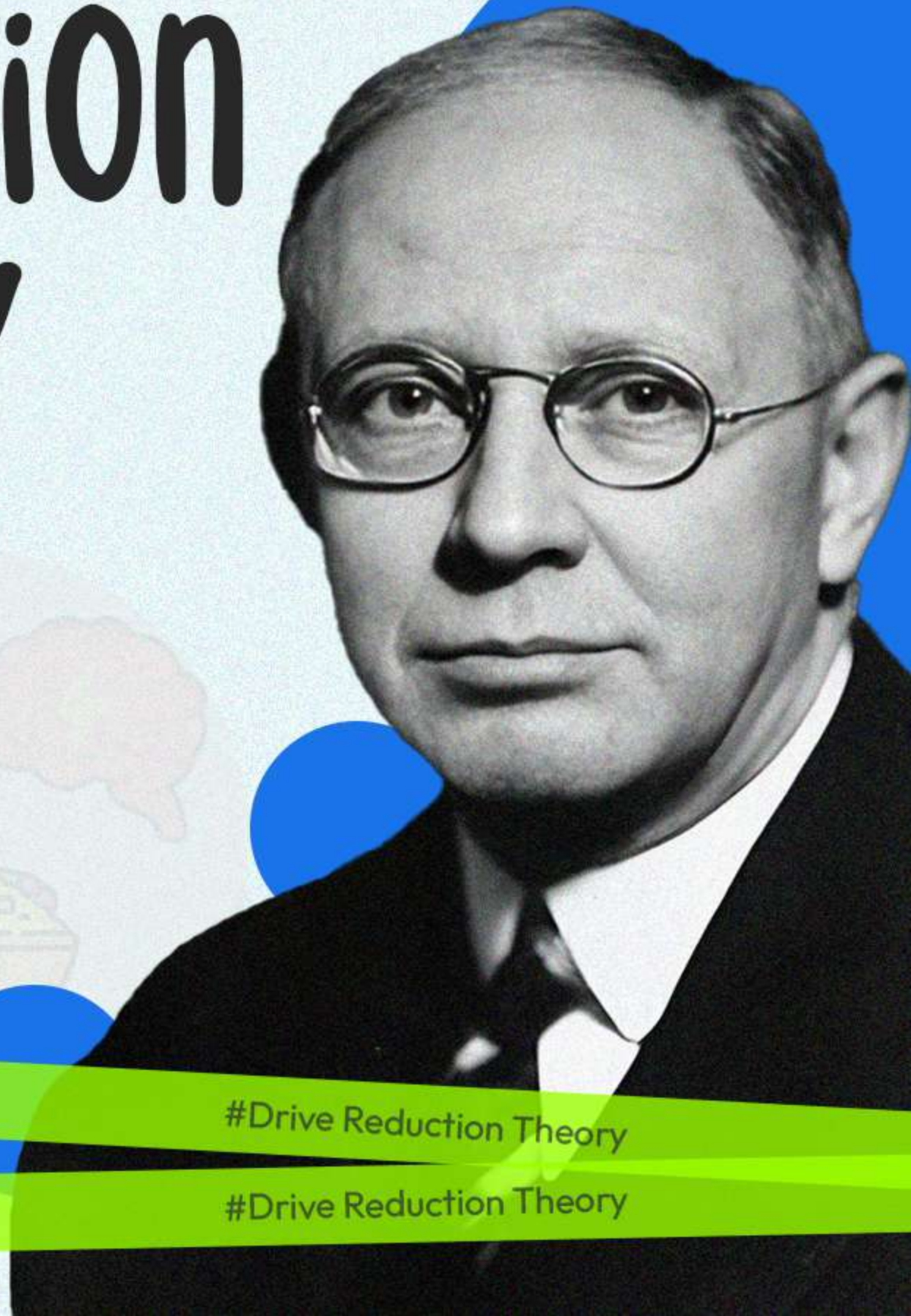


Drive Reduction Theory

of Motivation



#Drive Reduction Theory

#Drive Reduction Theory

#Drive Reduction Theory

#Drive Reduction Theory



Sample MCQs For Psychology Entrances

Ques. 1

Hull's equation for reaction potential (sEr) includes which of the following components?

A Habit strength, drive, incentive, inhibition

B Drive, cognition, expectancy, habit

C Incentive value, expectancy, reinforcement schedule

D Drive reduction, reinforcement gradient, expectancy



Ques. 2

Hull's theory struggled to explain behaviours like exploration and play. Which later theory directly addressed this limitation?

A Opponent-
process theory

B Incentive
motivation
theory

C Cognitive
evaluation
theory

D Arousal
theory

**Please read the complete post carefully and
try solving as you go.**

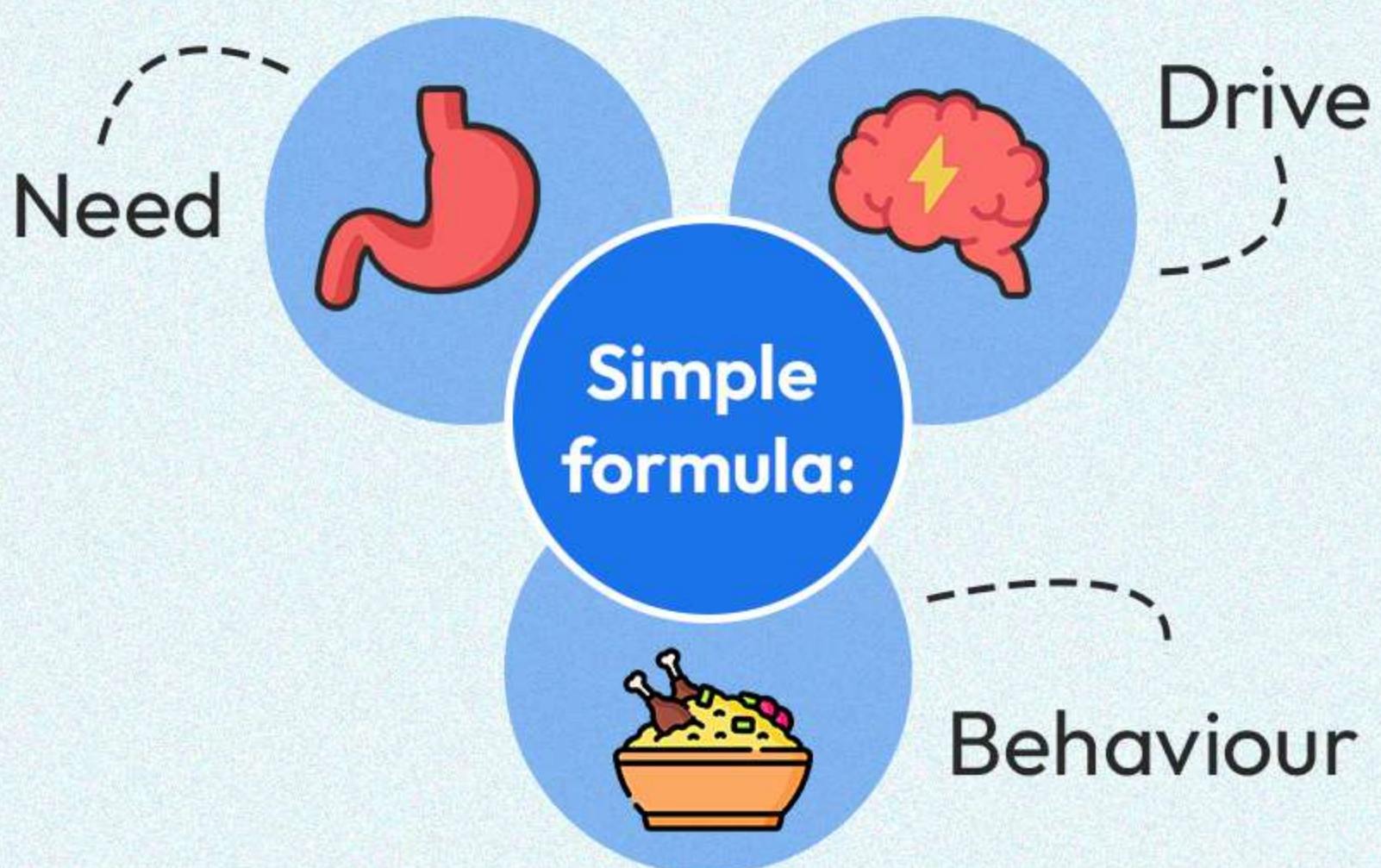
If not, the last slide has the answers.

What Is Drive Reduction Theory?

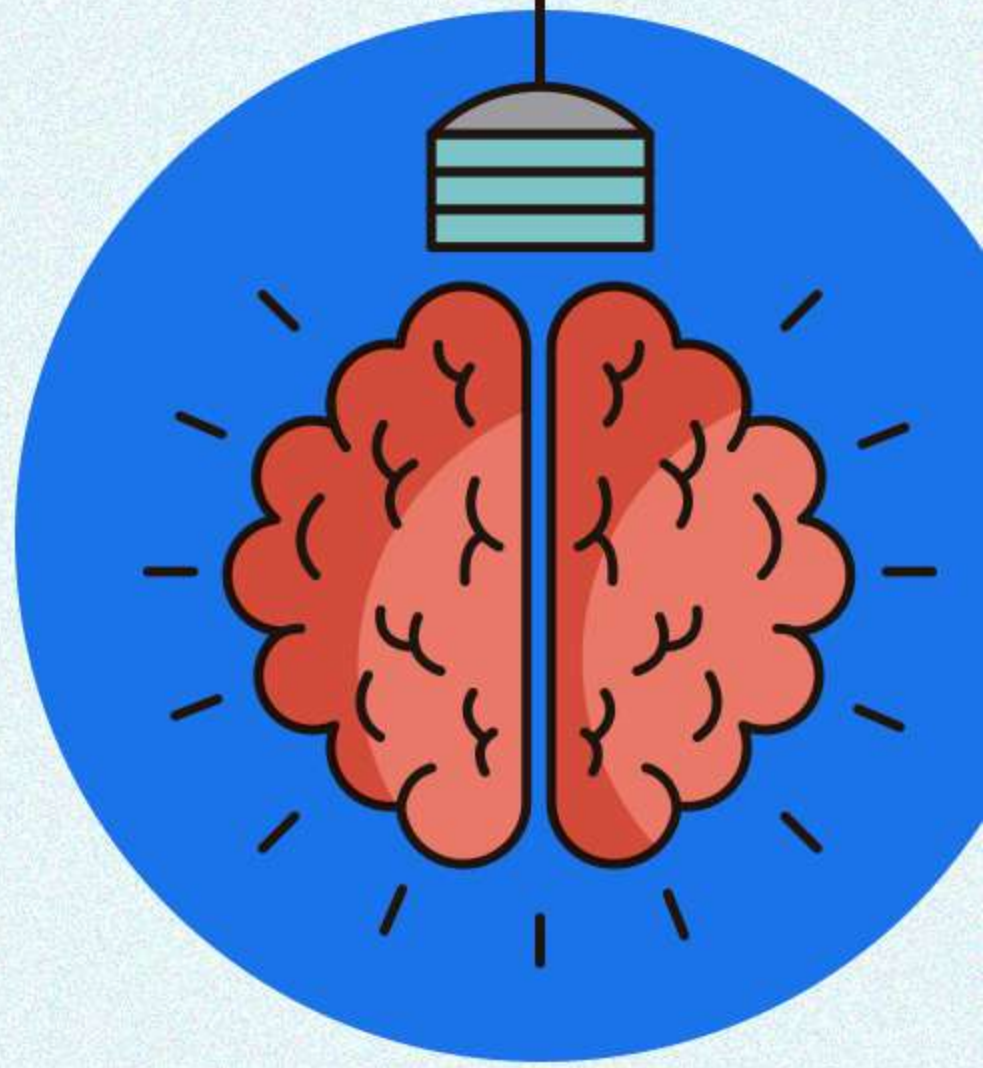
Proposed by **Clark L. Hull**, this theory states that behaviour starts when a biological need creates an unpleasant internal tension (a drive).

We act to reduce this tension and restore balance (homeostasis).

Need → Drive → Behaviour → Drive Reduction (Reinforcement)



Drive Reduction (Reinforcement)



Why Was This Theory Important?

Hull attempted to make psychology more scientific and measurable, using formulas to predict behaviour.

He believed motivation could be quantified, and learning happens through drive reduction. When a behaviour successfully reduces a need, it gets reinforced.

This made the theory central to early behaviourism.

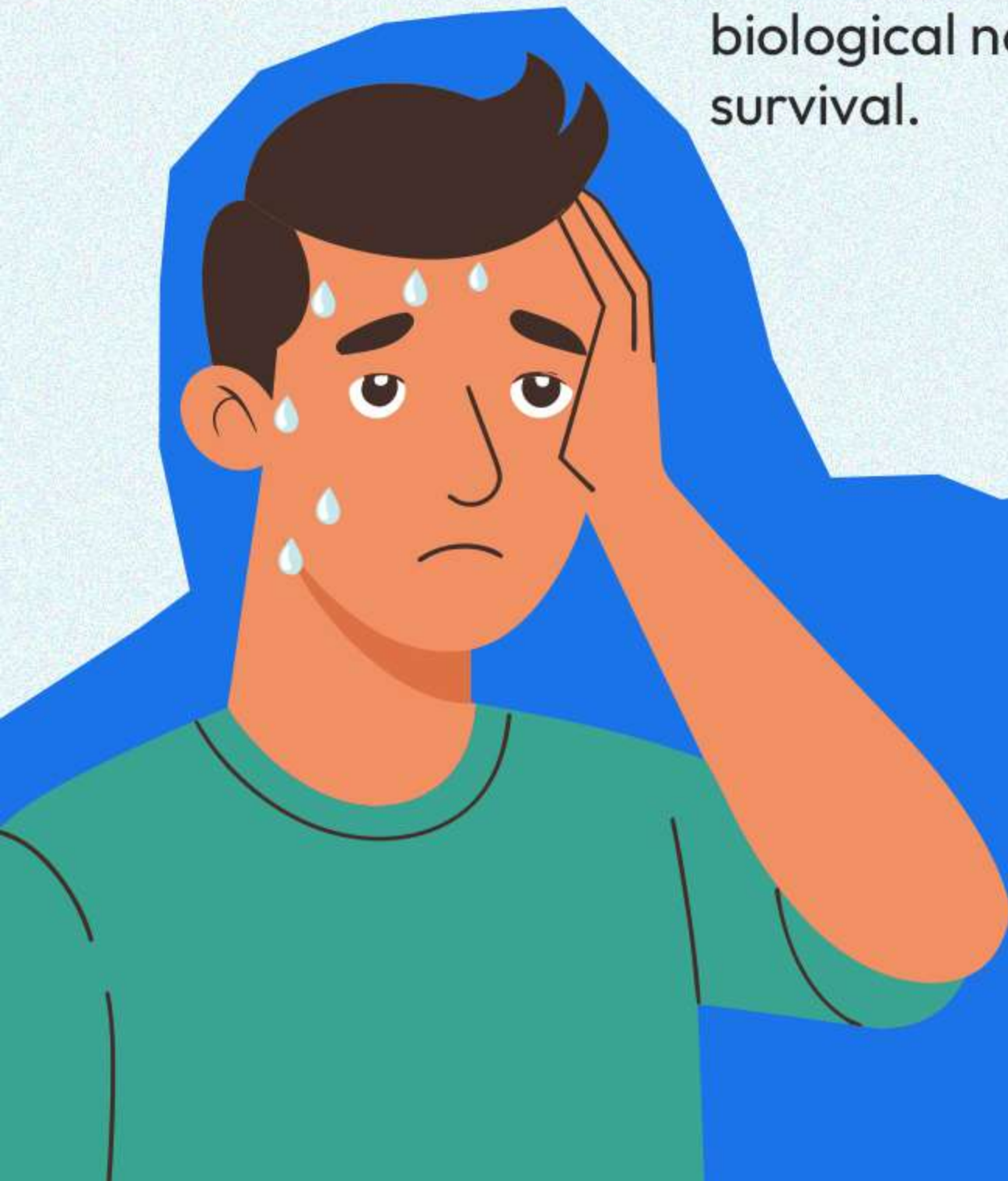
Key idea

Drive

Drive = energizing internal state created by deprivation (e.g., hunger, thirst).

It is not the behaviour itself, but the force pushing the organism to act.

Hull considered drives primary, meaning they originate from biological needs essential for survival.



Key idea

Habit Strength

Hull added a second variable: **habit strength (H)**.

Behaviour occurs when: **Habit Strength × Drive Level** is high enough.

So, motivation + learning history together determine action.

This is why familiar responses appear first when we're deprived.





Drive Reduction as Reinforcement

According to Hull, reinforcement happens only when a behaviour reduces a drive, making that response more likely in the future.

Example:

Eating reduces hunger → behaviour gets strengthened.



Extensions & Criticisms

Leonard Spence expanded the theory by adding **incentive motivation (K)** → not only internal drives but external cues matter.

Criticisms:

- Cannot explain behaviours done without biological need (e.g., curiosity).
- Overlooks cognitive influences.
- Too mechanistic and formula-based.

Despite this, it forms a base for understanding homeostasis, behaviourism, and early learning theories.

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Q.1 a) Habit strength, drive,
incentive, inhibition

Q.2 d) Arousal theory