

Psychology

Students should access and browse **Psychology Review**. This is a specialist publication, written for A-Level Psychology students. All our students can access Psychology Review and the archive going back to 2016. There are four issues every year September, November, February & April.

Read BOTH of the following articles linked below:

1 [Head injuries and criminal behaviour](#) [Open hyperlink for article](#))

Read and write a summary (300-400 words) of the main areas addressed in the article.

Consider what was found? Make notes of any findings and any new terminology.

How did they find it?

Who were the participants studied?

What does it mean?

How else might this be studied?

2 **Minority influence and US gun laws**

2021 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragic massacre of 16 primary-school children in Dunblane, a town in Scotland. The crime was committed by a man armed with four handguns. The horror of this event led to major changes in UK gun laws to restrict who can own them.

By contrast, we continue to hear horror stories of mass shootings in the USA with no change in their gun laws. For example, in 2019 in the USA there were 3.96 murders committed with a gun per 100,000 people. In the UK the figure was 0.04 per 100,000 people. In the USA in 2020 there were 614 mass shootings resulting in 446 deaths. In the UK there have only been two mass shootings in the 25 years since Dunblane — 12 deaths in Cumbria (2010) and 6 deaths in Plymouth (2021), as well as 6 mass attacks (for example the Manchester Arena bombing and the London Bridge attack).

The snowball effect

Many people despair at America's reluctance to change its gun laws. But here is an interesting reflection: we often overlook minority influence. It may not appear that attitudes are changing and on the surface they are not — no laws have changed. But one of the principles of minority influence (and the process of social change) is that we tend to be unaware of the fact that people are, in fact, slowly changing their attitudes as

a consequence of strong views expressed by a minority. This has been called the 'snowball effect'. The media continue to inform us about the most prevalent views so the undercurrent of change is masked.

Slow change

Polls in the USA by the Gallup organisation show that in 2010, 44% of those polled felt gun laws should be more strict whereas in 2020 this had risen to 57%. In 2010 42% felt the laws should be kept as they are, whereas in 2020 this had dropped to 34%. It seems that opinion is changing. In fact, the majority view now appears to be in favour of change to stricter controls.

Questions:

1. What are the three behavioural characteristics required for minority influence to be successful? Define each with examples.
2. According to the article, what made the March for Our Lives movement influential?
3. How does the concept of the 'snowball effect' relate to changes in attitudes towards gun laws in the US?
4. Why is consistency over time seen as important in minority influence?
5. Research and Compare: Find another example of minority influence in real life (e.g., climate activism, LGBTQ+ rights). Compare it with the US gun law movement in terms of:
 - a. Message
 - b. Consistency
 - c. Social change

Please bring these summaries to your first Psychology lesson in September.

The articles will be part of a class discussion so make sure you understand what you've written