# Describing the Contrast between Sensation and Perception

Use the information on this handout to write a carefully worded explanation of the differences between sensation and perception.

Employ these starter expressions, which will allow you to focus on **contrasting** two concepts:

- While the sensation process involves……, the perception process is influenced by…
- Whereas sensation refers to … , perception is a process in which…
- A crucial distinction between sensation and perception is that…
- One contrast between the two processes is that sensation is … , while perception requires/ is influenced by / involves / …
- In contrast to sensation, which refers to…, perception involves…

## Sensation

- **Physiological process** involving the **sensory receptors** in the eye, nose, ear, skin and tongue, which are all **sensory organs**

  - Includes the **reception** of specific physical energies, their **transduction** into electrochemical energy and its **transmission** to the brain

  - **Fundamentally similar** for all people whose **sensory organs** are functioning properly

  - The same **external stimuli** will lead to the **same sensations** in different people, assuming their **sensory organs** are intact.

- **Context** and **expectation** do not influence the sensory process,… →

- Involves **bottom-up processing** (a little like piecing a jigsaw together)

- The **sensory data** that we initially receive are **meaningless** in that form… →

- The **sensation process** involves **passively receiving data or detecting** them.

- Not influenced by culture or training

## Perception

- **Involves physiological but also mental and psychological processes** that take place in the brain

  - Includes the **organization** of the electrochemical energy that has been transmitted to the brain, along with its **interpretation**

  - **Varies** according to **individual psychological factors** such as background, experience, knowledge, expectations, emotional state

  - Since **psychological processes** such as memory, learning and motivation vary from person to person, the same sensory information may be **interpreted** by individual brains in different ways.

- **Context** and **expectation** do not influence the sensory process,… →

- Involves **top-down processing**, where the context and expectation of the perceiver leads to rapid **perceptual hypotheses** about what is being perceived.

- …but they play an important role in shaping our perceptions.

- **Is evident in top-down** processing, where the context and expectation of the perceiver leads to rapid **perceptual hypotheses** about what is being perceived.

- …until we convert them through the perceptual process into **meaningful** information.

- Perception is an **active process** of organising, interpreting and so attributing meaning to the sensory information that has been received.

- **Affected by cultural background and training**