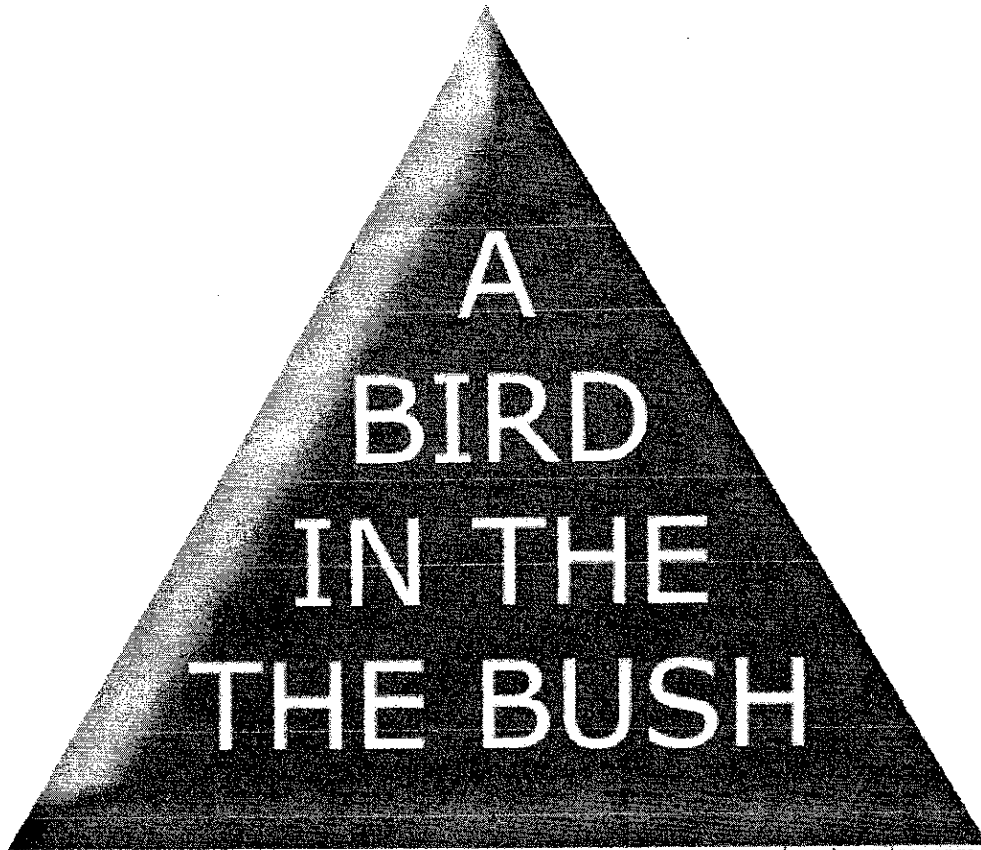


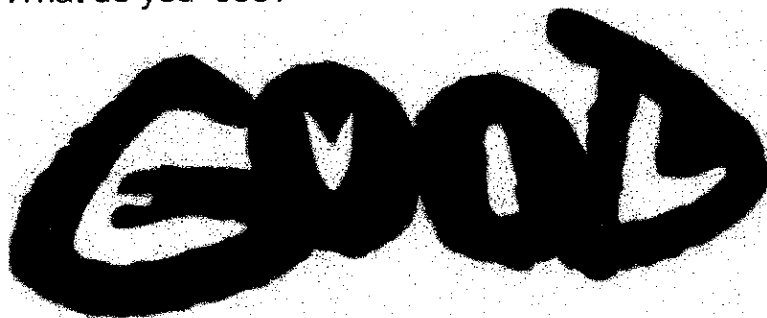
## Pretty Cool Perceptions Exercises

Read out loud the text inside the triangle below.



More than likely you said, 'A bird in the bush,'!  
But .... you failed to see that the word THE is repeated twice!  
Look again.

Next, let's play with some words.  
What do you see?



In black you can read the word GOOD, in white the word EVIL (inside each black letter is a white letter).

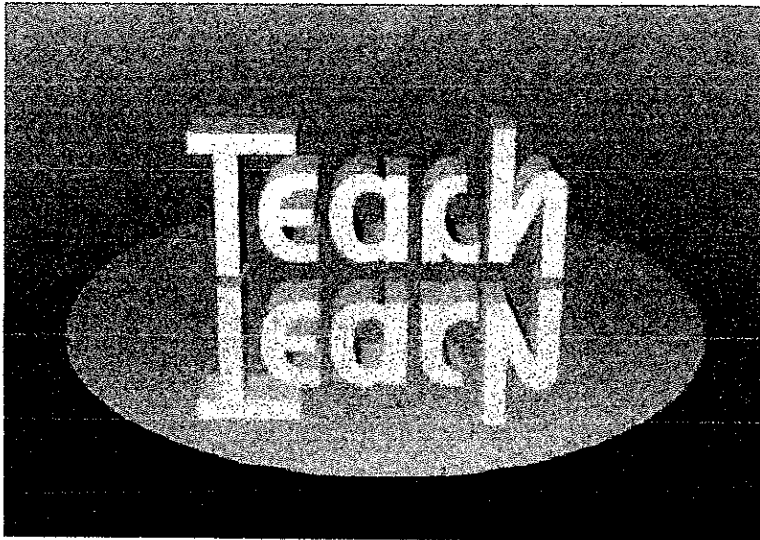
Now, what do you see?



You may not see it at first, but the white spaces read the word optical, the blue landscape reads the word illusion.

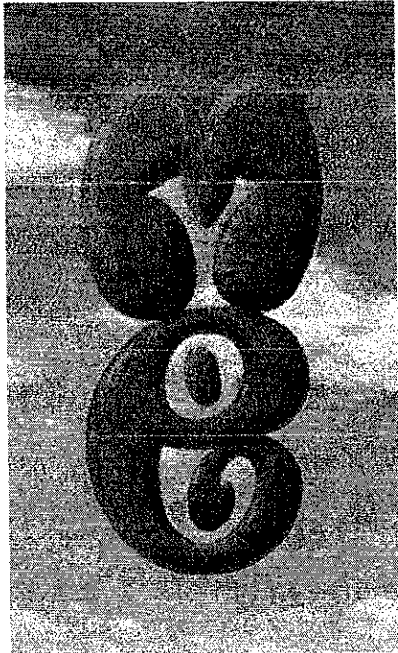
Look again! Can you see now why this painting is called an optical illusion?

What do you see here?



This one is quite tricky! The word TEACH reflects as LEARN.  
Last one.

What do you see?

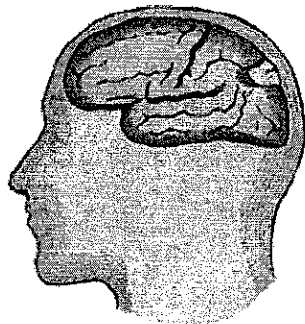


You probably read the word ME in brown, but.....  
when you look through ME you will see YOU!  
Do you need to look again?

***Test Your Brain***

This is really cool.

The second one is amazing so please read all the way though.



Count every ' F ' in the following text:

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY  
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS...**

**HOW MANY ?**

**WRONG, THERE ARE 6 -- no joke! READ IT AGAIN !**  
Really, go Back and Try to find the 6 F's before you scroll down.

The reasoning behind is further down.  
The brain cannot process 'OF'.



**Incredible or what? Go back and look again!!**  
Anyone who counts all 6 'F's' on the first go is a genius.

(Three is normal, four is quite rare).

Now the last one:

**More Brain Stuff . . From Cambridge University .**

**Olny srmatt poelpe can raed tihs.**  
**I cdnuol't blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht**  
**I was rdanieg.**

**The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig**  
**to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't**  
**mttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny**  
**iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the**  
**rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can**  
**sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm.**

**Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey**  
**lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig**  
**huh? And I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!**

## Figure & Ground

The individual perceives the environment as a total unit; he/she responds to the whole of what is seen and this whole is composed of the stimuli of which the person is aware or to which he/she attends, the "spontaneous concentration" of contact (the figure) and those of which the person is not aware or does not attend (the ground). The figure/ground processis perceptual and changes momentarily.

Study, for example, the classic Gestalt perceptual picture at right. Two persons can be perceived, an old woman and a young woman. When the old woman



is figural all the rest of the picture is ground; when the young woman is figural the old woman disappears into the ground. As you study the picture you may be able to change your perceptions from one figure to the other in order to appreciate the process of emerging figures and receding grounds as it occurs in your everyday life.

To arbitrarily change one's focus is an experiment in perception. However, in a life situation such a change in perceptual

focus represents more than a trick of the eye. The perception of a figure emerging from the ground is a consequence of an internal choice that, although momentary, involves a complex of internal processes. In the internal world, personal needs, values, beliefs, etc. provide the impetus for the choice of figure; the choice also is powered by the search for meaning, a search that is endemic in each human being. In Gestalt theory, the meaning connected with a figure is a critical aspect of its relation to the ground at that moment. Thus, if at the first look at the above illustration you perceive the young woman, your choice of that perceptual target may relate to some personal experience, favorable or difficult, with young women or some negative experience with old women. These relationships have been accumulated in the ground of your experience; for you, the meaning of the figural young woman is derived from the connections you have had with women. Some similar analysis could be made if you perceive the old woman first. Whether the viewer notices the old or the young is related meaningfully to the ground of the viewer's experience which is a rich mix of all of the past experiences of the self, the world, and their myriad interactions plus the feelings, beliefs, values and the needs that are embedded in the internal world. The ground defines the figure and gives it meaning.

To change the figure, whether in awareness or not, involves a complex set of internal changes. These are always in process. I sit at my desk as I write; at one moment I am aware of thinking, at the next of the feel of the pen in my hand, at the next of seeing a set of papers that remind me of other tasks I need to perform, and again I am aware of thinking about this material on figure and ground. On the unaware level in my body the figures have been relating to my internal processes and at once I am aware of being hungry. The context changes to choices about actions. Such perceptual

changes are a potent aspect of any therapeutic interaction as well. The client's figural process must be followed and the therapist's figural process must be honored also. The art of Gestalt therapy comes into play with this scene in which the therapist must attend to both the client's figural process and to his or her own.



Alternative illustrations of figure/ground relationships may be seen in the classic Gestalt "Vase/Faces" picture on the left, or from this example

offered in the Korb et al 1989 book: as you read this material note that the margins and spaces between letters and pictures on the printed pages help to define the words, sentences and pictures. If there were no margins and spaces it would be difficult to distinguish what has been written. Although the white margins are blank spaces they do not have blank functions—they are integral to the perceptions of the words.

Likewise, all figural information, whether visual, physical, semantic, emotional, or interpersonal, is gained by relating a figure meaningfully to the field of impressions against which it is perceived, the ground.

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