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Negative reinforcement strengthens a response or behavior by stopping, removing, or avoiding a negative outcome or aversive stimulus. B. F. Skinner first described the term in his theory of operant conditioning. Rather than delivering an aversive stimulus (punishment) or a reward (positive reinforcement), negative reinforcement works by taking away something that the individual finds undesirable. This removal reinforces the behavior that proceeds it, making it more likely that the response will occur again in the future. This article discusses how negative reinforcement works, how it compares to other behavioral learning methods, and how effective it can be in the learning process. Verywell / Jessica Olah Negative reinforcement works to strengthen certain behaviors by removing some type of aversive outcome. As a form of reinforcement, it strengthens the behavior that precedes it. In the case of negative reinforcement, it is the action of removing the undesirable outcome or stimulus that serves as the reward for performing the behavior. Aversive stimuli tend to involve some type of discomfort, either physical or psychological. Behaviors are negatively reinforced when they allow you to escape from aversive stimuli that are already present or allow you to completely avoid the aversive stimuli before they happen. Deciding to take an antacid before you indulge in a spicy meal is an example of negative reinforcement. You engage in an action in order to avoid a negative result. One of the best ways to remember negative reinforcement is to think of it as something being subtracted from the situation. There are two different types of negative reinforcement: example and avoidance learning. Escape learning involves being able to escape an undesirable stimulus, while avoidance learning involves being able to prevent experiencing the aversive stimulus altogether. Looking at some real-world examples can be a great way to get a better idea about what negative reinforcement is and how it works. Consider the following situations: Before heading out for a day at the beach, you slather on sunscreen (the behavior) to avoid getting sunburned (removal of the aversive stimulus).You decide to clean up your mess in the kitchen (the behavior) to avoid getting into a fight with your roommate (removal of the aversive stimulus).On Monday morning, you leave the house early (the behavior) to avoid getting stuck in traffic and being late for work (removal of an aversive stimulus).At dinner time, a child pouts and refuses to eat her vegetables for dinner. Her parents quickly take the offending veggies away. Since the behavior (pouting) led to the removal of the aversive stimulus (the veggies), this is an example of negative reinforcement. Can you identify the negative reinforcer in each of these examples? Sunburn, a fight with your roommate, being late for work, and having to eat vegetables are all negative outcomes that were avoided by performing a specific behavior. By eliminating these undesirable outcomes, preventive behaviors become more likely to occur again in the future. Positive reinforcement is a type of reinforcement that involves giving someone the desired reward in response to a behavior. This might involve offering praise, money, or other incentives. Both positive and negative reinforcement work to increase the likelihood that a behavior will occur again in the future. You can distinguish between the two by noticing whether something is being taken away or added to the situation. If something desirable is being added, then it is positive reinforcement. If something aversive is being taken away, then it is negative reinforcement. One mistake that people often make is confusing negative reinforcement with punishment. Remember, however, that negative reinforcement involves the removal of a negative condition to strengthen a behavior. Punishment involves either presenting or taking away a stimulus to weaken a behavior. Consider the following example and determine whether you think it is an example of negative reinforcement or punishment: Luke is supposed to clean his room every Saturday morning. Last weekend, he went out to play with his friend without cleaning his room. As a result, his father made him spend the rest of the weekend doing other chores like cleaning out the garage, mowing the lawn, and weeding the garden, in addition to cleaning his room. If you said that this was an example of punishment, then you are correct. Because Luke didn't clean his room, his father punished him by making him do extra chores. If you are trying to distinguish between negative reinforcement or punishment, consider whether something is being added or taken away from a situation. If an unwanted outcome is being added or applied as a consequence of a behavior, then it is an example of punishment. If something is being removed in order to avoid or relieve an unwanted outcome, then it is an example of negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement can be utilized in a variety of ways in many different settings. A few examples include: Parents can use negative reinforcement to encourage positive behaviors in various ways. For example, a parent might eliminate a chore that their child is supposed to do if they finish all of the other tasks on their list. Another example is giving children more time to play on their tablets if they finish all of their homework first. One example of negative reinforcement in the classroom is canceling a task that students dislike (such as a pop quiz) if they complete all their assigned work on time. Negative reinforcement is often utilized as a part of addiction treatment and behavioral therapy. People who have been convicted of drug-related offenses, for example, might be able to have their sentences reduced if they participate in drug and alcohol treatment. In behavioral therapy, negative reinforcement can help strengthen positive behaviors. As people develop skills, they may find that practicing new coping skills eliminates unpleasant outcomes, which can help further reinforce new behaviors. Negative reinforcement can be an effective way to strengthen the desired behavior. However, it is most effective when reinforcers are presented immediately following a behavior. When a long period elapses between the behavior and the reinforcer, the response is likely to be weaker. In some cases, behaviors that occur in the intervening time between the initial action and the reinforcer are may also be inadvertently strengthened as well. Some experts believe that negative reinforcement should be used sparingly in classroom settings, while positive reinforcement should be emphasized. While negative reinforcement can produce immediate results, it may be best suited for short-term use. While the name of this type of reinforcement often leads people to think that it is a "negative" type of reinforcement, negative reinforcement can have several benefits that can make it a valuable tool in the learning process. Potential advantages include: It can increase desirable behaviors: Because it involves the removal of an undesirable stimulus, it can help strengthen more positive behaviors.It can lead to lasting changes: When applied correctly, negative reinforcement can contribute to long-lasting changes in behavior.It can work quickly: The removal of an aversive stimulus can lead to relatively quick behavior change. While negative reinforcement can be a helpful learning tool, it can have some potential downsides. It can be misinterpreted: When a negative stimulus is removed, usually without explanation, it can sometimes lead to problems with communication. It can potentially create misunderstandings in relationships where people misread the other person's intentions.Poor timing can render it ineffective: If the delivery of negative reinforcement is not timed correctly, it can be less effective. A large gap between the behavior and the removal of an aversive stimulus means that people will be less likely to form a connection between the action and the consequences of the action. Negative reinforcement can have a powerful effect on behavior, but it tends to be most useful when used as a short-term solution. The type of reinforcement used is important, but how quickly and how often the reinforcement is given also plays a major role in the strength of the response. The schedule of reinforcement that is used can have an important impact not only how quickly a behavior is learned, but also on the strength of the response. Negative reinforcement is a learning method that reinforces desired behaviors by removing unpleasant stimuli. Learn how this behavior management strategy works and how it differs from positive reinforcement. Humans learn in various ways. One of the most effective methods is through behavior reinforcement.Through this process, we learn to behave in certain ways to seek a reward or avoid uncomfortable consequences. A classic example of a reward for desired behaviors is a child studying hard for their exam, so they get to go out for an ice cream cone when they get an A+.Positive reinforcement (rewards) and punishment are both well-known learning and behavior management strategies. But there’s another learning method you may not have heard of: negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement is a behavior management strategy that parents and teachers can use with children. It involves taking away something unpleasant in response to a stimulus. With time, children learn that when they engage in “good” behaviors, then this unpleasant thing or experience goes away.Both negative and positive reinforcement have been studied since the 1930s as part of a learning method called operant conditioning. Operant conditioning was first described by a behavior scientist named B.F. Skinner. It centers around the concept of behavior reinforcement and punishment. By reinforcing desired behaviors (either through negative or positive reinforcement), these behaviors become more likely to reoccur. By punishing undesired behaviors, those behaviors start to decrease in an effort to avoid the punishment.Whether you know it or not, negative reinforcement has probably affected your behavior at some point in your life. Here are some everyday examples:taking prescribed medication to alleviate health symptomsletting a tailgating car pass to stop their honkinggetting out of bed to silence your alarmIn each case, you adjust your behavior to remove the unpleasant or negative stimulus.Many educators and behavior therapists are very familiar with the general concept of positive and negative reinforcement. According to a 2019 meta-analysis, it can be effective for managing children’s behavior.For example, if a child doesn’t want to do their homework, and their parent scolds them (an unpleasant experience), the child may learn that completing their homework will make the nagging stop.Other examples of negative reinforcement with children include:removing chores for the weekend when a child keeps their room clean all weeklifting a grounding period when a child works on their homeworka sibling stopping their loud crying when a child stops arguing with themWhen used correctly, negative reinforcement can be an effective tool for behavior management. However, if used incorrectly, it may unintentionally reinforce misbehavior.For example, say your child doesn’t want to eat what you’ve cooked for them. The meal is aversive or unpleasant to them, and they begin to throw a tantrum. Overwhelmed, you take the offending trigger (the food) away. This is negative reinforcement but could actually reinforce an unwanted behavior: tantrums. In this interaction, you removed the food so your child would not tantrum and become calm.But your child learns that if they throw a tantrum, then the unpleasant experience (having to eat the food cooked for them) goes away.Positive reinforcement is another type of operant conditioning that involves providing rewards, such as praise or stickers, after a desired behavior occurs. The main difference between positive and negative reinforcement is that positive reinforcement adds a pleasant stimulus, while negative reinforcement removes an unpleasant one. Both strategies aim to reinforce desired behavior. Here are some examples of the two approaches in action:Although often confused, negative reinforcement and punishment are not the same. Punishment is about discouraging unwanted behavior, while negative reinforcement is about encouraging desired behavior by removing an unpleasant stimulus. To illustrate the differences between punishment and negative reinforcement, take a look at these examples:The differences are sometimes subtle, but they’re important to be aware of.Negative reinforcement is a powerful learning method that can effectively manage behavior when used correctly. By understanding the differences between negative reinforcement, positive reinforcement, and punishment, parents and educators can employ this strategy to encourage desired behaviors in children. Always be mindful of how you use negative reinforcement to avoid unintentionally reinforcing unwanted behaviors. In negative reinforcement, first devised by B. F. Skinner, an undesirable stimulus is removed to increase a behavior. If an organism is exposed to an aversive situation, and the termination of that situation is made contingent upon some response, then we say that the organism is being negatively reinforced. There are two types of negative reinforcement: escape and avoidance learning. Escape learning occurs when an animal performs a behavior to end an aversive stimulus, while avoidance learning involves performing a behavior to prevent the aversive stimulus. Negative reinforcement can be effective, but scholars generally agree that it must be used sparingly and is best for reinforcing short-term behaviors. Negative reinforcement strengthens a behavior by removing an unpleasant stimulus when the desired behavior occurs, as opposed to positive reinforcement, which provides a pleasant stimulus as a reward. Negative reinforcement refers to the process of removing an unpleasant stimulus after the desired behavior is displayed in order to increase the likelihood of that behavior being repeated. Negative reinforcement is a basic principle of Skinner’s operant conditioning, which focuses on how animals and humans learn by observing the consequences of their own actions (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). Skinner argued that learning is an active process. When humans and animals act on and in their environment, consequences follow these behaviors. If the consequences are pleasant, they repeat the behavior, but if the consequences are unpleasant, they do not repeat the behavior. The word “negative” in the phrase “negative reinforcement” means simply to “take something away. It is this removal of a stimulus that is intended to strengthen a desirable behavior. Thus, negative reinforcement is not intended to reinforce negative or undesirable behavior (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). Negative reinforcement occurs when performing an action stops something unpleasant from happening. For example, in one of Skinner’s experiments, a rat had to press a lever to stop receiving an electric shock. Example One example of negative reinforcement that often appears in adult life involves driving. Imagine that someone is driving to work and is running late. The driver sees that the speed limit is 55 mph but decides to go 65 mph so that they can get to work on time. Suddenly, they see a police car in their rearview mirror with its lights on. The aversive stimulus (getting pulled over) is now present, and so they slow down to the speed limit. In this case, the desired behavior (driving the speed limit) has occurred as a result of the aversive stimulus (getting pulled over). In another scenario, someone could drive through rush hour traffic to get to work. Their commute could take an hour or more, and it is very stressful. They may decide to leave work early one day so that they can avoid the traffic. Alternatively, they may decide to take a route that has very little traffic and make it to work in 45 minutes. That person, after getting the same results later in the week, may start taking this new route everyday. In this case, removing the negative stimulus of bad traffic changes the behavior of the driver (Chen, Zhang, Gong, & Lee, 2019). There are two main types of negative reinforcement: escape and avoidance. These differ when the aversive stimulus is removed. Escape Learning Escape learning occurs when an animal performs a behavior (such as pressing a lever) to stop or avoid an aversive stimulus (such as an electric shock) (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). For example, a rat in a Skinner box may learn to press a lever to stop the delivery of an electric shock. Once the animal has learned this behavior, the delivery of shock serves as an aversive stimulus that can be used to reinforce other desired behaviors (such as pressing a different lever). Avoidance Learning Avoidance learning occurs when an animal performs a behavior (such as jumping over a hurdle) to avoid or escape an aversive stimulus (such as an electric shock). For example, a bird in a laboratory experiment may learn to go into a dark compartment to avoid being exposed to a loud noise. Once the animal has learned this behavior, the loud noise serves as an aversive stimulus that can be used to reinforce other desired behaviors (such as going into dark compartments, even when there is no aversive stimulus present) (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). How is it different than punishment? Many people confuse negative reinforcement with punishment in operant conditioning, but they are two very different mechanisms. Remember that reinforcement, even when it is negative, always increases a behavior. In contrast, punishment always decreases behavior. Negative reinforcement, on the other hand, removes an unpleasant condition after a desired behavior is displayed to increase the likelihood of that behavior being repeated in the future (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). Punishment involves bringing an unpleasant consequence after a behavior has already occurred to decrease its likelihood of happening again in the future. For example, a child may lie about doing his chores, provoking his parents to give him extra chores. In this case, extra chores are an undesirable consequence to eliminate the behavior of lying. As another example of punishment, a teacher may take away a student’s recess because they were talking too much in class. This is not negative reinforcement because the teacher is taking away a positive consequence (recess) after the behavior (talking too much in class) has already occurred (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). All in all, punishment is intended to be an aversive stimulus that decreases the likelihood of a behavior being repeated, while negative reinforcement is intended to remove an aversive stimulus in order to increase the likelihood of a behavior being repeated. Negative reinforcement is not the opposite of positive reinforcement Both positive and negative reinforcement increases the likelihood of a behavior being repeated. The only difference is the type of consequence used to achieve this goal. While positive reinforcement uses a desirable consequence to increase the likelihood of a behavior being repeated, negative reinforcement removes an unpleasant condition after the behavior is displayed in order to increase its future occurrence (Dozier, Foley, Goddard, & Jess, 2019). For example, imagine a parent trying to potty train their child. Every time they use the toilet, the parent praises them and gives them a sticker. This is an example of positive reinforcement because the parent is providing a desirable consequence (praise and stickers) after the desired behavior (using the toilet) has occurred to increase its future occurrence. Now imagine that instead of praising and rewarding your child every time they use the toilet, the parent simply stops nagging them about it. This is an example of negative reinforcement because you are removing an aversive stimulus (nagging) after the desired behavior (using the toilet) has occurred in order to increase its future occurrence. Negative reinforcement can be used in any situation where behavior change needs to occur. One common example of negative reinforcement in the classroom is when a teacher gives students extra credit for turning in their homework on time. Imagine this is a scenario where students are avoiding turning in their homework on time because they wish to do it more thoroughly in order to avoid a lower grade. In this case, the extra credit is intended to remove the unpleasant condition (receiving a poor grade) after the desired behavior (turning in homework on time) has occurred in order to increase its future occurrence (Gunter & Coutinho, 1997). In this example, the extra credit is not given if the student does not turn in their homework on time. This is because negative reinforcement is only intended to work when it follows the desired behavior. If the extra credit was given regardless of whether or not the homework was turned in on time, then it would simply be a reward and would not function as negative reinforcement. Another common example of negative reinforcement in the classroom is when a teacher threatens to give students detention if they do not complete their homework. In this case, the removal of the aversive stimulus (detention) is contingent on the desired behavior (completing homework) being displayed (Gunter & Coutinho, 1997). Again, it is important to note that negative reinforcement should only be used after the desired behavior has already been displayed. If students are given detention regardless of whether or not they complete their homework, then it is simply punishment and will not function as negative reinforcement. Although this negative reinforcement could be effective in encouraging positive behavior, some researchers contend that positive reinforcement should be emphasized and negative reinforcement used sparingly. They argue that focusing on the positive (e.g., rewarding students for completing their homework) is more likely to result in long-term behavior change than focusing on the negative (e.g., threatening students with detention if they do not complete their homework). In this view, negative reinforcement is best for immediate behavioral changes (Gunter & Coutinho, 1997). Effectiveness Whether or not negative reinforcement is an effective way to change behavior depends on a number of factors, including the age and maturity of the learner, the severity of the aversive stimulus, and the desirability of the desired behavior. Negative reinforcement can be particularly effective when the aversive stimulus is something that the learner genuinely wants to avoid. For example, if a student is trying to study for an exam but is easily distracted by social media, using negative reinforcement (e.g., threatening to take away their phone if they do not study) could be an effective way to get them to focus on their work (Dad, Ali, Janjua, Shazad, & Khan, 2010). However, if the aversive stimulus is not something that the learner cares about, then it is unlikely to be effective. For example, if a student does not care about detention, then threatening them with detention is not likely to be an effective way to get them to do their homework. In general, negative reinforcement is most effective when it is used sparingly and only for behaviors that are genuinely undesirable. 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Further Reading Sprouls, K., Mathur, S. R., & Upreti, G. (2015). Is positive feedback a forgotten classroom practice? Findings and implications for at-risk students. Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 59(3), 153-160. Saul McLeod, PhD BSc (Hons) Psychology, MRes, PhD, University of Manchester Editor-in-Chief for Simply Psychology Saul McLeod, PhD., is a qualified psychology teacher with over 18 years of experience in further and higher education. He has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Clinical Psychology. Charlotte Nickerson Research Assistant at Harvard University Undergraduate at Harvard University Charlotte Nickerson is a graduate of Harvard University obsessed with the intersection of mental health, productivity, and design. In negative reinforcement, first devised by B. F. Skinner, an undesirable stimulus is removed to increase a behavior. 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Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 2(4), i-109. Watson, J. B. (1913). Psychology as the behaviorist views it. Psychological Review, 20, 158–177. Further Reading Sprouls, K., Mathur, S. R., & Upreti, G. (2015). Is positive feedback a forgotten classroom practice? Findings and implications for at-risk students. Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 59(3), 153-160. Saul McLeod, PhD BSc (Hons) Psychology, MRes, PhD, University of Manchester Editor-in-Chief for Simply Psychology Saul McLeod, PhD., is a qualified psychology teacher with over 18 years of experience in further and higher education. He has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including the Journal of Clinical Psychology. Charlotte Nickerson Research Assistant at Harvard University Undergraduate at Harvard University Charlotte Nickerson is a graduate of Harvard University obsessed with the intersection of mental health, productivity, and design. 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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Negative reinforcement involves taking away something that is very unpleasant when a person does something that we want. This encourages the behavior because the person feels relief whenever the behavior is repeated. The whole goal of negative reinforcement is to increase the chances of someone doing an action again so that they can feel the relief over and over again. Managers, parents, and coaches can all implement a negative reinforcement strategy. They will create a link between a desired action and something aversive being removed. Negative reinforcement is often used in educational settings as well. For example, a teacher might reduce homework if students behave in class or do well on an exam. Temper tantrums – A child cries (unpleasant stimulus) until the parent removes the vegetables from the table (desired behavior). Parents are trained to remove vegetables to stop the crying. Homework Holiday – A teacher says they will not assign any homework this weekend (unpleasant stimulus) if the students behave in the playground (desired behavior). The children are incentivized to be well-behaved so they don’t get homework. Needy and Naughty – A child misbehaves (unpleasant stimulus) until the teacher gives them attention (desired behavior). When the teacher diverts their attention away, the unpleasant stimulus starts again. Recess when you’re Done – A teacher keeps students behind in class at recess time (unpleasant stimulus) until they finish their work (desired behavior). Working Off Detention – Misbehaving students have earned their class 20 minutes of detention at lunch (unpleasant stimulus). The teacher says that the students can work off the detention time by behaving for the rest of the day (desired behavior). Exercise as Unpleasant Stimulus – A PE teacher says if you get an A in the exam (desired behavior) then you won’t have to run laps on Friday (unpleasant stimulus). Teasing – A child learns that they are less likely to be teased (unpleasant stimulus) if they conform to the fashion of the year. Nagging your Sibling – A teenager wants his older brother with his drivers license to drive her to the mall. He refuses, so she nags him (unpleasant stimulus) until he agrees to drive her there (desired behavior). Public Shaming – At weekly staff meetings, the manager shames everyone who didn’t meet their goals (unpleasant stimulus). Staff members are incentivized to finish their work by deadlines (desired behavior) so the weekly public shaming will stop. Returning the Cell Phone – Parents have taken their child’s cell phone off her. If she behaves (desired behavior), then the children can get the cell phone back. Teachers that work with toddlers have to have a lot of patience. The “terrible twos” can be… terrible. Children at this age cry very easily. They can get frustrated with lots of tasks, like putting on a coat or trying to do a simple puzzle. Although children may not seem very bright at this age, they can be very clever and know how to get their way. For example, if a teacher puts some vegetables on a child’s plate at lunchtime, and that child does not want to eat those vegetables, the child may throw a quite vocal tantrum. Crying loudly is a very unpleasant stimulus. So, the teacher immediately takes the veggies off the plate. Then, the child stops crying. This is a classic example of a toddler applying negative reinforcement to shape their teacher’s behavior. Toddlers may only be two, but they’re smarter than they look. No one likes to do homework on the weekends. So, every Friday presents an opportunity for teachers to apply a little negative reinforcement in the classroom. For example, a primary school teacher can explain to their students that if everyone is well-behaved on the playground, which means sharing toys and getting along with each other, then there will be no homework that weekend. Immediately after recess, when the students have all returned from outside, the teacher can announce the homework status. By removing the aversive stimulus of doing homework, the teacher has increased the goal behavior of sharing and getting along with each other. We often look at educational settings from only one perspective. But in reality, each scenario is more dynamic and several elements of operant conditioning can be operating simultaneously. For example, when a student is being disruptive, the teacher will direct their attention toward that student. Then, when the student stops being disruptive, the teacher will withdraw that attention and move on to another student. This scenario can be seen from two perspectives. On the one hand, the child’s disruptive behavior is being rewarded in the form of teacher-attention. Thus, increasing the likelihood of the student’s disruptive behavior occurring again. On the other hand, when the teacher gives the student attention, the student starts to behave. The student’s disruptive behavior is the negative reinforcer, and the teacher’s attention is the goal behavior. So, when the goal behavior increases, the aversive stimulus is removed. Thus, increasing the likelihood of the teacher’s behavior occurring again. Getting students to complete their work on time is a constant battle for most teachers. Especially for some kids that are easily distracted and real busy bodies, they just can’t sit still long enough to complete their work. This is when teachers have to rely on their knowledge of operant conditioning. For example, when it is time for recess the teacher may make some students stay inside to finish their work. When they complete the assignment that all of the other students have finished, then they can go outside to play too. In this scenario, staying inside is the negative reinforcer; finishing the assignment is the goal behavior. So, when the students engage in the goal behavior, the negative reinforcer will be removed. Sometimes P.E. class is a lot of fun, and sometimes it isn’t. Playing kickball and volleyball are always exciting, but doing push-ups or running laps are not. The ultimate goal of P.E. class is for students to develop skills such as hand/eye coordination and be healthy. Most school systems have health standards that students must meet, such as being able to do calisthenics for a certain period of time. But being healthy is not just about physical health, it also means knowing about nutrition and healthy habits. So, the P.E. teacher tells the class that each student that gets an A on the exam Friday will not have to run laps on Monday. The negative reinforcer is running laps and the goal behavior is getting an A on the exam. Most parents must endure two main dilemmas when they children become teenagers. One is paying for all the stuff they want, and the other is getting them to do their household chores. When it comes to household chores, getting them done can be like pulling teeth. Teenagers just don’t want to do them. There are so many other important things to do in life, like texting friends and making Tik Tok videos. So, a clever parent can establish a new system of “teenager management”. It works like this: If the teenager can find ways to make earn some of their own money, such as cutting grass or washing and waxing cars, then they can eliminate two of their least favorite chores. With this system the parent is applying negative reinforcement. When the teenager increases their earning money behavior, the unpleasant stimulus of doing chores will be removed. Most kids absolutely do not want to go to the dentist. But, if they don’t practice proper oral hygiene, that is exactly what they will have to do. So, parents can set up a behavioral chart system to shape their child’s behavior. First, take a sheet of paper and draw a daily chart on it that has at least two boxes for each day of the week. Each time the child brushes and flosses, they put a check-mark in the box. At the end of three months, the parents count the number of times the child brushed and flossed at least twice a day. If a certain threshold score is obtained, then the child doesn’t have to go to the dentist. The parents are increasing the goal behavior of proper oral hygiene by removing an unpleasant stimulus when that behavior is engaged. No one likes to be criticized in public. It is embarrassing and if ever there was an example of an aversive stimulus, this would be one of them. Unfortunately, some bosses use this tactic frequently when a member of the team underperforms. It’s not a highly recommended leadership style, especially in the 21st century, but it still exists in a lot of companies. On the one hand, you can look at this scenario from the perspective of the public scolding being punishment for bad performance. On the other hand, from a different perspective it is an example of using negative reinforcement. The employee will try harder to do well to avoid being criticized in front of colleagues. Here, he is engaging in active avoidance learning. One key principle of all operant conditioning techniques is that the reinforcers have to be something that the individual values. Of course, these days there may be nothing a teenager values more than the internet. So, this is a very powerful reinforcer for parents to use to their advantage. If parents want to increase their child’s sense of responsibility and helping out around the house, then they can use time on the internet. For example, until a certain number of chores each week are completed, the teenager is forbidden to use the internet. This should spark any teenager into immediate action. In this scenario, the negative reinforcer is restricted internet access and the goal behavior is doing household chores. When the chore-doing behavior increases, then the rest

behavior in a classroom setting. This might include things like motivating children with the use of small prizes, social activities, and special privileges for increasing positive behaviors.To create a positive reinforcement method in the classroom:Find out what motivates your students. You may consider writing up a survey to have them fill out.Focus on a certain behavior you want to change. For example, maybe you want students to be better about turning in assignments.Clearly define the desired behavior to your students. For example, let your students know that you want them to turn in assignments on time. Be as specific as possible when defining your expectations.Present the reinforcement immediately upon seeing the desired behavior. For example, if the class has turned in all assignments on time, immediately give them praise or other motivators, like special privileges.Not all children respond the same way to reinforcement. You may need to cater your approach to accommodate for the differences.There are a variety of ways to encourage and discourage behaviors. Negative reinforcement can be a useful tool if you're looking to increase a certain behavior. Punishment, on the other hand, is meant to decrease behaviors. The word "negative" simply refers to taking something away and does not mean that this method is bad and not worth exploring.Regardless of what discipline method you choose, consistency and the timing of the consequence are the most important aspects.