**Questions to Consider**

Chapter 3: Perception

* **What is perception?**

Perception is the cognitive processes through which we interpret the stimuli in the world around us.

* **How do our sensory systems affect our perception of the world?**

Sensory systems do the job of turning sensations into perceptions that help us understand what we are encountering in the world. Sensory systems do the job of turning stimulus energy into neural signals that can be processed in the brain.

* **Do we control our perceptions or can we perceive automatically?**

In some cases perception happens automatically, without our control (e.g., in experiencing perceptual illusions), but there are situations where we control perception (e.g., in perceiving a way to accomplish a behavioral goal).

* **Why do we sometimes perceive things incorrectly?**

Perceptual illusions occur through the natural pro­cesses of perception. In fact, they help illustrate the way that perception typically occurs in cases where illusions do not result.

* **What does it mean for something to be more than the sum of its parts?**

The Gestalt idea of perceiving the whole is proposed as a contrast to the computational approach where the parts are added together to achieve perception of the whole stimulus (e.g., as in feature detection mod­els and encoding of geons). In the Gestalt approach, perception is viewed as a process that organizes stim­uli into a coherent whole based on top-down pro­cessing in the form of organizing principles.

* **How does perception aid in action?**

According to the perception/action approach, per­ception is conducted as a means to achieve goal-directed behaviors. Thus, perception and action are intricately tied together.

* **What is the purpose of perception?**

The purpose of perception is to interpret the world around us. However, the means by which this occurs is varied and described in different ways by the different approaches researchers take in studying perception.