

Being psychologists for a day

PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH INTO WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT 'GOD'

The LAMBI scale: an alternative way of recording ideas

There are many ways of thinking about God, a higher power or a divine life force, but some of God's characteristics may seem more relevant to some people than others. Using a wide range of the scale below, please rate how well each word describes God.

Note that this is not asking you to say if you believe in God or not – just what you think when you use the word 'God'.

	-2	-1	0	1	2
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Limitless					
Infinite					
Strict					
Punishing					
Cosmic					
Consciousness					
Forgiving					
Merciful					
Unimaginable					
Unknowable					



Now, collect the snowflakes/grids and compare the answers you got from your interviewees with someone else's. Which words do people agree with most and least? Can you think why?

We think that the LAMBI scale can be used to assess important individual differences in thinking about God. It shows that people do not always mean the same thing when they use the word 'God'. It also shows that people's ideas are not always the same as the main teachings from organised religions.



Do you agree? Why? Why not?

What difference do you think it would make if someone thought that God was benevolent, or authoritarian or ineffable? For example, is someone more likely to follow God's teachings (in the Bible, say) if they think God is loving or if God is angry?