**Majority influence:**

Majority influence is when an individual adopts the beliefs of the most common/dominant group as a result of group pressure. This can be because the individual wants to be right (conversion), or because they want to fit in (compliance).

**Why people conform:**

*People may conform because they want to be right. If a person is in an ambiguous situation they may look to the judgment of the majority to help them come to their own answer. This involves conversion, as the person takes on that opinion. This is known as informational social influence.*

*People often go along with the majority just because they want to fit in. This is known as normative social influence. The person complies, but does not necessarily agree with the majority (i.e. Asch).*

**Minority Influence**

An individual being influenced to accept the beliefs or behaviour of a minority. This usually involves a shift in private opinion (Internalisation) as they need to accept the minority as ‘right’, if they are to reject the majority. This private change involves a process known as conversion, which is more likely to occur when the minority is consistent and flexible, as this is more persuasive.

**Explaining the Minority Effect**

**Consistency** - The minority must be consistent in their opinion.

**Flexibility** - The minority must not appear to be rigid and dogmatic.

**Commitment** - A committed minority will lead people to rethink their position - CONVERSION

**Relevance** - The minority will be more successful if their views are in line with social trends.
What is meant by the terms majority influence, minority influence and obedience?

Majority influence is when a person goes along with the most common/dominant group because they want to fit in, and so they comply – even if they don’t necessarily personally agree.

Minority influence is when a person yields to the less common/dominant group, which is usually because they internalise what the minority believes and change their personal opinion.

Obedience is when a person does as they are told, usually by an authority or somebody who is of higher status. It is different to conforming because the person feels that they have to obey as opposed to something they should do, and when a person obeys they don’t necessarily personally agree.

Describe the procedures and findings of one study of conformity/majority influence.

Asch’s study was a situation in which seven participants sat and looked at a display of 3 lines and had to determine which line was the same as the given stimulus. However, six of the participants were confederates who’d all been told to give the same wrong answer. The one genuine participant was last or last but one to give their answer. The same experiment was repeated without confederates so the performance of participants subjected to group pressure could be compared. They found that when confederates were present, 37% of participants gave the wrong answer also. This was because they didn’t want to stand out for being wrong - and is compared of an error rate of just 0.7% in the control condition. The people who didn’t yield to the group pressure said they were confident in their own judgment or focused on the task at hand.