• After World War 2, three major developments strengthened the status of clinical psychologists (1) the unease with the way in which patients were treated by psychiatrists in asylums; (2) input from scientific research into psychotherapy; (3) psychiatrists increasingly turned to medicines for the treatment of mental disorders.

• (1) Antipsychiatry movement: pressure group that called the usefulness of psychiatry into question, brought about by lobotomy, electric shocks and other demeaning treatments, and also findings from Rosenhan’s ‘On being sane in insane places’ (1973).

• (2) It was no longer enough to believe the founders’ claims about the usefulness of their therapies, value had to be shown empirically.

• Knowledge of psychology also became of public interest.

8.2 Psychological testing
• Throughout history, people have used tests in three types of situations: to establish a person’s honesty, to select the best person, and to diagnose illness.

• Psychologists were adamant that they could make authenticity tests (e.g. for lie detection), qualifying tests (e.g. for personnel selection), and diagnostic tests (e.g. for learning difficulties) that went far beyond what was available. These tests would be based on scientific research, inspired by the belief that human nature depended on invariable laws, which science could discover and bring into use.

• A first major achievement of psychologists was that they were able to define what good tests were and how this could be assessed objectively. Two issues were important – reliability and validity.

• Reliability: the degree to which the outcome of a test is repeated under unchanged circumstances.

• Validity: the degree to which a test measures what it claims to measure.

• Tests have become increasingly popular – within an individualised society, people want to know what distinguishes them from others, how their personality is unique etc.