**Mental process**

**Sensation**

1. The process or experience of perceiving through the senses.

2. an irreducible unit of experience produced by stimulation of a sensory receptor and the resultant activation of a specific brain center, producing basic awareness of a sound, odor, color, shape, or taste or of temperature, pressure, pain, muscular tension, position of the body, or change in the internal organs associated with such processes as hunger, thirst, nausea, and sexual excitement.

**Attention**

n. a state in which cognitive resources are focused on certain aspects of the environment rather than on others.

and the central nervous system is in a state of readiness to respond to stimuli . Because it has been presumed that human beings do not have an infinite capacity to attend to everything—focusing on certain items at the expense of others—much of the research in this field has been devoted to discerning which factors influence attention and to understanding the neural mechanisms that are involved in the selective processing of information. For example, past experience affects perceptual experience (we notice things that have meaning for us), and some activities (e.g., reading) require conscious participation (i.e., voluntary attention). However, attention can also be captured (i.e., directed involuntarily) by qualities of stimuli in the environment, such as intensity, movement, repetition, contrast, and novelty.

**Perception**

n. the processs or result of becoming aware of objects, relationships, and events by means of the senses, which includes such activities as recognizing, observing, and discriminating. These activities enable organisms to organize and interpret the stimuli received into meaningful knowledge and to act in a coordinated manner.