I. **Introduction:** What do I want to be when I grow up? This is a question that I am still in the process of answering. I have contemplated many professions over the years ranging from horse trainer to Air Force mechanic to criminal lawyer. I have found that I am interested in just about everything I can think of. However, it is within the last few years that I have realized that my most deep rooted desire is to help others lead a better life, regardless of their circumstances. In order to do this one would need to know what makes us who we are, both biologically and socially; how people learn; and how to influence and motivate others. The profession that best encompasses these ideals is Psychology. **Thesis:** Today I will tell you about the many facets of the field of Psychology. **Mapping:** I will start with the stringent education requirements, and then will talk briefly about the salary components of the various areas. Lastly, I will discuss just a few of the professions and employment opportunities available in the field.

II. **Body:**

1) **Education Requirements**

   A) According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook there are two Doctorate degrees available in this field; the familiar Doctor of Physics (Ph. D) and the Doctor of Psychology (Psy. D.). The Wikipedia website indicates that the Ph.D. is more focused on research and a dissertation, while a Psy. D. is geared toward a more clinical focus and experience. These degrees will allow you to work as an instructor, a clinician, or a counselor.

   B) If you are interested in becoming an organizational psychologist, a Master’s degree may be sufficient. The Master’s degree will take at least 2 years of graduate work and will require unique research and a fairly hefty thesis.

   C) A Bachelor’s degree will qualify you to act as an assistant to higher level psychologists, and if an entry-level government job is your goal, the requirements can be even less than this. However, there is particularly stiff competition for these positions because of the lower requirements.

   D) Regardless of which degree you hold, one skill that will be essential to your success in this highly human related field is communication. It will require a great deal of empathy and excellent listening skills in order to be effective.

**Transition:** One would think that the higher degree always means a higher salary, but this is not always the case. How much do you think someone with a Doctorate might earn? $50,000? $70,000? The degree may not matter as much as the specialty.

2) **Salary**

   A) CollegeBoard.com lists that counselors, clinical and school psychologists earn about as much as a full-time research psychologist; around 63,000 – 65,000 on average. These are the jobs that require the highest degree.
B) The same website indicates that the Bureau of Labor Statistics lists just over $82,000 as the average annual salary for an Industrial Psychologist, which does not require a doctorate level degree.

Transition: These are big degrees and big salaries, but what does it all mean? What do all of these folks actually do?

3) Occupations

A) The titles of research and counseling psychologist speak for themselves. Both research and counseling topics can be broad and can cover many human issues.

B) A clinical psychologist will specialize in helping individuals that have been diagnosed with an actual disorder according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-IV. They might work with other doctors and/or psychiatrists to devise treatment plans that involve medication, as a clinical psychologist is not permitted to write prescriptions.

C) An industrial or organizational psychologist may assist businesses and organizations in improving employee satisfaction and productivity or may help companies with restructuring and other human resources related tasks. These individuals are often hired on a contractual basis to address a specific problem.

Transition: These are just a few of the options available to anyone pursuing a degree in psychology. There are several other areas of focus and since psychology touches just about everything we do, there are many other creative directions to go as well.

III. Conclusion: I have outlined the basic degrees that are available in the field of psychology and have briefly touched on a small range of the higher end salaries that can be earned. We have also scratched the surface of occupations that are possible with a degree in psychology, though there are several other options available. While I may not envision myself devoting the amount of time and financial resources that it would require to earn a professional doctorate at this point in my life, it has become clear to me that no matter what I decide I want to be when I grow up, the field of psychology will play a very large role.

References:

