

## GLOSSARY OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

ABSENT SITTER: Person for whom a proxy session is held.

AGENT: Person who originates or tries to send an ESP message.

ALTERNATIVE-CHOICE MATERIAL: Test material where subject chooses between known alternatives, e.g., the five-symbol ESP cards, where subject knows there are only five symbols to choose from.

ANECDOTAL MATERIAL: Reports of spontaneous or similar experiences, in narrative form, often undocumented.

AURA: Colors with fluctuating boundaries, alleged by some psychics to surround persons and objects.

AUTOMATIC WRITING: Writing of a person who claims to be permitting his hand to move without his volition.

AUTOMATISM: Unconscious muscular activity, as in automatic writing or dowsing. (The early writers also used the term "sensory automatism" for a hallucination or a vision in a crystal ball.)

BLIND JUDGING: Scoring or judging data without knowing whether they were obtained from the actual target or from the comparison control; in general, scoring data without knowing the conditions under which they were obtained.

BLIND PROCEDURE: Obtaining or measuring data without knowing what experimental condition is being tested.

CALL: Subject's attempt to respond to an ESP target; guess.

CHANCE EXPECTATION: Score which would occur in the long run (if no ESP were in operation), e.g., 5 in a run of 25 ESP cards.

CLAIRVOYANCE: Extrasensory perception of a physical object or event (in contrast to telepathy).

COMMUNICATOR: A spirit alleged by a medium to give messages or information. The term is usually reserved for an alleged spirit which comes seldom, or comes only in connection with a particular person to whom the messages are directed.

CONTROL: (1) Sometimes used as a synonym for "guide" (see below).  
(2) As used in experimentation: see "Controlled conditions."

CONTROLLED CONDITIONS: Factors which the experimenter holds constant, or which he varies according to known standards. For example, in an ESP experiment the visual stimulation may be held constant (at zero) by enclosing each target in an opaque envelope, while the length of time between responses may be varied according to a pre-set schedule.

CRITICAL RATIO (CR): Measurement indicating how far the result differs from chance expectation. The CR is obtained by dividing the actual deviation by the standard deviation, and a standard statistical table then shows the associated probability value.

DEVIATION: Amount the score varies from chance expectation (above or below).

DOUBLE BLIND: Research condition where neither subject nor experimenter knows under which condition (ESP test or control) the subject is being tested. (See Blind Procedure.)

DOWSING: Identifying the location of something concealed, by means of an automatism. Classically, the term = locating underground water by the movement of some rigid object, like a hazel wand, held in the hands. Term now also covers attempting to find lost objects, mineral deposits, etc.; and the use of other instruments such as pendulums.

DISCARNATE ENTITY: An alleged spirit of someone not alive or not physically present. (Discarnate - out-of-the body.)

DISPLACEMENT: ESP responses to targets other than those for which the call was intended.

Backward displacement: ESP responses to targets coming before the intended target.

Forward displacement: ESP responses to targets coming later than the intended target.

ESP: EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION: The awareness or reception of information about, or a direct response to, some thought, object or event, when this information or response is not explainable by sensory contact, memory or inference. Subclasses of ESP are clairvoyance, telepathy, precognition and perhaps retrocognition.

(The term "perception" is not to be taken literally, since ESP may be a judgment or feeling, or some other non-perceptual response.)

FREE STIMULUS MATERIAL: Targets which include an unlimited or unspecified range of stimuli, such as pictures, words or personal data.

GESP: GENERAL ESP: ESP which may be either clairvoyant or telepathic, as when there is a target which someone knows.

GIFTED SUBJECT: A sensitive; a person who has demonstrated unusually effective psychic ability.

GOAT: A subject in a parapsychology experiment who states that ESP or PK cannot occur under the experimental conditions (whether or not it can occur under other conditions).

GUIDE: A spirit alleged by a medium to act as her advisor, helper and teacher.

HAUNTING: Visual or auditory hallucinations or apparitions, sometimes feelings of eeriness and cold in a certain place; usually located in one vicinity; usually interpreted as connected with discarnate entity.

HIT: Accurate response to a target.

MARGINALLY SIGNIFICANT: Score where p (probability) is between .05 (odds of 20/1 and .01 (odds of 100/1).

MEDIUM: Person who claims to communicate with those who have died.

OUT-OF-THE-BODY EXPERIENCE: One during which the subject feels his consciousness to be located in a position different from his own body.

PARAPSYCHOLOGY: An area of science dealing with such topics as ESP, PK, or survival after death.

PERCIPIENT: Person experiencing ESP, such as the "receiver" in a telepathy or clairvoyance experiment. The term is sometimes extended to include someone who acts as a receiver in such experiments, whether or not there is evidence of ESP.

PK: PSYCHOKINESIS: A physical change in an object, or in its state of rest or motion, which cannot be explained by ordinary physical processes and is therefore assumed to be due to psi (mind over matter).

POLTERGEIST: (= "Noisy, rattling spirit")

Disturbances characterized by unexplained physical happenings, such as loud noises, sudden movements and breakage of household objects. Usually of short duration and limited to a small area, such as a house.

PRECOGNITION: Foreknowledge of or response to something that has not yet happened, when this knowledge or response cannot be explained as inference from present knowledge or as typical of present responses.

p PROBABILITY: The likelihood that a particular event could occur by chance.  $p = .01$  means that the result could happen by chance only once in 100 times.

PROXY SITTER: The note-taker, record-maker, in a proxy sitting.

PROXY SITTING, PROXY SESSION: A procedure where a person (usually a sensitive or medium) is asked to give information about or messages for someone who is not present (the absent sitter), thus ruling out sensory cues and hints from the sitter. Sitter is usually only partially identified (e.g., by given name or as "the person who sent this object"), and should not be known to the proxy sitter. Sessions are usually held for several absent sitters, each of whom scores all records without knowing which was his own, thus permitting evaluation of accuracy.

PSI: Comprehensive term for ESP and PK.

PSI-MISSING: ESP responses which systematically avoid the target which the subject is attempting to hit. The term means more than simply "No ESP." The lack of ESP would result in scores within the range of chance; "psi-missing" is reserved for scores significantly below this range.

PSYCHIC (noun) : A person who is a sensitive or claims to be a medium.

PSYCHIC (adjective): Paranormal.

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT: Analysis and evaluation of data without statistics.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT: Analysis and evaluation of data in numerical terms.

RANDOMIZATION: Method of making sure that the sequence of targets is thoroughly random, e.g., by using a random-number table; in this method each digit stands for a certain target, and the order of digits determines the order of the targets

READING: Messages about a person, usually given in a mediumistic session or a psychometry session.

RETROCOGNITION: ESP of past events, when the information cannot be explained by present knowledge, logical inference or habitual modes of response.

RUN: Group of trials, e.g., 25 trials in ESP card test.

RSPK: Recurrent Spontaneous PK: Phenomena of poltergeist or haunting variety which seem due to agency of some person, either living or discarnate.

SENSORY CUES: Information which can lead to a correct response by normal means, and which would therefore invalidate an ESP investigation. Examples are: visual cues, as from a shiny surface, which reflects the target, or from the experimenter's eye movements toward the target; auditory cues, such as unconscious whispering, or body stillness as the subject gropes in the correct direction; tactual cues as in muscle-reading where a person who knows the target tenses or relaxes as the subject approaches the target.

SENDER: Agent.

SENSITIVE: Person who has demonstrated marked ESP ability.

SHEEP: Subject in a parapsychology experiment who states that ESP or PK might occur under the conditions of the experiment (even if it is considered very unlikely, or if the subject states that others might be able to do it but he cannot).

SIGNIFICANCE (level of): Statistical estimate of the likelihood that a result was due to chance. Thus a level of significance of  $p = .05$  indicates that statistics show the results would appear by chance in about one try out of 20.

STANDARD DEVIATION: A statistic used to assess the significance of the deviation.

SUPERSHEEP: Subject in a parapsychology experiment who is confident he can score high because of his ESP.

TARGET: Objective or mental event which a subject is asked to call in an ESP experiment or to produce in a PK experiment. The target in an ESP experiment may be a card, a picture, a thought, etc.; in a PK experiment it may be a certain position at which dice are desired to come to rest.

TELEKINESIS: PK. An older term seldom used nowadays, in referring to laboratory research, though still sometimes used in referring to the physical phenomena of mediums.

TELEPATHY: ESP response to the mental state, mental activity or mental content of some other person or animal. The term is often loosely used for GESP.

TOKEN OBJECT: An object used in psychometry.

TRIAL: Single attempt to identify target; or single unit in PK test.

VARIABLE: Experimental factor that changes during the course of the study.

VARIANCE: Variability of scores, expressed according to a statistical formula, and now considered one way in which ESP is shown. High variance refers to scores which show such marked swings between hits and psi-missing that the size of the swing falls outside the chance range. Low variance refers to scores which are more uniform ("flat") than would be expected by chance.

VERIDICAL: (= "telling the truth"): an ESP impression which reproduces the facts as they actually occurred.