Evaluating Milgram’s Electric Shocks Obedience Study

**Milgram counterarguments**

Use these in the relevant places to create your discussion of the Milgram experiment:

1. Milgram argued that he could not possibly know how distressed P’s would become. In answer to a follow up questionnaire a year later - 84% of P’s said they were glad they had taken part and 74% felt they had learned something.
2. Deception was necessary to make the study as internally and ecologically valid as possible. All participants were fully debriefed when the study ended.
3. Milgram did not break any ethical guidelines because there were none at the time he carried out his experiment. Indeed, it is partly because of his study that guidelines were introduced.



1. Milgram made it clear that P’s would be paid even if they did not continue with the study. The experiment may have lacked validity if P’s were constantly reminded of their right to withdraw.
2. Later studies have supported the ecological validity of Milgram’s research. Hofling et al found that 21 out 22 nurses (in a real life hospital) were willing to administer a potentially lethal dose of a drug to a patient when ordered to by a doctor
3. When asked later, 70% of participants said that they believed that they were giving real electric shocks.
4. The participants were from mixed backgrounds. The study has been replicated in other cultures with similar results to the original, although collectivist cultures are slightly more likely to obey.