

Steven Pinker



Psychologist, Linguist, Philosopher

Personal

- Born in Canada September 18, 1954.
- Raised in an English-speaking Jewish community of Montreal .
- Became an atheist by the age of 13.
- Oldest of 3 children.
- Married and divorced twice with no children.
- Current partner is philosopher Rebecca Goldstein.

Education

- Graduated from Montreal's Dawson College in 1973.
- Received BS in experimental psychology from McGill University in 1976.
- Received PhD. In experimental psychology from Harvard University in 1979.

Publications

- *The Language Instinct* (1994).
- *How the Mind Works* (1997).
- *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language* (1999).
- *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* (2002).
- *The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature* (2007).

Career

- Upon receiving PhD became assistant professor at Harvard then Stanford University.
- 1982-2003 taught at MIT eventually becoming director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience.
- Currently Johnstone Family Professor of Psychology at Harvard University.

Theory & Philosophy

- Evolutionary Psychologist
 - Expression of emotions have a biologically advantageous disposition.
 - Anger, guilt, sympathy, and love.
- Linguistics
 - Language is a biological adaptation not a cultural invention.
 - Gossip is popular because knowledge of others is an adaptive advantage.
- Innate Morality
 - Human beings pass on gravitations towards moral behaviors through their genes.