

perceptual-illusions.ga

Description

An **optical illusion** (also called a **visual illusion**^[2]) is an [illusion](#) caused by the [visual system](#) and characterized by a visual [percept](#) that (loosely said) appears to differ from [reality](#). Illusions come in a wide variety; their categorization is difficult because the underlying cause is often not clear^[3] but a classification^{[1][4]} proposed by [Richard Gregory](#) is useful as an orientation. According to that, there are three main classes: physical, physiological, and cognitive illusions, and in each class there are four kinds: Ambiguities, distortions, paradoxes, and fictions. A classical example for a physical distortion would be the apparent bending of a stick half immersed in water; an example for a physiological paradox is the [motion aftereffect](#) (where despite movement position remains unchanged). An example for a physiological fiction is an [afterimage](#). Three typical cognitive distortions are the [Ponzo](#), [Poggendorff](#), and [Müller-Lyer](#) illusion. Physical illusions are caused by the physical environment, e.g. by the optical properties of water. Physiological illusions arise in the eye or the visual pathway, e.g. from the effects of excessive stimulation of a specific receptor type. [Cognitive](#) visual illusions are the result of [unconscious inferences](#) and are perhaps those most widely known.

[Pathological visual illusions](#) arise from pathological changes in the physiological [visual perception](#) mechanisms causing the aforementioned types of illusions; they are discussed e.g. under [visual hallucinations](#).

Category

1. External Domains

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