

# Seeing and Perceiving

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Considered one of the world's most influential cognitive psychologists, Anne Treisman developed a classic psychological model of human visual attention. The feature integration theory of attention proposes a two-stage model for our perception of objects. The pre-attentive phase occurs automatically, before conscious awareness. In this stage, her research suggests, we register the elementary features of a visual stimulus, before our minds have grouped those features or bound them to an object. In the second phase, called the focused attention stage, we combine the features to perceive the specific object. Treisman's work has formed the basis for thousands of experiments in vision, cognitive, and neurological sciences. Her pioneering research on attention led President Barack Obama to award her the National Medal of Science.