

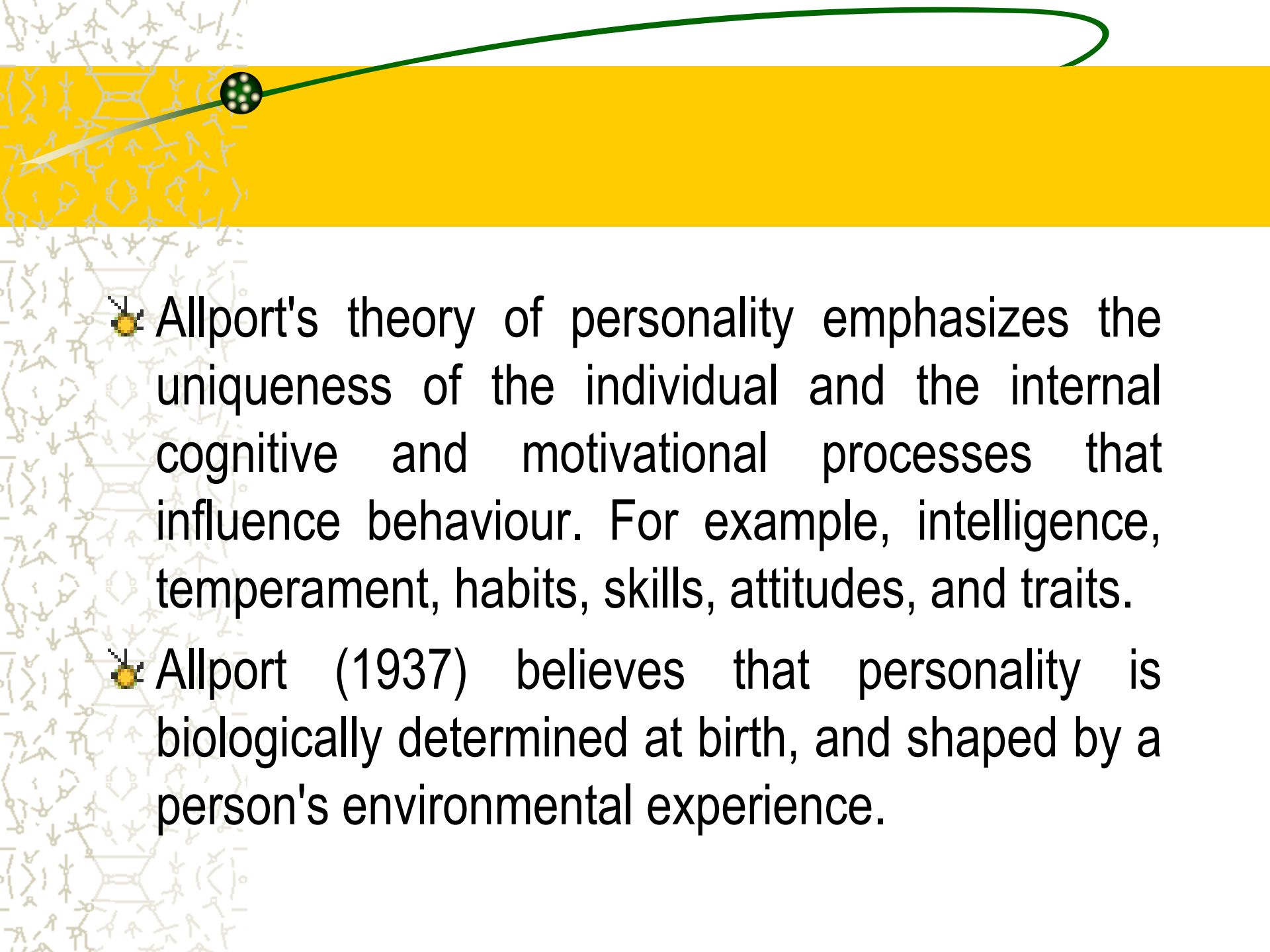


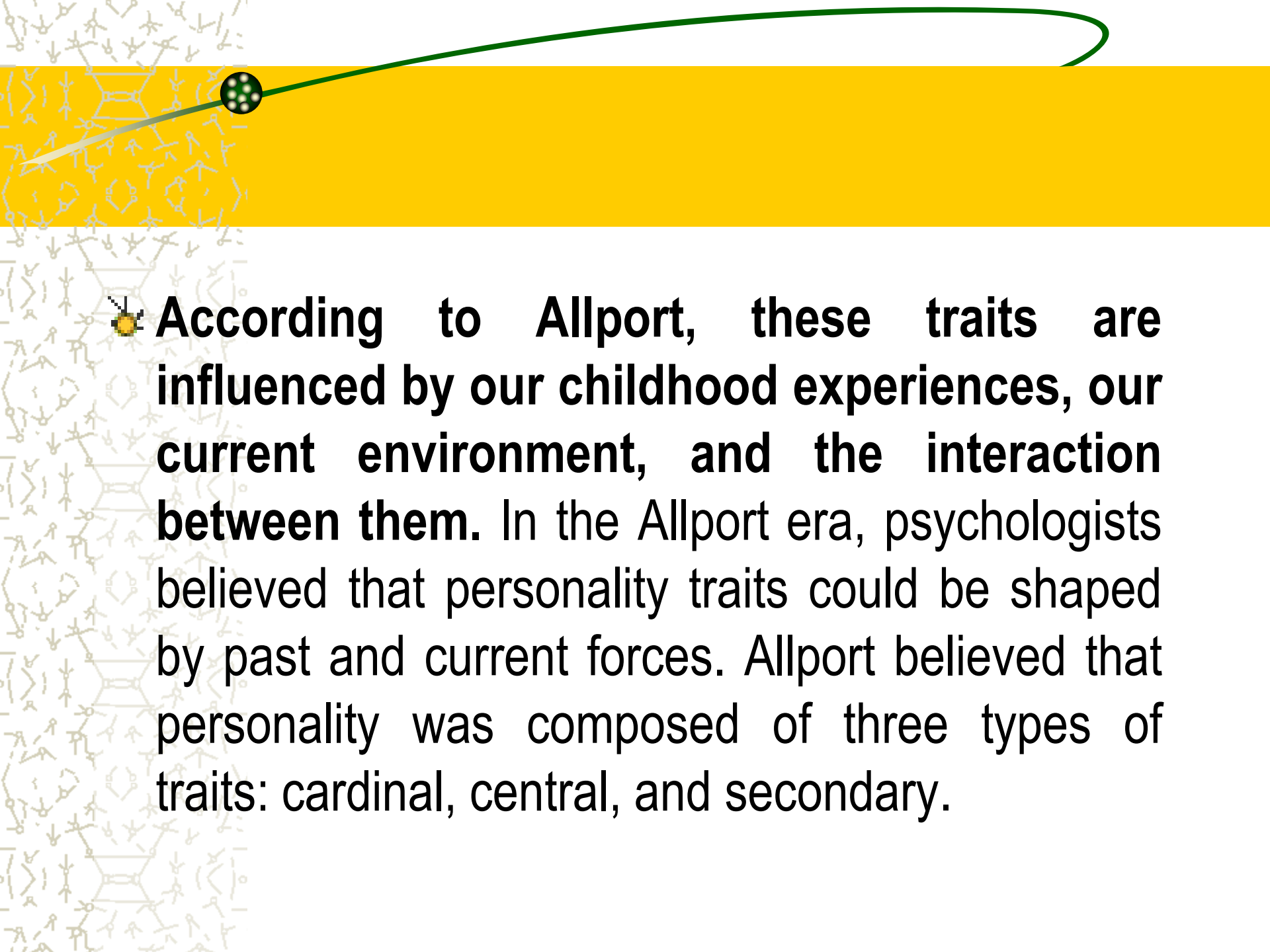
Gordon Allport (1897–1967)
Personality Traits/ Dispositional
Traits

Mr. Muhammad Asim


Gordon Allport (1897–1967)

- Gordon Allport was one of the first modern trait theorists. Allport and Henry worked through two of the most comprehensive dictionaries of the English language available and extracted around 18,000 personality-describing words. From this list they reduced the number of words to approximately 4,500 personality-describing adjectives which they considered to describe observable and relatively permanent personality traits.

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- ✦ Allport's theory of personality emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and the internal cognitive and motivational processes that influence behaviour. For example, intelligence, temperament, habits, skills, attitudes, and traits.
 - ✦ Allport (1937) believes that personality is biologically determined at birth, and shaped by a person's environmental experience.



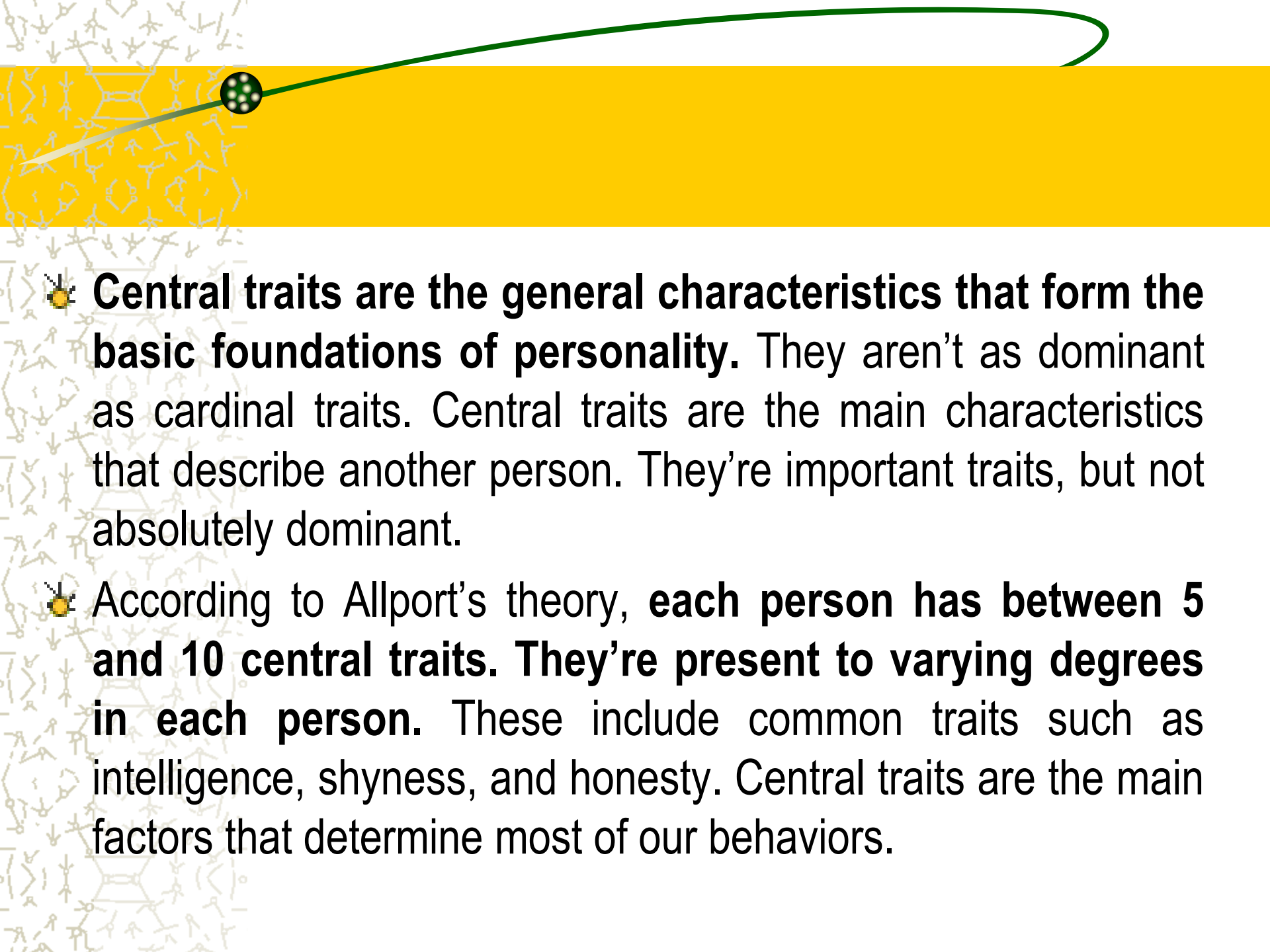
✦ **According to Allport, these traits are influenced by our childhood experiences, our current environment, and the interaction between them.** In the Allport era, psychologists believed that personality traits could be shaped by past and current forces. Allport believed that personality was composed of three types of traits: cardinal, central, and secondary.



✚ *Cardinal traits* dominate and shape an individual's behavior. They stand at the top of the hierarchy and are collectively known as the individual's *master control*. Cardinal traits are powerful, but few people have personalities dominated by a single trait. Instead, our personalities are typically composed of multiple traits.

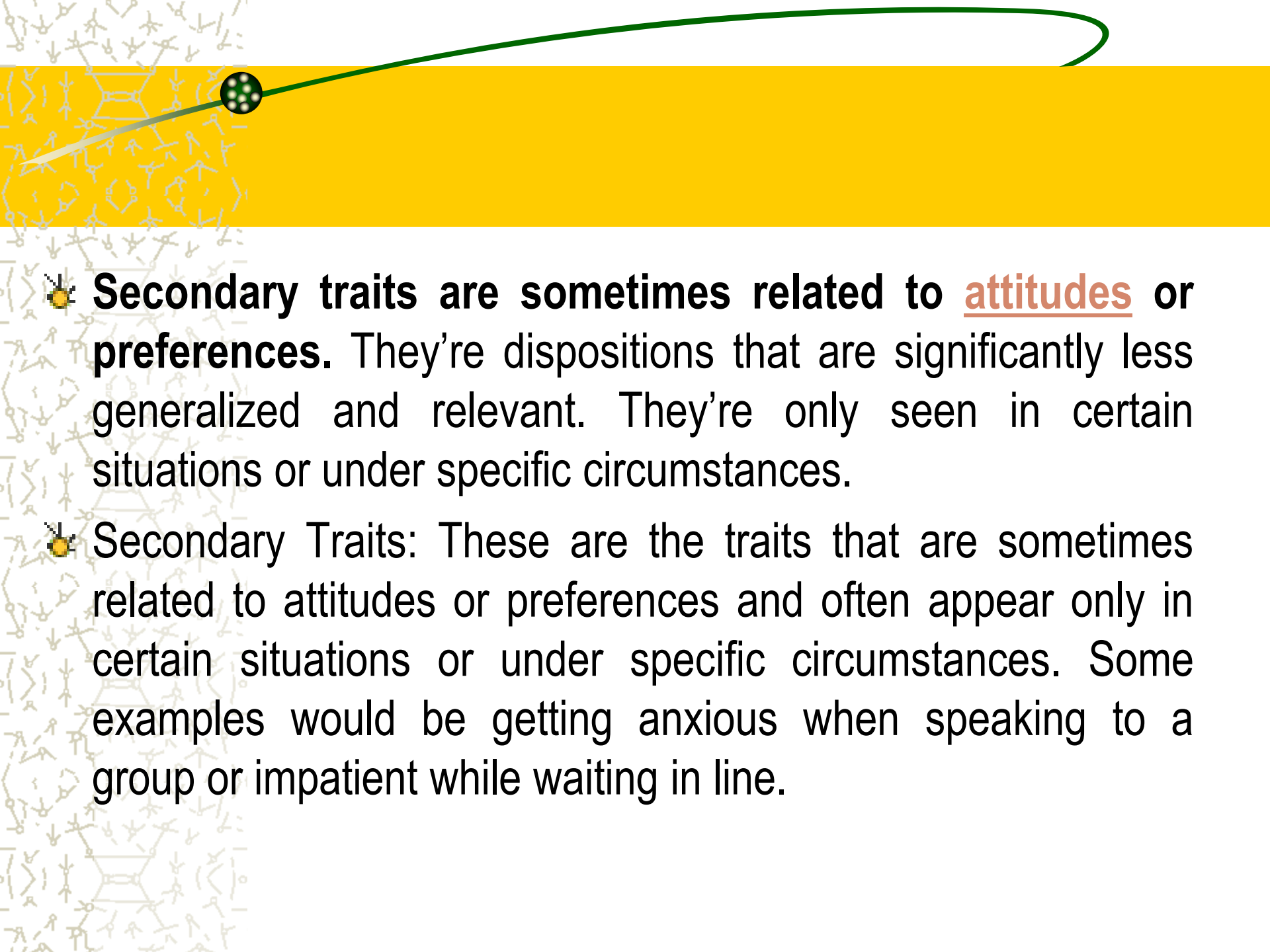
✚ **People with such personalities are known for these traits and their names are often associated with these qualities.**

✚ Cardinal Traits: Traits that dominate an individual's whole life, often to the point that the person becomes known specifically for these traits. Freudian, narcissism.



✦ **Central traits are the general characteristics that form the basic foundations of personality.** They aren't as dominant as cardinal traits. Central traits are the main characteristics that describe another person. They're important traits, but not absolutely dominant.

✦ According to Allport's theory, **each person has between 5 and 10 central traits. They're present to varying degrees in each person.** These include common traits such as intelligence, shyness, and honesty. Central traits are the main factors that determine most of our behaviors.



✦ **Secondary traits are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences.** They're dispositions that are significantly less generalized and relevant. They're only seen in certain situations or under specific circumstances.

✦ **Secondary Traits:** These are the traits that are sometimes related to attitudes or preferences and often appear only in certain situations or under specific circumstances. Some examples would be getting anxious when speaking to a group or impatient while waiting in line.



Trait Approach to Personality

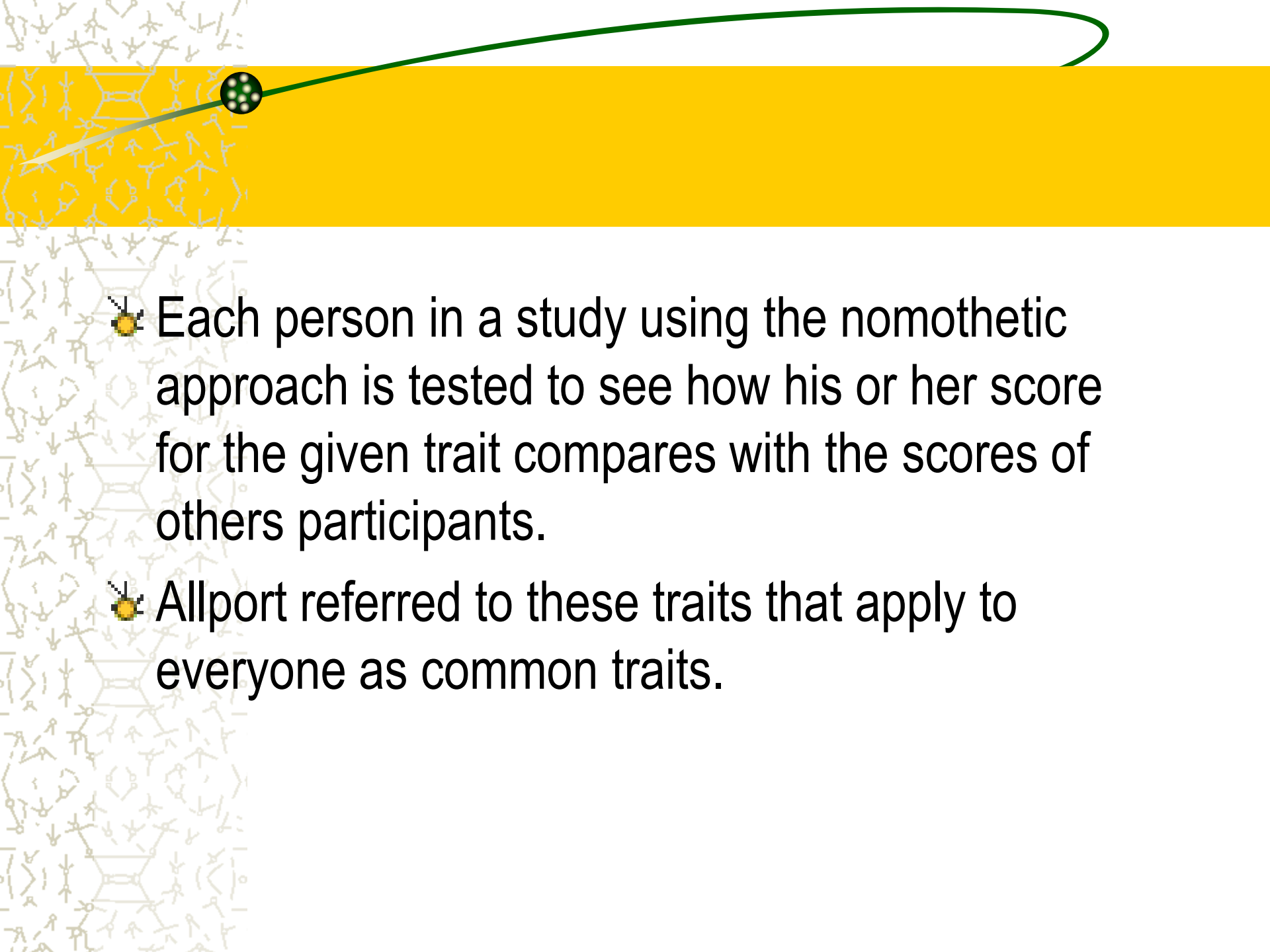
• Allport identified two Approaches

1. Nomothetic Approach
2. Idiographic Approach



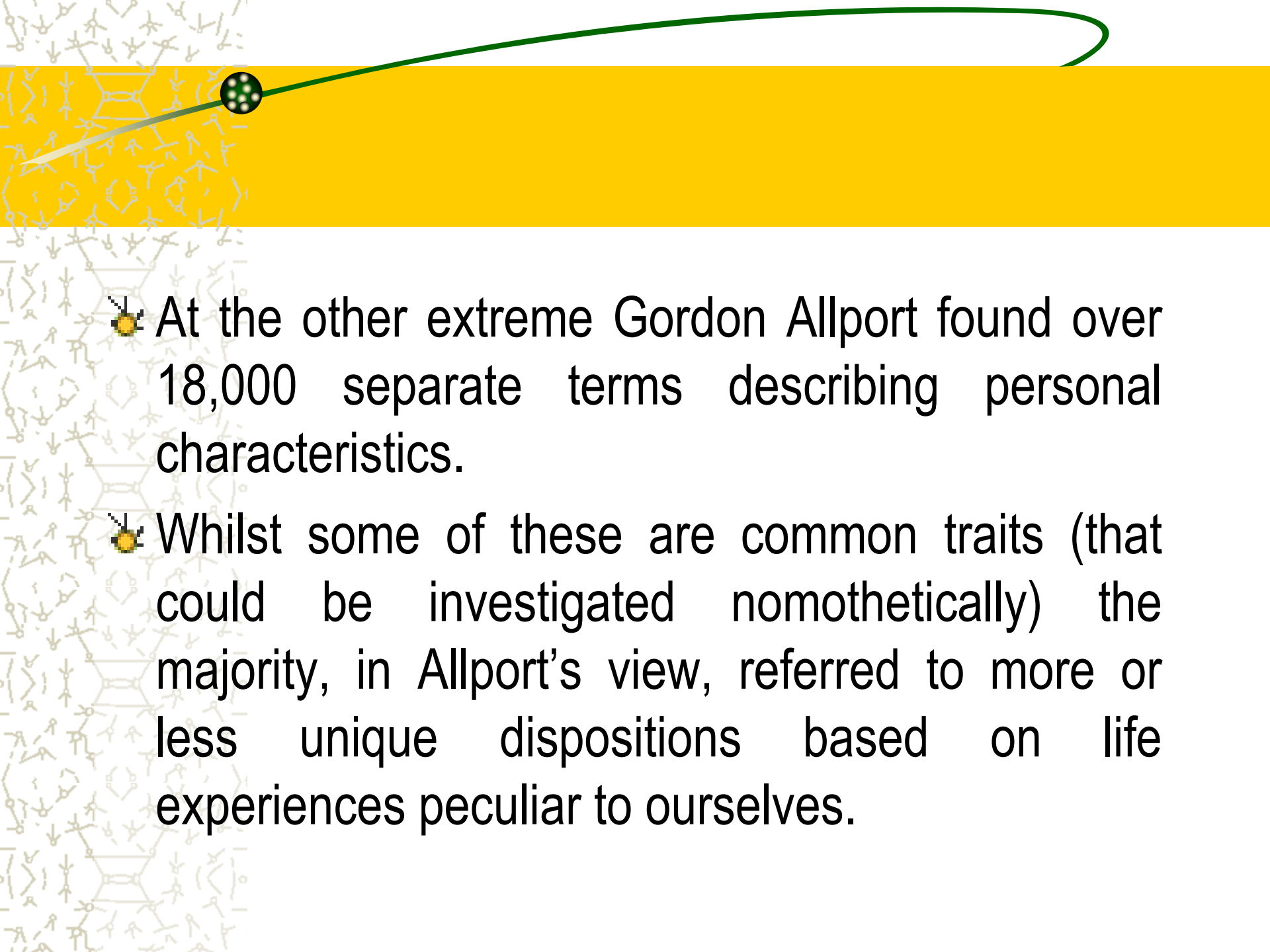
Nomothetic Approach

- ✦ The term “nomothetic” comes from the Greek word “nomos” meaning “law”.
- ✦ Psychologists who adopt this approach are mainly concerned with studying what we share with others (i.e. similarities between people).
- ✦ Therefore, the nomothetic approach involves establishing laws or generalizations that apply to all people.

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- ✦ Each person in a study using the nomothetic approach is tested to see how his or her score for the given trait compares with the scores of others participants.
 - ✦ Allport referred to these traits that apply to everyone as common traits.

The Idiographic Approach

- ✦ The term “idiographic” comes from the Greek word “idios” meaning “own” or “private”. Psychologists interested in this aspect of experience want to discover what makes each of us unique.
- ✦ No general laws are possible because of chance, free will and the uniqueness of individuals.

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- ✦ At the other extreme Gordon Allport found over 18,000 separate terms describing personal characteristics.
 - ✦ Whilst some of these are common traits (that could be investigated nomothetically) the majority, in Allport's view, referred to more or less unique dispositions based on life experiences peculiar to ourselves.