

Psychology A Level Year 12 Transition Work

Why study Psychology A Level?

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. Psychologists develop explanations and theories to help them to predict people's behaviour in different situations. These theories or explanations are tested by psychologists using research studies. You will learn to develop a keen grasp for the scientific nature of psychological research, including how it should be conducted, analysed and reported.

What can I do after Psychology A Level?

Psychology A Level can prepare you for a number of careers, including: therapist, counsellor, other roles in the medical field or health services, charity-based work, graphic design, business and further study in the field of Psychology.

Psychology A Level at a glance

Within the topics we explore how different approaches, theories and research experiments explain human behaviour. It is also important to know that maths and statistics form an important part of the Psychology A Level.

For the full A Level in psychology, which is sat at the end of year 13, students will sit 3 exams, each for 2 hours and each worth 33.3% of the final grade. These will be written exams with a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Paper 1 topics - Introductory topics in psychology: Students will be assessed on Social influence, Memory, Attachment and Psychopathology.

Paper 2 topics - Psychology in context: Students will be assessed on Approaches in psychology, Biopsychology and Research methods.

Paper 3 topics - Issues and options in psychology: In this paper you will be assessed on Issues and Debates in psychology, Relationships, Schizophrenia and Forensic Psychology

How is the course assessed?

3 x 2 hour exam papers in the summer of Year 13 (there is **no coursework**).

We follow the AQA specification: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>

The purpose of the transition work

This bridging unit is designed to provide you with an introduction to the main ideas in Psychology, particularly the topics you will cover in Year 12. It will provide you with a basis of understanding before you start the course.

If you have any questions about the bridging work, please e-mail Mrs Jordan:
kjordan@holytrinitycrawley.org.uk

- You must remember to bring this to your first Psychology lesson in September.



Psychology A Level

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Transition tasks:

1. Over the summer you need to investigate the following key figures from five different Approaches in Psychology (Approaches are different ways of explaining human behaviour and are covered extensively in the course):
 - a. Sigmund Freud (Psychodynamic Approach)
 - b. B.F. Skinner (Behaviourist Approach)
 - c. Elizabeth Loftus (Cognitive Approach)
 - d. Hans Selye (Biological Approach)
 - e. Abraham Maslow (Humanist Approach)

Write a 150 word summary on each Psychologist, explaining what and how they have contributed to our understanding of human behaviour. Do not simply cut and paste from the internet, research carefully and pick out only the key points on each – summarising is an important aspect of this course.

Challenge – for each approach can you give an example of how one key concept can be applied to your own life

2. Your next part of the task is to analyse the case of 'K' below using these different psychological approaches. State how at least 3 of the approaches/ psychologists would explain the causes of K's behaviour and give evidence from the extract to support your point e.g. 'The biological approach would suggest that K's aggression is due to an imbalance of hormones as in the extract it states ...

Here is an extract from a brief psychological assessment made by a psychiatrist:

'K' is a 30-year old man who has had a long history of violence. He was most recently arrested (for the fifth time) for an attack on another man in a crowded pub. 'K' claimed that the man had knocked his drink and laughed about it. At the time of the arrest, 'K' was found to have abnormally high levels of testosterone (as well as high blood alcohol level). He reported many experiences of seeing his father being aggressive and suffered himself in the form of beatings. 'K' said very little about his mother, who appeared to have been absent during this time, although this did not seem to be a concern for 'K'. 'K' was excluded from school on many occasions for bullying other children. If 'K' had a philosophy on life, and it is 'never show weakness to others'.

3. Introducing Research Methods part 1: Ethics mind map

Ethical issues arise when studying the human mind. Investigate these and create a mind map of the main ones (deception, confidentiality, informed consent, right to withdraw, protection from harm) – explaining why they are of concern.

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/ethical-issues-of-psychological-investigation>
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Ethics.html>

4. Introducing Research Methods part 2: Psychological Methods

Psychologists do not draw conclusions about human behaviour based on their personal experience or subjective opinion. They conduct research studies. However, there are flaws to every piece of research. Unlike in Biology and Chemistry we cannot control every part



of our experiments in Psychology because we are dealing with humans, which makes it hard to be robustly scientific.

Form a table like the one below summarising some of the main research methods used by Psychologists, give one strength and one weakness of each method.

The study notes on tutor 2 U are a good starting point for this (they are at the bottom of the page so scroll down): [Revision Help: Research Methods for A-Level Psychology | Collections | Psychology | tutor2u](#)

Method	Description	Strength	Limitation	Challenge: example in Psychology
Lab Experiment				
Field Experiment				
Natural Observation				
Interview				
Questionnaire				
Case Study				

Wider reading / watching / listening:

<u>Read</u>	<u>Watch</u>	<u>Listen</u>
"Life lessons from a brain surgeon" – Dr Rahul Jandial	'How close are we to uploading our minds?' https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_s_a_graziano_how_close_are_we_to_uploading_our_minds?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare	"The Life Scientific" – Jim Al-Khalili
"The man who mistook his wife for a hat" – Oliver Sacks	'The Psychology behind irrational decisions' https://www.ted.com/talks/sara_garofalo_the_psychology_behind_irrational_decisions	"The Hidden Brain" – Shankar Vedantam
Other: Guardian 'Science' section: https://www.theguardian.com/science British Psychological Society – BPS: https://www.bps.org.uk/	'What is depression'? TED Ed Talk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z-IR48Mb3W0	"All in the Mind" – BBC Radio 4



	'Watson's Theory of Behaviourism' https://youtu.be/V09FuazW8bc	"Nature" podcast
		"New Scientist Weekly"

TED talks

There are many, many TED talks on Psychology, but here are some of my favourites. Try to watch at least 3 of them to spark your interest in Psychology:

- Steven Pinker – Human nature and the blank slate
- Oliver Sacks – What hallucination reveals about our minds
- Philip Zimbardo – The psychology of evil
- Scott Fraser – why eyewitnesses get it wrong
- Andrew Solomon – The struggle of mental health
- Elyn Saks – A tale of mental illness from the inside
- Read Montague – what we're learning from 5000 brains.
- Ben Ambridge - 10 myths about Psychology, debunked.
- Jon Ronson - Strange answers to the psychopath test
- Ben Goldacre - Battling Bad Science
- Keith Barry – Brain magic
- Carol Dweck - The power of believing that you can improve

Need help with any tasks?

These are our recommended online resources:

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>

<https://psychboost.com/>

<https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/>

<https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/psychology-revision/>



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