

Year 12 Psychology Summer Tasks

Welcome to A Level Psychology!

For many of you, psychology will be a brand new subject. Many students see it as a 'fresh start' and look forward to studying something completely different.

In order to give yourself the best possible chance of succeeding on the course you will need to start the process of acclimatising yourself to Psychology as soon as possible. This booklet contains a brief introduction to the course, followed by study skills tasks. The purpose of each task is to introduce you to a key concept in psychology and in the process, help you to develop some of the study skills that you will need to thrive on the course.

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. It is interested in what influences our behaviour, from communication and memory to thought and emotion. It's about understanding what makes people tick and how this understanding can help us address many of the problems and issues in society today.

As a science psychology functions as both a thriving academic discipline and a vital professional practice, one dedicated to the study of human behaviour - and the thoughts, feelings, and motivations behind it - through observation, measurement, and testing, in order to form conclusions that are based on sound scientific methodology.

Useful websites:

Look at the British Psychological Society's website (www.bps.org.uk). It gives details of courses in Psychology, career opportunities for those who study Psychology and even has a magazine for A-Level students of Psychology

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

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

<https://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/psychology>

<http://www.holah.karoo.net/links.htm>

<http://psychlotron.org.uk/newResources/archive.html>

Task 1:

Psychology is a varied discipline, with different explanations for behaviour. You will study 7 different areas/ perspectives to explain human behaviour. These are:

- Social
- Cognitive
- Developmental
- Biological
- Individual differences
- Behaviourism
- Psychodynamic

(Humanistic Psychology – an extra one for those who would like to complete additional reading)

Your first task is to briefly summarise (4/5 lines) how each approach explains human behaviour. Use the websites listed above to help you. Make a note of any key words that you think are important for each approach. You will find it useful to start a glossary for each.

Task 2

Your next task is to research the key figures listed below. Produce a factsheet about each key thinker. Use the websites listed above to help you conduct your research.

- Sigmund Freud
- Ivan Pavlov
- Roger W. Sperry
- B.F Skinner
- Albert Bandura
- Stanley Milgram
- Philip Zimbardo

Information to include:

- When and where they were born; dates they were working
- Which approach they contributed to (Social, Cognitive, Developmental, Biological, Individual Differences, Behaviourism, Psychodynamic)
- What their key ideas about human behaviour were. How do they explain human behaviour?
- Any classic piece of research they conducted. What did they do/ find? (This should be brief and focus on one or two pieces.)

Task 3

As well as the 7 main areas/perspectives within psychology there are also many issues and debates that are often discussed when trying to evaluate the areas/perspectives and the different explanations of behaviour. Two of those debates are: free will vs determinism and nature vs nurture.

Based on your knowledge of the 7 areas/perspectives, predict which side of the debate they would be on. Justify your answers.

Approach	Key influence on behaviour	Free will vs. determinism	Nature vs. nurture
Social			
Cognitive			
Developmental			
Biological			
Individual Differences			
Psychodynamic			
Behaviourism			

Task 4

Psychologists use different research methods to conduct research which then forms the basis of theories they formulate to explain human behaviour. Complete the table below using the websites listed earlier.

Research method	What is it?	Evaluation – strengths of using this method	Evaluation – limitations of using this method	Example of it being used in Psychology
Laboratory experiment				
Field experiment				
Case studies				
Interviews				
Questionnaires				
Naturalistic Observation				
Structured observation				

To help with the evaluation of each method, research what the following terms mean:

- Reliability
- Validity
- Ethical issues such as fully informed consent, confidentiality, right to withdraw, protection from harm, deception...

Useful documentaries to watch – there are many more you will be shown throughout the course but these are to whet your appetite and offer insight into the content you will be studying as part of the course. Some of you may find some of the content in these documentaries a little upsetting. Viewer caution is advised.

<https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/brain-secret-history/>

<https://www.documentarystorm.com/the-secret-life-of-the-manic-depressive/>

<https://topdocumentaryfilms.com/phantoms-in-the-brain/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yUZpB57PfHs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISZvEH3c1Zk>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b05nyysy/louis-theroux-by-reason-of-insanity-part-1>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD_ytS-RsGg

<https://watchdocumentaries.com/stephen-the-murder-that-changed-a-nation/>