**A-level Psychology**



**Bridging Course - Week 1**

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****St Mary’s Catholic School

A-level Psychology Bridging Course

**What are the Entry Requirements for Studying A-level Psychology?**

* Students should be expecting to achieved at least a grade 6 in the following subjects: GCSE English and Maths
* Students should enjoy investigating behaviour and discussing topical issues
* Students should enjoy planning and writing essays
* Students should enjoy analysing data to reach conclusions
* Students should enjoy contemplating both ethical and methodological decisions, which scientists must make when conducting research

**What to expect from A-level Psychology.**

A-level Psychology is a challenging subject which encourages students to question the source of human behaviour in a scientific manner. A range of mental health disorders are explored, including addiction and schizophrenia, as well as attachment behaviours and memory. Key studies are explored in detail, in order to assess how well theories can be supported. Students also debate topical issues, including the role nature and nurture play in determining human behaviour, and the degree of free will humans have. Outside of lessons, students are expected to complete substantial amounts of reading, engage with webinars and watch relevant documentaries, in order to prepare for lessons. Students should expect to plan and write essays regularly, as well as complete shorter, comprehension tasks to consolidate their knowledge. Another demand of the course is that students must be confident in planning investigations and to be fully prepared for this, students will be expected to engage in class discussions surrounding key research. Psychology will prompt you to question how both pro and anti-social behaviours develop, as well as consider the ways theories can be used to facilitate positive changes in society, and the field of mental health treatment.

**This bridging course will provide you with detailed information about A-level Psychology, and what to expect from the course, as well as key work to complete so that you have knowledge of the key approaches which will be referred to throughout the course. Students who are expecting to study Psychology at A-level, and are likely to meet the entry requirements, must complete the bridging course fully and thoroughly, to the best of their ability. You should complete all work on paper and keep it in a file, in an ordered way. You will submit it to your teacher in September. All of the work will be reviewed and selected work will be assessed, and you will be given feedback on it. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact the school and appropriate resources will be sent to you. If you are thinking about studying Psychology at A-level you should attempt this work to see whether or not you think studying a subject like this is right for you. If you later decide to study Psychology, you must ensure you complete this work in full. This work should be completed after you have read and completed the Study Skills work that all of Year 12 students should complete.**

**Course outline**

**Introductory topics in psychology (Paper 1):** this will assess your knowledge and understanding of social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology

**Psychology in context (Paper 2):** this will assess your knowledge and understanding of approaches, biopsychology and research methods

**Issues and options in psychology (Paper 3):** this will assess your knowledge and understanding of issues and debates, cognition and development, schizophrenia and addiction

**These papers are all worth an equal amount of the A level, and each one is taken at the end of Year 13. The papers are all 2 hours long and they are include a range of questions, including multiple choice, scenario, comparative and essay questions.**

The following work requires reading and researching, and some of the concepts might be challenging to understand at first. Remember to take regular breaks, go back to the tasks after some time away, and try your best. Your Psychology teacher will go over the concepts with you in lessons, early in Year 12 to check your understanding.

You are now going to begin preparatory work relevant to all of the topics you will study in Psychology A level. This week’s work initially focuses on how humans and animals can be studied, before moving on to look at key approaches within psychology.

**Task 1**

From your study of sciences at GCSE, recap what you already know about how scientists plan, carry out and write up research.

Bullet point what you already know on a paper, under the title ‘Week 1, Task 1: How do scientists plan, carry out and write up research?’

**If you can, include the following:**

A definition of an aim

A definition of a hypothesis

A definition of a pilot study

A definition of a standardised procedure

The sections of a scientific report

**Extension:**

From your GCSE studies, or own knowledge, can you outline any research which has been carried out by researchers to explain behaviour? If so, add these to you work under the subheading ‘Extension.’

**Task 2**

Before we begin to look at the key researchers and approaches within psychology, click on the link below, review the information, and make a glossary of key terms. Some of these key terms you might be familiar with, and may well have included them in your notes for task 1, however, the benefit of writing them in a glossary is that this information can be placed at the front of your Psychology folder for reference later.

**Link:** <https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-research-methods.html>

In your own words, under the title ‘Week 1, Task 2: Glossary of Research Methods Terms’, create your own glossary which includes, brief descriptions of the terms in this template:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Key Term** | **Description** |
| Aim |  |
| Hypotheses |  |
| Volunteer sampling |  |
| Opportunity sampling |  |
| Random sampling |  |
| Systematic sampling |  |
| Stratified sampling |  |
| Independent variable |  |
| Dependent variable |  |
| Extraneous variable |  |
| Independent measures design |  |
| Repeated measures design |  |
| Matched pairs design |  |
| Lab experiment |  |
| Field experiment |  |
| Natural experiment |  |
| Case Study |  |
| Correlation |  |
| Interview |  |
| Questionnaire |  |
| Observations |  |
| Pilot Study |  |
| Content analysis |  |
| Meta-analysis |  |

**Extension:**

Click on the ‘further information’ links on the webpage to read more about these research methods. This will help you to start being able to evaluate them and be ready to discuss them during class discussions. Add to your work under the subheading ‘Extension’.

**Task 3**

We will now look at the key approaches and key researchers within psychology. These approaches are not only assessed in Paper 2, but are drawn upon when studying topics across all papers. These approaches and researchers provide us with various views, theories and ideas which have been put forward in an attempt to describe, understand and modify a range of behaviours, including memory, mental health disorders and children’s behaviour.

These approaches are very important and will provide you with a firm foundation in psychology by introducing you to key assumptions, methods and research within the following fields. The key approaches are:

Biological psychology – this focuses on the idea that we are genetically predisposed to behave in a particular way and also considers the effect of brain trauma on behaviour.

Cognitive psychology – this focuses on how our thoughts are processed and ultimately determine our responses and also considers the effect of environment on how we process events.

Behavioural psychology – this focuses on the idea that we learn how to behaviour from experiences, consequences and other people.

Humanistic psychology – this focuses on the idea that in order to be fulfilled as humans we must fulfil our full potential and we have different levels of needs which must be met.

Psychodynamic psychology - this focuses on the effect of early childhood experiences on how our personality develops, as well as the role the unconscious plays in our behaviour.

None of these approaches are perfect, they each have their own ways of describing, explaining and modifying behaviours (we will look at each one in more detail next week). We must consider each approach in terms of how well it can explain human behaviour and if there is one approach which seems to be the most appropriate. As psychology is still a relatively young science, we do not have all the answers or a firm set of agreed theories, and so this is why we continue to consider a range of possibilities when trying to understand human behaviour.

Some of the approaches have key researchers linked to them which you must be confident in referring to. These key researchers are listed below:

Pavlov (Behavioural psychology)

Skinner (Behavioural psychology)

Bandura (Behavioural psychology)

Maslow (Humanistic psychology)

Rogers (Humanistic psychology)

Freud (Psychodynamic psychology)

**You are now going to make six factsheets (one for each researcher).**

For each key researcher, complete the reading and watch the clips to learn more about them (see links below). You can also use the internet to conduct your own research on these researchers.

Then you need to make a factsheet (minimum of 1 side of A4, maximum of 2 sides of A4) for each researcher, which includes the key terms listed next to their name. Use the title: Task 3: Factsheet for (insert researcher’s name).

Your factsheets can include images, as well as text, so this is a chance to be creative. Each factsheet should answer the questions below, however, how you present the information is your choice. To make your factsheet useful for you, think about how you learn and the sorts of resources you found useful when studying your GCSE courses.

**Each factsheet must include (you can of course include more information):**

Who the researcher was (some background information about them)

What their research aimed to investigated

Where/How they conducted their research

Which approach the researcher supports/investigates

A summary of their findings and the theory/idea/concepts they proposed

Definitions of key terms

**Extension:**

Include information about how the ideas of the researcher can be used to modify behaviour

**Links/Key terms:**

Pavlov (classical conditioning, neutral stimulus, conditioned stimulus, unconditioned stimulus, conditioned response, unconditioned response, association)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvVaTy8mQrg>

Skinner (reinforcement, punishment, operant conditioning)

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/operant-conditioning.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvVaTy8mQrg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLaa8cgljKk>

Bandura (social learning theory, attention, retention, motivation, capability, bobo doll, role model, vicarious reinforcement)

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

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/bobo-doll.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zerCK0lRjp8>

Maslow (hierarchy of needs, self-actualisation)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQJwE6yg6cY>

Rogers (congruence, unconditional positive regard)

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/carl-rogers.html>

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

Freud (psychoanalysis, psychosexual stages, iceberg analogy, unconscious, defence mechanisms)

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i7DvpnOHlM>

**Task 4**

Now you need to complete the questions below. You should write in full sentences. Try to complete these questions without your factsheets in front of you (review them before you start the questions). Doing them without the factsheets in front of you will give you an opportunity to see how much information you have retained and understood. These questions will be marked by your teacher.

You do not need to write the questions out. Write your answers on paper under the title ‘Comprehension Questions Week 1.’

**Questions**

1. Explain the difference between positive and negative reinforcement, using examples.
2. Outline two similarities and two differences between the research/ideas of Skinner and Pavlov.
3. Outline two key terms which were proposed by Rogers.
4. Who proposed the term ‘self-actualisation’ and what does it mean?
5. Outline the iceberg analogy and state which researcher proposed this idea. You may draw a diagram if you wish.
6. Which three researchers support the idea that behaviour is learnt from the environment?
7. Outline what Freud meant by defence mechanisms, using an example.
8. Explain what is meant by vicarious reinforcement, using an example.
9. Which type of experiment was conducted by Skinner and Pavlov?
10. Which key researcher used a controlled observation to carry out their research?
11. Briefly outline Freud’s psychosexual stages of development.
12. What is a role model and which researcher believed these individuals are important when trying to understand human behaviour?
13. Summarise Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. You can do this as a diagram if you wish.
14. Which researcher discovered their theory by accident? Explain how you know this.
15. Chose one of the researchers and outline how they would explain a person having a phobia or spiders.