

# A Level Psychology Transition Booklet



This pack contains information about A Level Psychology and provides a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start the course in September. Please use this during the summer term and the summer holidays to prepare for your A Level course.



## **Please note the compulsory summer work which starts on page 3**

**About the course:** The specification we teach is produced by AQA. The unit code is 7182 and a full copy of this specification and other useful information is available at:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>

### **The course:**

The course consists of the following compulsory topics

1. Social Influence
2. Memory
3. Attachment
4. Psychopathology
5. Approaches in psychology
6. Biopsychology
7. Research Methods
8. Issues and Debates in Psychology

It will also consist of one topic from each of the option groups

Option 1- Relationships, gender or cognition and development

Option 2- Schizophrenia, Eating behaviour or Stress

Option 3- Aggression, Forensic Psychology or Addiction

### **Examination:**

The examination is entirely exam based and no coursework will be completed. Each component is worth 33% of the final grade.

## Compulsory Summer Work

### **Task 1: Getting to know the famous psychological research of the last 100 years**

Your first set of activities will require you to do some internet research to learn about some of the most famous psychological research of the last 60 years. On the website you have been given you will find written information and, in some cases, a video about each piece of research.

For each piece of research listed below you should complete a summary of the research on the following pages. When looking at psychology studies/experiments it is always important to consider three things:

- How did the psychology carry out their research?
  - What methods did they use?
  - Who and how many participants took part?
  - What did they get them to do?
- What were the findings of the study/experiment?
  - What data was collected?
  - How many/what % of participants responded in what way?
  - What did they observe participants doing?
- What does this study tell us about human behaviour?
  - Given the results, what have we learned about human behaviour from the research?

You should use this website:

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

1. Milgram's study of obedience
2. Zimbardo's prison experiment
3. Bandura's Bobo doll experiment
4. Harlow's monkey study
5. Asch's study of conformity
6. Loftus and Palmer misleading information study

### **Task 2: Maths Skills**

10% of marks across the psychology A-level will involve mathematical content. Most of the maths skills you will be asked to demonstrate you will have already learnt for GCSE maths but it is important that you keep practising these skills over the holidays.

Below is a list of all the maths skills you will be asked to use in psychology. You should practise some of these skills for yourself and bring your notes in September.

| <b>Mathematical skills</b>  | <b>Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of AS Psychology</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Arithmetic and numerical computation</b>                                       |   |
| Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form.                       | For example, converting data in standard form from a results table into decimal form in order to construct a pie chart.   |
| Use ratios, fractions and percentages.  | For example, calculating the percentages of cases that fall into different categories in an observation study.  |
| Estimate results.   | For example, commenting on the spread of scores for a set of data, which would require estimating the range.  |
| <b>Handling data</b>  |   |
| Use an appropriate number of significant figures.                                 | For example, expressing a correlation coefficient to two or three significant figures.  |
| Find arithmetic means.  | For example, calculating the means for two conditions using raw data from a class experiment.   |
| Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms. | For example, selecting and sketching an appropriate form of data display for a given set of data.   |
| Understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.              | For example, explaining how a random or stratified sample could be obtained from a target population.   |
| Understand the terms mean, median and mode.                                       | For example, explaining the differences between the mean, median and mode and selecting which measure of central tendency is most appropriate for a given set of data.          |
| Use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables.            | For example, plotting two variables from an investigation on a scatter diagram and identifying the pattern as a positive correlation, a negative correlation or no correlation. |
| Make order of magnitude calculations.   | For example, estimating the mean test score for a large number of participants on the basis of the total overall score.   |
| Know the characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.                      | For example, being presented with a set of scores from an experiment and being asked to indicate the position of the mean (or median, or mode).                                 |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Understand measures of dispersion, including standard deviation and range. | For example, explaining why the standard deviation might be a more useful measure of dispersion for a given set of scores, eg where there is an outlying score.                          |
| Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data.      | For example, explaining how a given qualitative measure (for example, an interview transcript) might be converted into quantitative data.  |
| Understand the difference between primary and secondary data.              | For example, stating whether data collected by a researcher dealing directly with participants is primary or secondary data.   |
| <b>Algebra</b>   |  |
| Understand and use the symbols: =, <, <<, >>, >, $\alpha$ , $\sim$ .       | For example, expressing the outcome of an inferential test in the conventional form by stating the level of significance at the 0.05 level or 0.01 level by using symbols appropriately. |
| <b>Graphs</b>  |  |
| Translate information between graphical, numerical and algebraic forms.    | For example, using a set of numerical data (a set of scores) from a record sheet to construct a bar graph.   |
| Plot two variables from experimental or other data.                        | For example, sketching a scatter diagram using two sets of data from a correlational investigation.  |

### **Task 3: Glossary**

Psychology is a new subject for you – and there is therefore a whole new language and set of key terms to learn.

Please find the meanings of the words listed below. These are just some of the new terms you will be using in one of our first topics. Be careful to look for Psychology definitions!

| <b>Key term</b>         | <b>Definition</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Psychology              |                   |
| Introspection           |                   |
| Classical conditioning  |                   |
| Operant conditioning    |                   |
| Vicarious reinforcement |                   |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Mediational processes |  |
| Cognitive             |  |
| Schema                |  |
| Inference             |  |
| Evolution             |  |
| The unconscious       |  |
| Id                    |  |
| Ego                   |  |
| Superego              |  |
| Self-actualisation    |  |
| Congruence            |  |
| Free will             |  |
| Reductionism          |  |
| Determinism           |  |
| Nature                |  |
| Nurture               |  |
| Holism                |  |

## Reading Challenge

During your A-level course we expect you to read around and beyond the topic. This can include academic articles like the ones within this pack but can also include reading fiction, watching films and documentaries or listening to podcasts.

Listed below are some suggestions of resources you could access before and during the course.

This is an optional (but recommended) challenge to do before the course begins. Once you have read/watched/listened to something relating to Psychology (feel free to find a resource of your own!) then please complete the review using the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=HPQIAJ8IMUG9Dsn0I8M74FEgx3K5tQ5Og-gjwfSVFYxUN1Y2UDJTTVBWMFhNUUVKrk9RSEpYVEpQTC4u>



### Books:

***Lucifer Effect* by Zimbardo** - Examines how the human mind has the capacity to be infinitely caring or selfish, kind or cruel, creative or destructive.

***The Psychopath Test* by Jon Ronson** - What if society wasn't fundamentally rational, but was motivated by insanity? This thought sets Jon Ronson on an utterly compelling adventure into the world of madness.

***The Interpretation of Dreams* by Lucien Freud** - Freud is acknowledged as the founder of psychoanalysis, the key to unlocking the human mind, a task which has become essential to man's survival in the twentieth century, as science and technology have rushed ahead of our ability to cope with their consequences.

***Elephants on Acid* by Alex Boese** - Have you ever wondered if a severed head retains consciousness long enough to see what happened to it? And what would happen if you were to give an elephant the largest ever single dose of LSD? The chances are that someone, somewhere has conducted a scientific experiment to find out...'

***The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat* by Oliver Sacks** - In his most extraordinary book, Oliver Sacks recounts the stories of patients lost in the bizarre, apparently inescapable world of neurological disorders. These are case studies of people who have lost their memories and with them the greater part of their pasts; whose limbs have become alien; who are afflicted and yet are gifted with uncanny artistic or mathematical talents.

***Opening Skinner's Box* by Lauren Slater** - In *Opening Skinner's Box*, Lauren Slater sets out to investigate the twentieth century through a series of ten fascinating, witty and sometimes shocking accounts of its key psychological experiments.



***Obedience to Authority by Stanley Milgram*** - From the Holocaust to Vietnam and Iraq, "Obedience to Authority" goes some way towards explaining how ordinary people can commit the most horrific of crimes if placed under the influence of a malevolent authority.

***The Heretics Adventures with the Enemies of Science by Will Storr*** - Will Storr goes on a tour of Holocaust sites with David Irving and a band of neo-Nazis, experiences his own murder during 'past-life regression' hypnosis, takes part in a mass homeopathic overdose, and investigates a new disease affecting tens of thousands of people - a disease that doesn't actually exist.

***Brainwash - The Secret History of Mind Control by Dominic Streatfeild*** - With access to formerly classified documentation and interviewees from MI5, MI6, the CIA, the US Army and British Intelligence Corps, BRAINWASH traces the evolution of the world's most secret psychological procedure, from its origins in the Cold War to the height of today's war on terror

#### **Documentaries:**

The Truth About Sleep: We are one of the most sleep-deprived countries in the world. In The Truth About Sleep, insomniac Michael Mosley finds out what happens if we don't get enough sleep and looks at surprising solutions to help us get more.

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x66hear>

Horizon Is your brain male or female? - Dr Michael Mosley and Prof Alice Roberts investigate whether male and female brains really are wired differently.

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2702un>

100 Humans - One hundred hardy souls from diverse backgrounds participate in playful experiments exploring age, sex, happiness and other aspects of being human. **You will need Netflix to watch this one.**

**Films – all of these films are available to rent/buy on PrimeVideo and/or Youtube Movies. Please make sure you ask your parents before you access them:**

#### **The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015).**

Useful for: Social Influence, research methods

Plot: In 1971, twenty-four male students are selected to take on randomly assigned roles of prisoners and guards in a mock prison situated in the basement of the Stanford psychology building.

#### **12 Angry Men (1957)**

Useful for: Aggression, social influence

Plot: A diverse group of 12 jurors deliberates the fate of an 18-year-old Latino accused of murdering his father. As a lone dissenting juror tries to convince the others that the case is not as open-and-shut as it appears, individual prejudices and preconceptions about the trial emerge.

#### **One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest (1975)**

Useful for: Psychopathology, forensic psychology, treatments

Plot: Randle McMurphy has a criminal past. To escape his most current prison sentence, he pleads insanity so that he can be sent to a mental institution where he thinks he can serve his sentence





more comfortably than in jail. Upon admittance, he rallies the other patients into rebellion against the oppressive Nurse Ratched.

### **A Beautiful Mind (2001)**

Useful for: Psychopathology

Plot: Based on the life of mathematical genius and Nobel Laureate John Forbes Nash, who suffers from severe mental illness, this film won four Academy Awards including Best Picture.

### **Rain Man (1988)**

Useful for: Attachment, psychopathology

Plot: "Rain Man" is the story of a hustler, Charlie Babbit, and his brother, Raymond, an autistic savant unknown to Charlie who is living in an institution. When the brothers' father dies and leaves his fortune in trust to Raymond, Charlie sets out on a scheme to gain custody of Raymond and control of the money during a classic cross-country road trip.

### **Getting ready for Psychology**

You will have free access to an online textbook for the course so there is no need to purchase your own. However, some learners do like to have their own copy of the textbook, or revision guide version so if you would like to purchase one please make sure it is this one:

**AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS Student Book: 2nd Edition Paperback** by Cara Flanagan (Author), Matt Jarvis (Author), Rob Liddle (Author)

Other resources that are useful to have for September include:

- An A4 large ring binder
- Plastic wallets
- Sticky labels
- Highlighters
- Pens and coloured pens
- Lined paper

### **Expectations and Workload**

We are delighted you have chosen to study Psychology. You can expect well-planned and resourced lessons delivered by teachers who genuinely want to see you achieve your potential. In return we expect you to arrive promptly and properly equipped to all lessons. You will also be expected to use your private study time in an organised and effective way to supplement and reinforce what you have learnt in class and conduct regular retrieval practice (we will show you how!). **Simply turning up to most of the lessons will not be enough to secure your target grade.** The work you do outside of your lessons will have a very significant impact on your results. Above all else, we expect you to display *enthusiasm* and *passion* for Psychology.

I look forward to seeing you in September!

Mrs Lowdell

[r.Lowdell@woottonparkschool.org.uk](mailto:r.Lowdell@woottonparkschool.org.uk)

