

A-Level
Psychology
Transition Activities



What is psychology?

Psychology as a science

So, you want to study Psychology? But do you *really* know what it is and even more importantly maybe what it isn't.

Activity 1 (Mandatory)

What is Psychology? Research this question and write a short paragraph or make a mind map about what Psychology *is*. You may additionally want to include what psychology *is not*.

Is Psychology a science? It is often debated whether Psychology is a 'science' or not. Using different *credible* sources, find at least two arguments that support both points of view.

Yes, it is

No it is not

Sources – write down all the sources of information you have used for Activity 1 here:

Note Taking

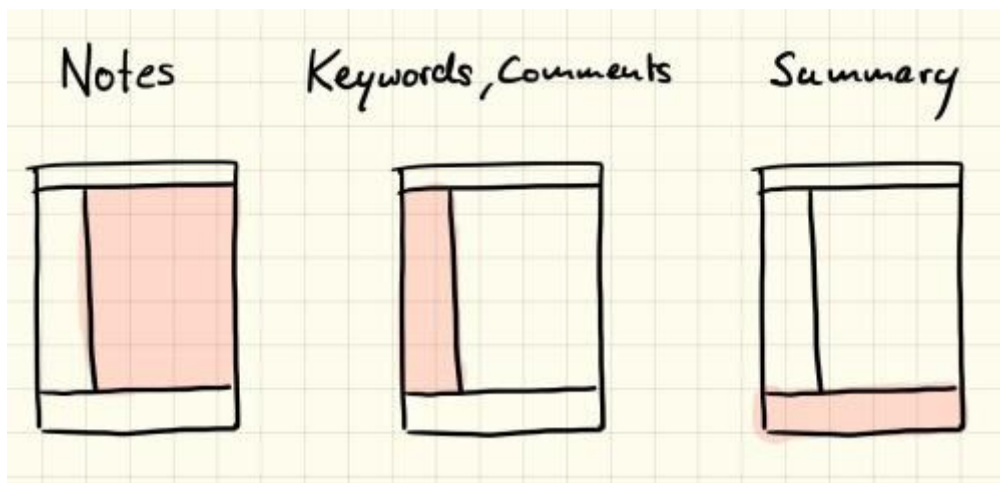
Study Skills

Research, reading and note making are essential skills for A level Psychology. You are going to practice producing 'Cornell Notes' to summarise some of the TED talks you have listened to.

Activity 2 (Mandatory)

Choose **two** TED talks from the list on the next page and make notes in the following format:

Divide your page into three sections as below:



- You take notes during the lesson
- You write the key words/ questions after the lesson
- You summarise the topic in a few sentences at the bottom

Still need help? For more information watch this 3 minute video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

TED talks

Inspiring psychological talks

These interesting TED talks can give you a quick insight into some fascinating topics in contemporary Psychology.



10 myths about psychology, debunked

How much of what you think about your brain is actually wrong? In this whistle stop tour of dis-proved science, Ben Ambridge walks through 10 popular ideas about psychology that have been proven wrong — and uncovers a few surprising truths about how our brains really work.



Are we in control of our own decisions?

Behavioral economist Dan Ariely, the author of Predictably Irrational, uses classic visual illusions and his own counterintuitive (and sometimes shocking) research findings to show how we're not as rational as we think when we make decisions.



The surprising science of happiness

Dan Gilbert, author of "Stumbling on Happiness," challenges the idea that we'll be miserable if we don't get what we want. Our "psychological immune system" lets us feel truly happy even when things don't go as planned.



How reliable is your memory?

Psychologist Elizabeth Loftus studies memories. More precisely, she studies false memories, when people either remember things that didn't happen or remember them differently from the way they really were.



The paradox of choice

Psychologist Barry Schwartz takes aim at a central tenet of western societies: freedom of choice. In Schwartz's estimation, choice has made us not freer but more paralyzed, not happier but more dissatisfied.



The psychology of evil

Psychology isn't all happiness and flourishing, of course. The discipline also delves into the darker sides of human nature and what drives us toward unethical or even downright evil behaviour. That's the topic of this talk by 'superstar' Zimbardo in which "he shares insights and graphic unseen photos from the Abu Ghraib trials." But don't worry, it's not all gloom and doom. He also 'talks about the flip side: how easy it is to be a hero, and how we can rise to the challenge.'



Everything we think we know about addiction is wrong

What really causes addiction — to everything from drugs to smart-phones? And how can we overcome it? Johann Hari has seen our current methods fail first hand, as he has watched loved ones struggle to manage their addictions. He started to wonder why we treat addicts the way we do — and if there might be a better way.

**When domestic violence victims don't leave**

Leslie Morgan Steiner was in "crazy love" -- that is, madly in love with a man who routinely abused her and threatened her life. Steiner tells the story of her relationship, correcting misconceptions many people hold about victims of domestic violence, and explaining how we can all help break the silence.

**The mysterious workings of the teenage brain**

Cognitive neuroscientist Sarah-Jayne Blakemore compares the prefrontal cortex in adolescents to that of adults, to show us how typically "teenage" behaviour is caused by the growing and developing brain, in this TED Talk.

**Why we love, why we cheat**

Anthropologist Helen Fisher takes on a tricky topic – love – and explains its evolution, its biochemical foundations and its social importance. She closes with a warning about the potential disaster inherent in antidepressant abuse.

**The riddle of experience v memory**

If you're looking for highly credentialed TED speakers, Kahneman's résumé won't fail to impress. A Nobel Prize-winning psychologist and bestselling author, Kahneman uses his 20 minutes on the TED stage to explain that there are actually two flavours of happiness: the kind we experience in the moment and the kind we experience in our memories. Maximizing your own well-being in life means keeping both in mind.

**Flow, the secret to happiness**

In this talk, legendary psychologist Csikszentmihalyi dares to ask one of life's biggest questions: What makes us happy? The answer isn't fame or money, he insists, but flow -- that lost-in-time feeling you get when you focus intensely on work you're good at.

TED Ideas worth spreading

Topics

Introductory research

A-level Psychology is a completely new subject for you. It is *really* important you know what you are going to be studying on the course. Read the following information on the introductory topics (Paper 1) and do some wider reading/ watching if you wish.

Activity 3 (Optional)

Watch the crash course videos suggested below for each topic and make 3 key learning points from each video.

Social Influence

Humans behave very differently in groups than when they are alone; the psychology of social influence tries to unravel the processes which cause this to occur. Why do people conform? Why do they obey orders from others, even if they disagree or do not wish to comply? How do some individuals have an impact on others even if their views are not the views of the majority? How does social change occur? These are all questions which Psychologists have tried to answer.

Crash Course on YouTube 'Social influence' –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGxGDdQnC1Y>

Key Learning Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Memory

We all remember things all the time – but do you know how you do it? Becoming aware of memory processes can help us to make our memories better and might even be able to help you revise more effectively! This topic includes the study of eyewitness testimony and the processes which police use to extract the best evidence possible from their witnesses.

Crash Course on YouTube 'How me make memories' -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSycdlx-C48>

Key Learning Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Psychopathology

What is meant by mental illness? To answer that we first need to answer a more difficult question – what is meant by mental health? In the broad field of human behaviours, which behaviours should be classified as 'sane' or 'insane', and which should be medicated or otherwise treated? Perhaps we shouldn't treat any mental illness and embrace the diversity of human experience? This topic attempts to answer some of these questions, defining 'abnormal' mental experience and looking at different ways of approaching psychopathology.

Crash Course on YouTube 'Psychological disorders' –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuhJ-GkRRQc>

Key Learning Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Attachment

This topic takes a look at our earliest and perhaps most influential relationship – that with our mother. How does this bond form, and why is it so influential later in life? What happens if that bond is weak or broken, or if a mother simply cannot care for her infant? Can we overcome these early setbacks to go on to live a life full of love? Can this field of study tell us why some people appear better-prepared than others for adult romantic relationships?

Crash Course on YouTube 'Monkeys and morality' -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcQg1EshfIE>

Key Learning Points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

All topics in AQA A-level Psychology

- Paper 1** Social influence
Memory
Psychopathology
Attachment
- Paper 2** Biopsychology
Research Methods
Approaches
- Paper 3** Issues and debates
Aggression
Schizophrenia
Relationships

Research Methods

in Psychology

Research methods are an integral part of all topics that we study in Psychology and they also make up **25%** of the overall marks in the A-level examinations.

This piece of work is your opportunity to show that you possess the independent, self-directed study skills required of a successful A-level student.

Psychologists use a variety of research methods to find out about human behaviour. These include:

Experimental Methods	Non-experimental methods
Lab experiments	Self-report
Field experiments	Observations
Natural experiments	Case studies
Quasi experiments	Correlational studies

Activity 4: For each method you must find:

- a definition
- two strengths
- two weaknesses
- a famous example e.g. Asch's line experiment

You can choose to present the data how you like. You may decide to do a table on Word, make a mind map or handwritten notes for example.

These websites will be useful:

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/research-methods.html>

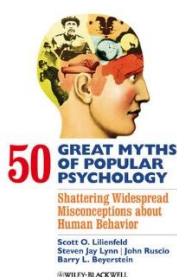
<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>



Books

If you want to get ahead

These books are a great starting point for you to understand what psychology is and gain insight to the importance of the scientific research which underpins Psychology. You may want to just have a read of a chapter rather than the whole book.

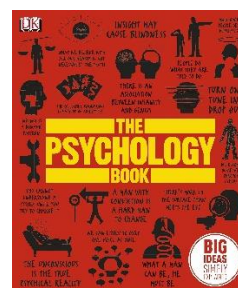


50 great myths of popular psychology

...uses popular myths as a vehicle for helping students and laypersons to distinguish science from pseudoscience. Uses common myths as a vehicle for exploring how to distinguish factual from fictional claims in popular psychology such as 'opposites attract', 'people use only 10% of their brains', and 'handwriting reveals your personality'.

The psychology book

...explains more than 100 of the most important big ideas and ground-breaking theories in the field of psychology in a clear and simple way, this is the perfect introduction to the history of psychology and understanding human behaviour.



Activity 5 (Optional)

If you read either of the books (or chapters from the books) then please write some brief notes on the key points which can be handed to your teacher.

Equipment

Come prepared in September

Effective study skills are vital to your success in A-level Psychology. You will have lots to read and remember and you need to be able to make effective and succinct notes. Keeping organised is a must, so be prepared with the following equipment in September.

- A4 Lever Arch File (just for psychology with subject dividers)
- Lined A4 paper
- Blue or black pens
- Green pen
- Highlighters
- Ruler
- Psychology transition work

