AP Psychology Syllabus

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

CR1	The teacher and students have access to college-level resources, including a recently published (within the last 10 years) college-level textbook(s) in print or electronic format.	See page: 2
CR2	The course provides opportunities to develop student understanding of the required content outlined in each of the five units described in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.	See pages: 3-8
CR3	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 1: Concept Application.	See pages: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
CR4	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 2: Research Methods & Design.	See page: 3,6,7,10
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 3: Data Interpretation.	See page: 7,10
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 4: Argumentation.	See page: 4,5,6,7,8,10,11

COURSE DESCRIPTION

AP Psychology is a full-year, college-level course designed to prepare students for the Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology exam. The goal of this course is to introduce students to the vast field of psychology and to understand its connections and application to everyday life.

AP Psychology explores psychology as the scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. Students will learn about key contributors to the field of psychology, psychological perspectives and theories, and the phenomena psychologists study and how they are studied. In the context of understanding and applying psychological approaches, students will learn about concepts and theories related to the biological bases of behavior and how people sense and perceive the world. They will explore human development, learning processes, motivation, thinking and intelligence, social psychology, and the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. By examining the research, theories, and analyses that have formed the knowledge base of the discipline, students will critically engage with topics throughout the course, evaluating claims and evidence, to understand and appreciate the breadth of areas of psychological study.

By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to find ways to apply psychology to their own lives and to helping others. They will understand the major milestones throughout the human lifespan and appreciate that the world can be seen from multiple perspectives. Students will leave the course having enhanced their scientific reasoning skills and be better aware of instances of bias and faulty reasoning. Ultimately, students will demonstrate a mastery of psychology's main concepts and develop skills and strategies for learning and thinking that are applicable beyond the study of psychology itself.

RESOURCES

These materials are required for this course:

- Spielman, Rose M., William J. Jenkins, and Marilyn D. Lovett. *Psychology 2e*. 2nd ed. Houston: OpenStax, 2020. https://openstax.org/details/psychology-2e CR1
- College Board AP® Classroom and website for AP Psychology. Teachers and students are encouraged to make use of resources provided through the AP® website. Students may access additional instructional supports, complete progress checks, and take practice exams. http://apcentral.collegeboard.com.

COURSE CONTENT

The AP Psychology curriculum introduces students to the key concepts and topics of psychology across five units:

- Unit 1: Biological Bases of Behavior
- Unit 2: Cognition
- Unit 3: Development and Learning
- Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality
- Unit 5: Mental and Physical Health

COURSE OUTLINE CR2

Unit 1: Biological Bases of Behavior

Chapter 1.1: Scientific Foundations of Psychology

What is psychology? This chapter introduces students to the discipline of psychology, its scientific basis in research, and the perspectives of the major approaches to psychology. Research methodology, experiments, and analysis of statistical data are explained, as well as ethical guidelines informing the study of psychology.

Lessons

- What Is Psychology?
- Psychology's Founders
- Psychology's Seven Modern Approaches
- Psychology's Domains and Careers
- How Do Psychologists Study Behavior and Mental Processes?
- How Do Psychologists Use the Experimental Method?
- Find the Flaw
- How Do Psychologists Use Statistics?
- Why Are Ethics Important in Research?
- Writing the Free Response

Key Activities

- Contributors to Psychology Timeline (Practice 1) CR3
- Design Your Own Experiment (Practice 2) CR4

Chapter 1.2: Psychology and Biology

Students are introduced to the biological bases of the behaviors that psychology studies. The chapter covers the endocrine system, the nervous system and neural activity, and the brain and the tools psychologists use to study the brain. Students will also explore the influences of heredity and environment, and the states of sleeping and dreaming.

Lessons

- How Do Nature and Nurture Interact? (Topic 1.1)
- The Body's Speedy Communication System: The Nervous System (Topic 1.2, 1.3)
- The Body's Slow Communication System: The Endocrine System
- Neurotransmitters and How Drugs Affect Them
- How Do Drugs Affect the Nervous System?
- Functions of the Hindbrain, Midbrain, and Limbic System (Topic 1.4)
- Functions of the Cerebral Cortex
- Tools for Studying the Brain and Brain Plasticity
- Sleep and Dreams (Topic 1.5)

Key Activities

- Endocrine Amusement Park (Practice 1) CR3
- Zombie Brain (Practice 1) CR3

Chapter 1.3: Sensation and Perception

In this chapter, students learn about the principles of sensation and perception, plus the biological anatomy and processes through which our senses are perceived.

Lessons

- Principles of Sensation (Topic 1.6)
- Principles of Perception (Topic 2.1)
- Attention
- Visual Anatomy
- Visual Perception (Topic 2.1)
- Auditory Sensation and Perception (Topic 1.6)
- Chemical Senses, Touch, and Pain (Topic 1.6)
- Sensory Interaction (Topic 1.6)
- Sensory Impairments (Topic 1.6)

Key Activities

- Photos: Perception Cues (Practice 1) CR3
- Sensory Disorders Touch Box (Practice 1) CR3
- Teenagers and Sleep (Practice 4) CR6

Unit 2: Cognition

Chapter 2.1: Cognitive Psychology

This chapter begins with a thorough examination of the processes and biological bases of memory. Next, students are introduced to thinking and problem solving, including biases in thinking. Finally, students learn about intelligence, intelligence testing, and language acquisition.

Lessons

- Introduction to Memory (Topic 2.3, Topic 3.9)
- Encoding (Topic 2.4)
- Storage Part 1 (Topic 2.5)
- Storage Part 2 (Topic 2.5)
- Biological Bases for Memory
- Retrieval (Topic 2.6)
- Forgetting and Memory Distortion (Topic 2.7)
- Thinking and Problem Solving (Topic 2.2)
- Biases and Errors in Thinking
- Introduction to Intelligence (Topic 2.8)
- Is Intelligence One, Three, or Many? (Topic 2.8)
- History of Intelligence Testing (Topic 2.8)
- Principles of Test Construction

Key Activities

- Case Study: Ronald Cotton and Memory Distortion (Practice 1, Practice 4) CR3 CR6
- Which Theory of Intelligence Is Most Accurate? (Practice 1) CR3

Unit 3: Development and Learning

Chapter 3.1: Developmental Psychology

This chapter explores the psychology of human development across the lifespan, examining physical, social, cognitive, and moral development from childhood through old age. Gender and sexual orientation are discussed.

Lessons

- The Lifespan and Physical Development in Childhood (Topic 3.2, Topic 3.1)
- Social Development in Childhood (Topic 3.6)
- Cognitive Development in Childhood (Topic 3.4)
- Language (Topic 3.5)
- Adolescent Development (Topic 3.2, 3.4, 3.6)
- Adulthood and Aging (Topic 3.2, 3.4, 3.6)
- Moral Development
- Gender and Sexual Orientation (Topic 3.3)

Key Activities

- Who Am I? Identity (Practice 1) CR3
- Slides: Timeline of My Life (Practice 2) CR4

Chapter 3.2: Learning

Students are introduced to learning and explore both classical and operant conditioning. Social and cognitive factors that influence learning are discussed.

Lessons

- Introduction to Learning
- Classical Conditioning (Topic 3.7)
- Applications of Classical Conditioning (Topic 3.7)
- Operant Conditioning (Topic 3.8)
- Applications of Operant Conditioning (Topic 3.8)

- Biological and Cognitive Factors in Learning (Topic 3.9)
- Observational Learning

Key Activities

- Classical Conditioning Gallery (Practice 1) CR3
- Applying Operant Conditioning (Practice 1) CR3
- Debating Parenting Techniques (Practice 4) CR6

Semester Review and Exam

Students will review the previous topics and take an exam.

Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality

Chapter 4.1: Social Psychology

This chapter explores the realm of social psychology, where individuals interact. Concepts include attribution theory, attitudes, conformity, compliance, obedience, and group influences. Students learn about bias, prejudice, and discrimination, as well as interpersonal attraction.

Lessons

- Attribution Theory and Person Perception (Topic 4.1)
- Attitude Formation and Attitude Change (Topic 4.2)
- Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience (Topic 4.3)
- Group Influences on Behavior and Mental Processes 1 (Topic 4.3)
- Group Influences on Behavior and Mental Processes 2 (Topic 4.3)
- Bias, Prejudice, and Discrimination (Topic 4.3)
- Altruism and Aggression (Topic 4.3)
- Interpersonal Attraction (Topic 4.3)

Key Activities

- Groupthink in the Real World (Practice 2) CR4
- Implicit Bias (Practice 1) CR3

Chapter 4.2: Motivation, Emotion, and Personality

Theories of motivation and emotion are introduced along with an explanation of stress and methods of coping. A variety of theoretical approaches to understanding personality are discussed, as well as tools used to measure personality.

Lessons

- Motivation Concepts (Topic 4.6)
- Motivational Theories (Topic 4.6)
- Specific Topics in Motivation (Topic 4.6)
- Theories of Emotion 1 (Topic 4.7)
- Theories of Emotion 2 (Topic 4.7)
- Stress and Coping
- Psychoanalytical Theory of Personality: Freud
- Psychodynamic Theories of Personality (Topic 4.4)
- Humanistic Theories of Personality (Topic 4.4)
- Trait Theories of Personality (Topic 4.5)
- Behavior and Social-Cognitive Theories of Personality (Topic 4.5)
- Measuring Personality 1
- Measuring Personality 2

Key Activities

- Facial Feedback Experiment (Practice 3) CR5
- Defense Mechanisms in Action (Practice 2) CR4
- Case Study: Stanford Prison Experiment (Practice 4) CR6

Unit 5: Mental and Physical Health

Chapter 5.1: Clinical Psychology

Students learn about the major groups of psychological disorders, along with historical and changing perspectives on the classification of disorders. A variety of treatments are introduced and their efficacy discussed.

Lessons

- Introduction to Psychological Disorders (Topic 5.1)
- Positive Psychology (Topic 5.2)
- Psychological Perspectives and Etiology of Disorders (Topic 5.3)
- Neurodevelopmental and Neurocognitive Disorders (Topic 5.4, Topic 3.9)
- Schizophrenic Spectrum Disorders (Topic 5.4)
- Anxiety and OCD-Related Disorders (Topic 5.4)

- Depressive and Bipolar Disorders (Topic 5.4)
- Trauma- and Stressor-Related, Dissociative, and Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders (Topic 5.4)
- Feeding and Eating, Substance and Addictive, and Personality Disorders (Topic 5.4)
- Psychodynamic and Humanistic Therapies (Topic 5.5)
- Behavior and Cognitive Therapies (Topic 5.5)
- Biomedical Therapies 1 (Topic 5.5)
- Biomedical Therapies 2 (Topic 5.5)
- Evaluating Therapy (Topic 5.5)

Key Activities

- Pros and Cons of Labels Case Study (Practice 1, Practice 4) CR3 CR6
- Pamphlet: Medication Treatment (Practice 2) CR4

Semester Review and Exam

Students will review the previous topics and take an exam.

Course Review and AP Practice

Students will review the course and prepare for the AP Practice Exam.

SCIENCE PRACTICES

In this course, students will be introduced to four science practices that are essential to the study of psychology. Students will develop and apply these skills throughout the course lessons, activities, projects, and assessments.

- **Practice 1: Concept Application**
  - Apply psychological perspectives, theories, concepts, and research findings to a scenario.
  - Explain how cultural norms, expectations, and circumstances, as well as cognitive biases apply to behavior and mental processes.
- **Practice 2: Research Methods and Design**
  - Determine the type of research design(s) used in a given study.
  - Evaluate the appropriate use of research design elements in experimental methodology.
  - Evaluate the appropriate use of research design elements in non-experimental methodologies.
  - Evaluate whether a psychological research scenario followed appropriate ethical procedures.
- **Practice 3: Data Interpretation**
  - Identify psychology related concepts in descriptions or representations of data
  - Calculate and interpret measures of central tendency, variation, and percentile rank in a given data set.
  - Interpret quantitative or qualitative inferential data from a given table, graph, chart, figure, or diagram.
- **Practice 4: Argumentation**
  - Propose a defensible claim.
  - Provide reasoning that is grounded in scientifically derived evidence to support, refute, or modify an established or provided claim, or norm.

These practices are developed through a variety of lessons and activities, including:

- **Endocrine Amusement Park Project:** Students learn how the endocrine system affects behavior by designing an amusement park that models the anatomical parts of the endocrine system and their functions. Each park attraction is explained with a curator card connecting the ride or activity to endocrine anatomy, and all elements are joined in a digital, poster, or three-dimensional park model of the endocrine system. **(Practice 1)** CR3
- **Photos Perception Cues Project**: Students apply concepts of perception and sensory processing in analyzing an image. Each student selects a photograph or work of art to analyze, and then identifies and explains how five or more cues in the image are processed to perceive and understand the image. **(Practice 1)** CR3
- **Applying Operant Conditioning Project:** Students create an original example of operant conditioning based on Ivan Pavlov's classic experiment of conditioning dogs to salivate to the sound of a bell. Students develop an operant conditioning scenario and create a graphic with explanations showing the steps of conditioning. They identify the neutral, unconditioned, and

conditioned stimuli and responses at each step. **(Practice 1)** CR3

- **Case Study: Ronald Cotton and Memory Distortion Project**. Students examine Elizabeth Loftus's research resulting in the misinformation effect paradigm theory. Students apply the results and concepts of that research via a video case study about Ronald Cotton and eyewitness testimony, and to a reading on the case of Elizabeth Smart. Students will reflect on the validity of eyewitness testimony and the misconception of how it is used in criminal justice trials. Review other related eyewitness studies, such as the weapons-effect as well as others that don't. Then, students will examine the problems associated with wrongful convictions based on eyewitness testimony. **(Practice 2, Practice 4)** CR4 CR6
- **Timeline of My Life Project**. Students explore two studies on moral development: the research of Lawrence Kohlberg and of Carol Gilligan. Students select significant moments in their own lives involving a moral decision—selecting examples from childhood and adolescence—and analyze each in terms of the stages of Kohlberg's and Gilligan's theories. **(Practice 2)** CR4
- **Essay on Intelligence Project**. Students examine multiple intelligence studies that have resulted in major intelligence theories, including research by Spearman, Sternberg, and Gardner. First, students describe their understanding of intelligence prior to the course. Then, students describe which studies and theories align most with those initial views. Finally, they examine which research results have impacted their current understanding of intelligence and how those theories have supported, challenged, or modified their prior assumptions. **(Practice 2)** CR4
- **Facial Feedback Hypothesis Project:** Students conduct an experiment to replicate a study by Fritz Strack. Students work with at least six participants in two study groups who are shown at least four cartoons that the participants rate on a scale of 1–10 indicating how funny they believe them to be. Students analyze the findings to determine connections between facial expressions and associated emotions. **(Practice 3)** CR5
- **Research in Psychology Lessons:** In learning how psychologists conduct research, students proceed through a sequence of lessons that include direct instructional content, sequenced and interactive assessments, and quiz questions about the analysis and interpretation of data, as well as measures of validity and reliability. The sequence culminates by assessing students' ability to analyze and interpret quantitative data, including understanding numerical correlations, and calculating means and medians. Sequenced lessons include "How Do Psychologists Use the Experimental Method?" "Find the Flaw," and "How Do Psychologists Use Statistics?" **(Practice 3)** CR5
- **Measurements of Intelligence Lessons:** Students sequence through a pair of lessons about how intelligence has been tested and measured over time. Through the lesson content, videos, interactives, and assessments, students demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret quantitative data in the context of the history of intelligence testing. Sequenced lessons include "History of Intelligence Testing" and "Principles of Test Construction." **(Practice 3)** CR5
- **Teenagers and Sleep:** Students read an article on the importance of sleep. Then, they will conduct a personal study and keep a sleep log for two weeks. After the two weeks, students should calculate their data and discuss any patterns they noticed. Then, they will answer the prompt, "Using evidence from your research, make an argument on whether school start times be later for teens." **(Practice 4)** CR6

- **Debating Parenting Techniques:** Students engage in formal or formal argumentation on the issue of the effectiveness of certain parenting techniques. When learning about developmental psychology, Students research 2-3 parenting techniques (ie giving rewards, timeout to correct behavior) and use evidence to debate which technique is most effective. Sequenced lessons include "Operant Conditioning" and "Applications of Operant Conditioning." **(Practice 4)** CR6
- **Case Study: Stanford Experiment:** Students will read about the Standford Prison Experiment in their textbook. Then they will identify the methodological issues with the study and describe and evaluate the ethics of the experiment. In an argumentative essay, students will debate the merits, ethics, and criticism of the experiment. They should include the response to recent criticism of the experiment published by Zimbardo and other researchers. **(Practice 4)** CR6
- **Pros and Cons of Labels Case Study:** Using their own research, students will identify and list the benefits and drawbacks of labeling someone with a mental illness. Then, they will rate the benefits and drawbacks in order of significance of impact on the individual. After analyzing their responses, the student will write a brief argumentative essay that uses supporting evidence to explain their opinion. **(Practice 1, Practice 4)** CR3 CR6