

Year 11 Psychology Activities

Psychology is a subject that investigates us as human beings. It is a subject that requires a broad range of skills from scientific planning and investigation to reading and critically evaluating / debating to statistical analysis of data. These activities are designed to show you each aspect of Psychology to prepare you for the A Level.

Consolidation of GCSE studies:

Although you have not studied Psychology at GCSE you could prepare for the A level by:

- Reviewing your lessons and notes from Biology on the nervous system as this is relevant to Psychology.
- Making sure your maths skills are up to speed (particularly % increase and % decrease, mean, median, mode and range, ratios and probability, all charts and graphs and scattergrams). You will need all these.

Psychology is a subject that relates to 'real-life'.

Activity 1: Keep a scrapbook (digital or paper) of articles in the news that are linked to how people behave, how they think, what motivates them etc. Annotate each article with a summary of the main points and create a glossary of terms that are new to you. You should find at least one article per week.

Use the following sources:

www.bbc.co.uk

www.theguardian.com

www.thetimes.co.uk

www.independent.co.uk

<https://digest.bps.org.uk/>

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/highlights/peeps/>

Searches in the science, health, family and business sections may be useful for the newspaper links or use the search box and enter 'psychology'.

Psychology involves studying our amazing brain.

Activity 2: a. Research and make a table of notes on the following ways of studying the brain: MRI scan, fMRI scan, EEG and Post-Mortem. You will need to find out what these abbreviations mean first! Aim to include strengths and weaknesses of each method.

b. Create a drawing/picture of the brain. It can be a scientific drawing in cross section or even an artistic representation using any medium, digital or otherwise. Spend some time learning about the different parts of the brain and their function; it will really help you in your A level.

c. Visit the website www.livescience.com and read '10 things we learned about the brain in 2019'. Choose your three favourite and write a summary of each finding.

d. Watch these two TED talks on the structure and function of the brain

https://www.ted.com/talks/read_montague_what_we_re_learning_from_5_000_brains

https://www.ted.com/talks/henry_markram_a_brain_in_a_supercomputer

Psychology involves critically analysing evidence for different explanations of behaviour.

Activity 3: Investigate the question: 'are criminals born or made?' Aim to produce a 500-1000 word essay considering this question and weighing up **both sides** of the arguments and the evidence. The 'born' side of the argument (nature) suggests criminal behaviour is influenced by genetics or the brain, or nervous system malfunctions. The 'made' side of the argument (nurture) suggests that criminal behaviour is influenced by personality, dysfunctional thinking (cognition) or learning and environment. What will your conclusion be? In Psychology you have to give a measured conclusion based on the weight of the evidence for each side and not on personal opinion. You might like to include a case study of a serial killer or other famous criminal in your work, as an example.

A good source of explanations is www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-forensic.html

Psychology involves investigating human behaviour

Activity 4: Design a study to investigate whether there is an association or relationship (correlation) between time spent outdoors and happiness. Think about something you can do in 'lockdown'. You might use Microsoft or Google Forms, for example. To be able to do a correlation each participant in your study needs to provide you with 'time spent outdoors' and 'happiness' measured on a numerical scale (a score). You can then use a spreadsheet function on a computer to calculate the correlation between the two measures. You can interpret the correlation using this website <https://www.dummies.com/education/math/statistics/how-to-interpret-a-correlation-coefficient-r/>

Stretch and Challenge: Psychology requires lots of reading

Activity 5: Read one (or more) of the following books and write a review of no more than 250 words for each. They are quite tough, but very interesting.

'The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat' By Oliver Sacks

'The Brain; The Story of You' by Brian Eagleman

'Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole; Extraordinary Journeys into the Human Brain', by Allan Ropper and BD Burrell

For books on other topics in Psychology please ask.

Activity 6: Complete the free introductory online courses below:

'Starting with psychology'

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/psychology/starting-psychology/content-section-0?active-tab=content-tab>

'Learning how to Learn for youth'

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/learning-how-to-learn-youth/>

Feel free to ask for help if you need it or if you have any questions. Enjoy your first step into Psychology!