

Course Description

AP Psychology is a semester long, 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.

In addition to learning a great deal about psychology, the course emphasizes many concepts that form a foundation for further learning in both academic studies and later life. 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.

Course Objectives

The AP Psychology curriculum introduces students to the key concepts and topics of psychology across these subject areas:

- Scientific Foundation of Psychology
- Biological Bases of Behavior
- Sensation and Perception
- Learning
- Cognitive Psychology
- Developmental Psychology
- Motivation, Emotion, and Personality
- Clinical Psychology
- Social Psychology

The Units cover the breadth of content students should master to qualify for college credit and/or placement in the course. In addition, Units are divided into Topics, with each Unit consisting of 10–20 Topic areas. Each Topic is associated with one or more Learning Targets and an associated Skill, ensuring that course content sufficiently covers material via clear learning goals and the practice of related skills.

In this course, students will be introduced to three categories of skills that are essential to the study of

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

psychology. Students will develop and practice applying these skills throughout the course lessons, activities, projects, and assessments.

- **Skill Category 1: Concept Understanding**
 - Define, explain and apply concepts, behavior theories, and perspectives. **1**
 - Define and/or apply concepts.
 - Explain behavior in authentic context.
 - Apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.
- **Skill Category 2: Data Analysis**
 - Analyze and interpret quantitative data. **2**
- **Skill Category 3: Scientific Investigation**
 - Analyze psychological research studies. **3**

These skills 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. **(Skill 1)**
- **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. **(Skill 1)**
- **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. **(Skill 1)**
- **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. **(Skill 2)**
- **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?” **(Skill 2)**
- **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.” **(Skill 2)**
- **Case Study: Ronald Cotton and Memory Distortion Project.** Students examine Elizabeth Loftus’s research resulting in the misinformation effect paradigm theory. Students apply the

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

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. **(Skill 3)**

- **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. **(Skill 3)**
- **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. **(Skill 3)**

Resources

This course contains lessons and reviews that use these materials.

- Spielman, Rose M., William J. Jenkins, and Marilyn D. Lovett. *Psychology 2e*. 2nd ed. Houston: OpenStax, 2020. <https://openstax.org/details/psychology-2e>
- 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>.

Student Expectations

This course requires the same level of commitment from the student as a traditional classroom course.

Students are expected to spend approximately five to seven hours per week online on:

- interactive lessons that include a mixture of instructional videos and tasks.
- assignments in which students apply and extend learning in each lesson.
- assessments, including quizzes, tests, and cumulative exams.

Communication

Teachers will communicate with students regularly through discussions, emails, chats, and system announcements. Students will also communicate with classmates, either via online tools or face to face, to collaborate on projects, ask and answer questions in peer groups, and develop speaking and listening skills.

Grading Policy

Students will be graded on the work completed online and the work submitted electronically to the

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

teacher. The weighting for each category of graded activity is listed below:

Grading Category	Weight
Assignments	10%
Lesson quizzes	20%
Unit tests	20%
Projects	30%
Semester exams	20%

Scope and Sequence

When students log on to Edgenuity, they can view the entire course map—an interactive scope and sequence of all topics under study. The units of study are listed below:

Semester A	Semester B
• Scientific Foundation of Psychology	• Developmental Psychology
• Biological Bases of Behavior	• Motivation, Emotion, and Personality
• Sensation and Perception	• Clinical Psychology
• Learning	• Social Psychology
• Cognitive Psychology	• Semester review and exam
• Semester review and exam	• Course review and AP practice exams

Technology Requirements

All course materials are provided through the student portal. Students will become familiar with them through an orientation video and the student handbook. These resources are available within the Student Help Center, where students can also check the status of their operating system, processor speed, plug-ins and connection speed.

The course is designed for accessibility to all students. The system provides features and accommodations to meet the needs of ELL and students with Individualized Learning Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, and Section 508. These accommodations include addressing multiple learning styles, accommodations for assessments, video caption/transcripts, read-aloud and translation tools, and many other features/accommodations.

Course Outline

Unit 1: Scientific Foundations of Psychology

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

What is psychology? This unit 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.

Topics: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6

Learning Targets: 1.A, 1.B, 1.C, 1.D, 1.E, 1.F, 1.G, 1.H, 1.I, 1.J, 1.K, 1.L, 1.M, 1.N, 1.O

Skills: 1, 2, 3

Lessons

- What Is Psychology? 1.1 1.A 1
- Psychology's Founders 1.1 1.B 1
- Psychology's Seven Modern Approaches 1.1 1.C 1.D 1
- Psychology's Domains and Careers 1.1 1.E 1
- How Do Psychologists Study Behavior and Mental Processes? 1.2 1.F 1.G 3
- How Do Psychologists Use the Experimental Method? 1.3 1.H 1.I 1.J 3
- Find the Flaw 1.4 1.K 3
- How Do Psychologists Use Statistics? 1.5 1.L 1.M 2
- Why Are Ethics Important in Research? 1.6 1.N 1.O 1
- How to Write an Effective Free Response Answer

Projects

- Contributors to Psychology Timeline
- Design Your Own Experiment

Unit 2: Biological Bases of Behavior

Students are introduced to the biological bases of the behaviors that psychology studies. The unit 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.

Topics: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9

Learning Targets: 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D, 2.E, 2.F, 2.G, 2.H, 2.I, 2.J, 2.K, 2.L, 2.M, 2.N, 2.O, 2.P, 2.Q, 2.R, 2.S

Skills: 1, 2

Lessons

- How Do Nature and Nurture Interact? 2.1 2.A 2.B 2.C 1
- The Body's Speedy Communication System: The Nervous System 2.3 2.4 2.5 2.E 2.F 2.G 1

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

- The Body's Slow Communication System: The Endocrine System 2.2 2.D 1
- Neurotransmitters and How Drugs Affect Them 2.5 2.6 2.G 2.H 2.I 1
- How Do Drugs Affect the Nervous System? 2.8 2.H 2.P 2.Q 1
- Functions of the Hindbrain, Midbrain, and Limbic System 2.6 2.I 1
- Functions of the Cerebral Cortex 2.6 2.I 2.J 1
- Tools for Studying the Brain and Brain Plasticity 2.7 2.8 2.K 2.L 2.M 2.N 2
- Sleep and Dreams 2.9 2.O 2.R 2.S 1

Projects

- Endocrine Amusement Park
- Zombie Brain

Unit 3: Sensation and Perception

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

Topics: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7

Learning Targets: 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 3.D, 3.E, 3.F, 3.G, 3.H, 3.I, 3.J, 3.K

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- Principles of Sensation 3.1 3.A 3.B 3.C 1
- Principles of Perception 3.2 3.D 1
- Attention 3.2 3.E 1
- Visual Anatomy 3.3 3.F 1
- Visual Perception 3.4 3.H 1
- Auditory Sensation and Perception 3.5 3.I 1
- Chemical Senses, Touch, and Pain 3.6 3.7 3.J 3.K 3
- Sensory Interaction 3.7 3.K 3
- Sensory Impairments 3.7 3.G 1

Projects

- Photos: Perception Cues
- Sensory Disorders Touch Box

Unit 4: Learning

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

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

Topics: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4

Learning Targets: 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 4.D, 4.E, 4.F, 4.G, 4.H, 4.I, 4.J

Skills: 1

Lessons

- Introduction to Learning 4.1 4.A 4.G 1
- Classical Conditioning 4.2 4.F 1
- Applications of Classical Conditioning 4.2 4.D 1
- Operant Conditioning 4.3 4.B 4.H 4.I 1
- Applications of Operant Conditioning 4.3 4.H 4.J 1
- Biological and Cognitive Factors in Learning 4.1 4.C 4.D 4.E 1
- Observational Learning 4.4 4.C 1

Projects

- Classical Conditioning Gallery
- Applying Operant Conditioning

Unit 5: Cognitive Psychology

This unit 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.

Topics: 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11

Learning Targets: 5.A, 5.B, 5.C, 5.D, 5.E, 5.F, 5.G, 5.H, 5.I, 5.J, 5.K, 5.L, 5.M, 5.N, 5.O, 5.P, 5.Q, 5.R, 5.S, 5.T

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- Introduction to Memory 5.1 5.A 5.B 1
- Encoding 5.2 5.A 5.D 1
- Storage Part 1 5.3 5.C 5.E 5.H 1
- Storage Part 2 5.4 5.C 5.E 5.H 1
- Biological Bases for Memory 5.5 5.H 1
- Retrieval 5.6 5.F 1
- Forgetting and Memory Distortion 5.7 5.G 1
- Thinking and Problem Solving 5.7 5.I 5.J 1
- Biases and Errors in Thinking 5.8 5.K 1
- Introduction to Intelligence 5.9 5.L 5.M 1

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

- Is Intelligence One, Three, or Many? 5.9 5.N 1
- History of Intelligence Testing 5.9 5.O 1
- Principles of Test Construction 5.10 5.P 5.Q 5.R 3
- Language 5.11 5.S 5.T 1

Projects

- Case Study: Ronald Cotton and Memory Distortion
- Which Theory of Intelligence Is Most Accurate?

Unit 6: Semester A Review and Exam

In this unit, students will review the previous 5 units and take an exam.

Unit 7: Developmental Psychology

This unit 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.

Topics: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7

Learning Targets: 6.A, 6.B, 6.C, 6.D, 6.E, 6.F, 6.G, 6.H, 6.I, 6.J, 6.K, 6.L, 6.M, 6.N, 6.O, 6.P

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- The Lifespan and Physical Development in Childhood 6.1 6.A 6.B 6.C 3
- Social Development in Childhood 6.2 6.D 6.E 6.F 6.G 1
- Cognitive Development in Childhood 6.3 6.H 6.I 1
- Adolescent Development 6.4 6.J 1
- Adulthood and Aging 6.5 6.K 6.L 6.M 1
- Moral Development 6.6 6.N 6.O 3
- Gender and Sexual Orientation 6.7 6.P 1

Projects

- Who Am I? Identity
- Slides: Timeline of My Life

Unit 8: Motivation, Emotion, and Personality

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

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.

Topics: 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.10

Learning Targets: 7.A, 7.B, 7.C, 7.D, 7.E, 7.F, 7.G, 7.H, 7.I, 7.J, 7.K, 7.L, 7.M, 7.N, 7.O, 7.P

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- Motivation Concepts 7.1 7.A 3
- Motivational Theories 7.1 7.B 3
- Specific Topics in Motivation 7.2 7.C 7.D 7.E 1 3
- Theories of Emotion 1 7.3 7.D 7.F 1
- Theories of Emotion 2 7.3 7.D 7.F 7.G 1
- Stress and Coping 7.4 7.D 7.H 1
- Psychoanalytical Theory of Personality: Freud 7.5 7.6 7.J 3
- Psychodynamic Theories of Personality 7.5 7.6 7.J 7.K 1 3
- Humanistic Theories of Personality 7.5 7.8 7.J 7.M 7.N 1
- Trait Theories of Personality 7.5 7.9 7.J 7.O 1
- Behavior and Social-Cognitive Theories of Personality 7.5 7.7 7.J 7.L 1
- Measuring Personality 1 7.10 7.I 1 3
- Measuring Personality 2 7.10 7.P 1

Projects

- Facial Feedback Experiment
- Defense Mechanisms in Action

Unit 9: 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.

Topics: 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10

Learning Targets: 8.A, 8.B, 8.C, 8.D, 8.E, 8.F, 8.G, 8.H, 8.I, 8.J, 8.K, 8.L, 8.M, 8.N, 8.O, 8.P, 8.Q

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- Introduction to Psychological Disorders 8.1 8.A 8.B 8.C 1
- Psychological Perspectives and Etiology of Disorders 8.2 8.D 8.E 8.I 1

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

- Neurodevelopmental and Neurocognitive Disorders 8.2 8.E 1
- Schizophrenic Spectrum Disorders 8.3 8.F 1
- Anxiety and OCD-Related Disorders 8.4 8.G 1
- Depressive and Bipolar Disorders 8.5 8.G 1
- Trauma- and Stressor-Related, Dissociative, and Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders 8.6 8.H 1
- Feeding and Eating, Substance and Addictive, and Personality Disorders 8.7 8.I 1
- Psychodynamic and Humanistic Therapies 8.7 8.8 8.K 8.L 1
- Behavior and Cognitive Therapies 8.7 8.8 8.K 8.L 1
- Biomedical Therapies 1 8.8 8.O 1
- Biomedical Therapies 2 8.9 8.P 3
- Evaluating Therapy 8.7 8.8 8.10 8.M 8.N 8.O 8.Q 3

Projects

- Pros and Cons of Labels Case Study
- Pamphlet: Medication Treatment

Unit 10: Social Psychology

This unit 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.

Topics: 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7

Learning Targets: 9.A, 9.B, 9.C, 9.D, 9.E, 9.F, 9.G, 9.H, 9.I, 9.J, 9.K, 9.L

Skills: 1, 3

Lessons

- Attribution Theory and Person Perception 9.1 9.A 9.C 1
- Attitude Formation and Attitude Change 9.2 9.D 9.E 1
- Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience 9.3 9.F 9.G 3
- Group Influences on Behavior and Mental Processes 1 9.4 9.B 9.H 9.I 1
- Group Influences on Behavior and Mental Processes 2 9.4 9.H 9.I 1
- Bias, Prejudice, and Discrimination 9.5 9.J 1
- Altruism and Aggression 9.6 9.K 1
- Interpersonal Attraction 9.7 9.L 1

Projects

- Groupthink in the Real World
- Implicit Bias

Course Overview and Syllabus (continued)

Unit 11: Semester B Review and Exam

In this unit, students will review the previous 4 units and take an exam.

Unit 12: Course Review and AP Practice Exam

In this unit, students will review the course and take at least one AP Practice Exam.