

# Psychology Pre-Course Summer Work

Below are 4 compulsory tasks to complete to help prepare you for the Psychology A Level course:

## 1. Research Task: How do Psychologists explain behaviour?

Over the summer you need to investigate the following key figures from five different Approaches in Psychology (Approaches are different ways of explaining human behaviour and are covered extensively in the course):

1. **Sigmund Freud** (Psychodynamic Approach)
2. **B.F. Skinner** (Behaviourist Approach)
3. **Elizabeth Loftus** (Cognitive Approach)
4. **Hans Selye** (Biological Approach)
5. **Abraham Maslow** (Humanist Approach)

**Write a 150 word summary** on each Psychologist, explaining what and how they have contributed to our understanding of human behaviour. Include a brief review of how each approach explains the reasons behind human acts. Do not simply cut and paste from the internet, research carefully and pick out only the key points on each – summarising is an important aspect of this course.

**Challenge** – for each approach can you give an example of how one key concept can be applied to your own life?

## 2. Preparing you for essay writing task

Good essay writing is integral to success in Psychology. Research and then make a list of conjunctions (also called connectives) that you can use to link paragraphs in Psychology essays e.g. Furthermore, in contrast, however, this is challenged by, in addition, despite this etc. Present this as a **poster** that you can put at the front of your folder. You could even google 'Psychology essays' and read some exemplars to gain key words/ phrases.

## 3. Introducing Research Methods part 1: Ethics

Ethical issues arise when studying the workings of the human mind. Investigate these and **create a mind map** of the main ones – deception, confidentiality, informed consent, right to withdraw, protection from harm, use of animals

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/ethical-issues-of-psychological-investigation>

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

## 4. Introducing Research Methods part 2: Psychological Methods

**Form a table** like the one below summarising some of the main research methods used by Psychologists, give one strength and one weakness of each method. The study notes on tutor 2 U are a good starting point for this (they are at the bottom of the page so scroll down):

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/collections/a-level-psychology-study-notes-research-methods>

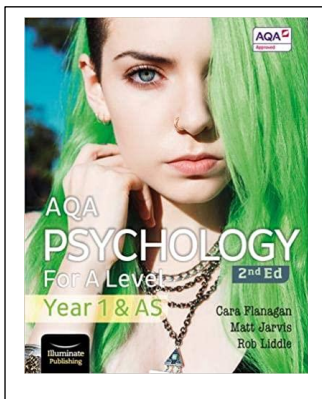
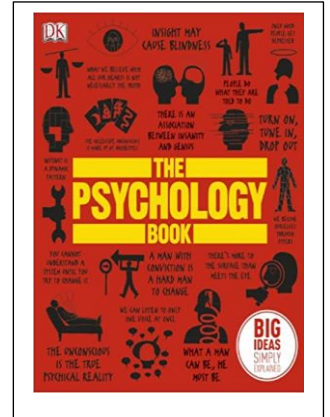
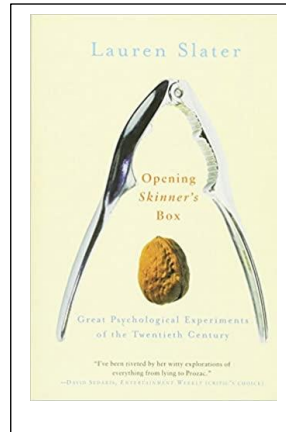
Method	Brief description	Strength/ advantage	Weakness/ disadvantage
Lab experiment	conducted under controlled conditions, researcher deliberately changes something (I.V.) to see the effect of this (D.V.).	High level of control	Lacks ecological validity – findings may not be generalised to real life
Field experiment			
Natural observation			
Interview			
questionnaire			
Case study			

# Psychology optional extras

## Recommended introductory reading

If you want to read a really interesting book which documents of the most significant studies conducted in Psychology try **'Opening skinner's box' by Lauren Slater**. Her book takes many of the most famous studies in Psychology and investigates the authors and how the studies were done. A really engaging read.

Alternatively try **'The Psychology Book' by Richard Benson**, a stimulated guide to over 100 Ideas and studies including the collective unconscious, the "selfish" gene, false memory, psychiatric disorders, and autism



The class **textbook** we will be using is 'AQA Psychology for A Level year 1 & AS Student Book' by Cara Flanagan et al. (2020) which is published by illuminate. You might consider purchasing this and pre-reading the first topics we will be studying: Approaches and Attachment. The RRP is £26.99 but if you look around you might be able to find it cheaper!

## Online courses

Complete one (or more) of the following free courses:

This one is through the open university. It takes around 3 hours to complete.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/investigating-psychology/content-section-overview-0>

Or complete one of the Future learn courses (try the 'Introduction to Psychology' one to start)

<https://www.futurelearn.com/subjects/psychology-and-mental-health-courses/psychology>

or Seneca learning has summer prep courses including an introduction to Psychology and A level tasters:

<https://app.senecalearning.com/classroom/course/1b7f46e7-060b-4cf7-922b-1829a0013079>

## Watch List:

### Netflix

There are some really great Psychology series on Netflix (1) Babies (2) The Mind, Explained (3) 100 humans, life's questions, answered, (4) Babies (5) Mindhunter

### TED talks

There are many, many TED talks on Psychology, but here are some of my favourites. Try to watch at least 3 of them to spark your interest in Psychology:

- Steven Pinker – Human nature and the blank slate
- Oliver Sacks – What hallucination reveals about our minds
- Philip Zimbardo – The psychology of evil
- Scott Fraser – why eyewitnesses get it wrong
- Andrew Soloman – The struggle of mental health,
- Elyn Saks – A tale of mental illness from the inside
- Read Montague – what we're learning from 5000 brains.
- Ben Ambridge - 10 myths about Psychology, debunked.
- Jon Ronson - Strange answers to the psychopath test
- Ben Goldacre - Battling Bad Science
- Keith Barry – Brain magic
- Carol Dweck - The power of believing that you can improve



## Movie recommendations:



### **We need to talk about Kevin (2011)**

Based on the novel by Lionel Shriver (which you could read instead), the film focuses on the mother of Kevin who is struggling to come to terms with her son and the mass school shooting that he has committed. An interesting consideration of nature vs nurture.

### **Girl, Interrupted (1999)**

Based on writer Susanna Kaysen's account of her 18 month stay at a mental hospital in the 1960s. This film questions what it means to be sane.

### **As good as it gets (1997)**

Looks at what life is like when you live with OCD.

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

Film that is based on Philip Zimbardo's research, which you will be studying in year 12. Twenty-four male students were selected to take on randomly assigned roles of prisoners and guards in a mock prison situated in the basement of the Stanford psychology building.

### **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)**

A criminal pleads insanity after getting into trouble again and once in the mental institution rebels against the oppressive nurse and rallies up the scared patients. An interesting consideration of what it means to be sane vs insane and a historical insight into life in a mental institution in the 1960s.

### **Good Will Hunting (1997)**

Will Hunting, a janitor at M.I.T., has a gift for mathematics, but needs help from a psychologist to find direction in his life. Considers the impact of attachment problems in later life.

### **Memento (2000)**

A man with total memory loss creates a strange system to help him remember things; so he can hunt for the murderer of his wife without his short-term memory loss being an obstacle.

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

A jury member holds out in his attempt to prevent a miscarriage of justice by forcing his colleagues to reconsider the evidence. Demonstrates the qualities necessary for persuasion and influence which is considered within the field of Social psychology.

## Podcasts:

- BBC Radio 4's 'All in the mind'  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxx9/episodes/player>
- The British Psychological Society has a list of interesting podcasts  
<https://digest.bps.org.uk/2007/03/11/psychology-podcasts-a-clickable>



## Museum Trips

### The Science Museum

Exhibitions cover all areas of science and technology, including Psychology. Includes online exhibits and a learning area. *Exhibition Rd, SW7 2DD.*

### The Freud Museum.

Step into the world of Sigmund Freud, and see his iconic couch. *20 Maresfield Gardens, NW3 5SX.*

### The Wellcome Collection.

Explores the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future. Exhibitions constantly change. *183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE.*

### The Museum of the Mind

The Bethlem Museum of the Mind records the lives and experience and celebrates the achievements of people with mental health problems. *Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX.*

## Psychologists on Twitter

**David Buss** –Prolific Evolutionary Psychologist.

@ProfDavidBuss

**Ben Goldacre** –GP, and campaigner for better media communication of science, and popular scientific communicator.

@bangoldacre

**Richard Wiseman** –Magician turned Psychologist!

@RichardWiseman

**Elizabeth Loftus** –Memory researcher and founder of 'false memory' theory.

@eloftus1

**Philip Zimbardo** –Conducted the Stanford Prison Experiment.

@PhilZimbardo

**The Beck Institute** –Centre for developing cognitive therapies.

@BeckInstitute

**David Eagleman** –Neuroscientist who had his own series on the BBC.

@DavidEagleman

**Michael Mosely** –Very popular science communicator and founder of the 5:2 diet.

@DrMichaelMosely

**Derren Brown** –Magician with an interest in all things psychological!

@DerrenBrown

**Stephen Pinker** –Cognitive scientist, wrote 'the Blank Slate'.

@sapinker

**Martin Seligman** –Founded the area of Positive Psychology.

@MartinEPSeligman and @PositiveNewsUK

**Mark Griffiths** –Researches the psychology of Addiction.

@DrMarkGriffiths

**Daniel Kahneman** –Author of *Thinking: Fast and Slow*, and founder of 'pop psychology'.

@DanielKahneman