

Preparing for A Level Psychology

Summer Work 2026



Welcome to Psychology

Hello future Psychologists! A massive warm welcome to the Social Sciences department at Derby Cathedral School. This booklet contains useful tasks for you to complete to prepare you for A Level Psychology. The tasks have been designed to give you a flavour of what A Level Psychology is all about and will introduce you to some core psychological concepts to aid your understanding ready for September. You need to have completed all of the tasks before our first lesson in September. You will need to hand it into your class teacher during your first lesson:

Mrs Macleod – Teacher of Psychology and Criminology and Child Development

If you have any questions about the summer work please email h.macleod@derbycathedralschool.org.uk and we will get in touch with you.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in September!

Key Information

Exam Board	AQA
Specification Exam Past Papers and Mark Schemes	The psychology specification is being changed for September 2025. The specification will be updated on the website soon. The link below takes you to the general AQA Psychology page. https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/a-level/psychology-7182 https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/a-level/psychology-7182/assessment-resources
Textbooks	We have class copies of the textbook that you are more than welcome to borrow and return. If you do wish to purchase your own copy, the links are below: Year 12: https://www.amazon.co.uk/AQA-Psychology-Level-Year-Third/dp/1036011976
Revision Guides	We have class copies of the revision guides that you are more than welcome to borrow and return. If you do wish to purchase your own copy, the links are below: Year 12: https://www.amazon.co.uk/AQA-Psychology-Level-Revision-Guide/dp/1036013375
Organisation	Organisation is the key to success with your A Levels. When you arrive in September, you will be provided with: • A student handbook • An assessment folder • Class copies of the textbook and revision guide (these will stay at school) • Online copies of the work • Printed worksheets You will need to bring the following equipment: • A folder for year 12 and year 13 • Folder dividers (x7 for year 12 and x5 for year 13) • Lined paper OR a hole punched exercise book to go into your folder (can be provided) • Plastic wallets • A calculator • Black pen, purple pen, highlighters and pencil

Task 1 - Introduction to Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of people, the mind and behaviour. Psychologists develop explanations and theories to help them to predict people's behaviour in different situations. These theories or explanations are tested by psychologists using research studies. You will learn to develop a keen grasp for the scientific nature of psychological research, including how it should be conducted, analysed and reported. Psychology tackles some of the big questions we have, such as:

- What is mental illness and what can we do about it?
- Why do babies attach to their primary caregiver and not a stranger?
- How can humans commit genocide or torture other humans?
- Do we have free will or are our behaviours determined by environmental factors?
- What factors make us obey?
- How does memory work?
- How do phobias develop?
- What is more influential, nature or nurture?



Psychology: AQA A Level Preparation -
Summer 2021



This first task gives you an introduction to psychology in general and covers some of the topics you will study in Year 12. Work through the learning within the assignment and complete the tasks as you get to them. All parts of the assignment should be completed.

1. Log onto Seneca or create a new account.
2. Search for the course 'Psychology: AQA A Level Preparation – Summer 2021'
3. Complete the course.
4. Once complete, take a picture/screenshot that you have completed the course as evidence.

Task 2: Psychological Approaches

Psychologists examine human behaviour from a range of perspectives; each one underpinned by a shared set of assumptions of what people are like, what is important to study and how to study it. You will be learning about the following approaches:

1. The 'learning' or behaviourist approach: which analyses us from the point of view of learning in response to our environment (includes Social Learning Theory).
2. The cognitive approach: which analyses us from the point of view of our mind and its information processes of perception, attention, language, memory and thinking.
3. The biological approach: which analyses us from the point of view of our genetics and physiology.
4. The humanistic approach: which analyses us from the point of view of our self-image (free will and self-determination).

5. The psychodynamic approach: which analyses us from the point of view of our unconscious and early childhood experiences.

You are going to pick **ONE** of the approaches from the list above. You are going to research that approach using the links below (and any other independent research) and create your own poster on that approach.

Success criteria:

- Name of the approach
- A brief overview of the approach
- Assumptions of the approach
- A key study
- A strength of the approach
- A limitation of the approach

Suggested Links:

<https://psychologyalevel.com/aqa-psychology-revision-notes/approaches-in-psychology/#:~:text=A%20level%20psychology%20looks%20at,is%20a%20result%20of%20biological>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWcL86DVqCI>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-approaches.html>

<https://studyrocket.co.uk/revision/a-level-psychology-aqa/issues-options-in-psychology/approaches-in-psychology>

https://youtu.be/T_teqVYQEY8?si=J56JIEBrKoPtIcWk

Task 3 – Maths in Psychology

It is important that you have the skills, knowledge and understanding in the specific areas of mathematics. At least 10% of the marks in assessments for Psychology will require the use of mathematical skills. These skills will be applied in the context of A-level Psychology and will be at least the standard of higher tier GCSE mathematics.

1. Go to the following link and read the key mathematic requirements and exemplification for the A Level (ignore the AS part). <https://www.aqa.org.uk/files/850e1d56-91f9-4d84-a0c8-e0965b7ac733/661250c1cb8bd3586f93ddb48c89a3218a3913ca.pdf> Pages 33-37
2. Watch the following YouTube video to go over key mathematical skills.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JQTIDv4luY>
3. You then need to use your time wisely between now and starting the course to familiarise yourself with the mathematic skills needed and brush up on any knowledge needed.

Task 4 – Enrichment Opportunity

Once you start Psychology, you must actively use it in your everyday life. This includes engaging with wider enrichment opportunities. Each week your teacher will ask you to make a log of something you have listened to (e.g., podcast), watched (e.g., series/YouTube video/film) or read (e.g., article/book) that relates to Psychology. We have a long list of suggestions for you that we can share in September.

In order to prepare over the summer, we would like you to pick one of the suggested enrichment opportunities below and write a summary paragraph about it (you can pick an alternative source if you discover something interesting and relevant).

Read it	Watch it
Ψ Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole by Dr Allan Ropper (Biopsychology, Psychopathology). Ψ The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks (Psychopathology, Neurological disorder). Ψ The Happiness Hypothesis by Jonathan Haidt (Psychological Well Being). Ψ The Little Book of Psychology by Emily Ralls – All the best bits of Psychology. Ψ The Lucifer Effect by Philip Zimbardo (Social Influence and Obedience). Ψ The Psychopath Test by John Ronson (Psychopathology).	Ψ 12 Angry Men – Social influence (Conformity) Ψ The Wave – Social Influence (Conformity & Obedience) Ψ The Experimenter – Social Influence (Obedience) Ψ A Beautiful Mind – Psychopathology (Schizophrenia) Ψ One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest – Psychopathology (Schizophrenia) Ψ Dangerous Methods – Approaches (Psychodynamic Approach) Ψ Shutter Island – Psychopathology (Schizophrenia) Ψ Spinning Out – Psychopathology Ψ The Notebook – Memory Ψ 50 First Dates – Memory Ψ The Bodyguard – Relationships Ψ Three Identical Strangers – Issues and Debates (Nature/Nurture)

Task Checklist

Task	Description	✓
1	Seneca assignment complete	
2	Approaches poster (pick one approach)	
3	Mathematical skills	
4	Enrichment task	