

AP[®] Psychology

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Psychology Course Overview

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the psychologists and studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with such topics as the biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, learning and cognition, motivation, developmental psychology, testing and individual differences, treatments of psychological disorders, and social psychology. Throughout the course, students employ psychological research methods, including ethical considerations, as they use the scientific method, evaluate claims and evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

The AP Psychology course is designed to be the equivalent of the Introduction to Psychology course usually taken during the first year of college.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for AP Psychology. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

AP Psychology Course Content

The course content is organized into commonly taught units of study that provide a suggested sequence for the course. These units comprise the content and conceptual understandings that colleges and

universities typically expect students to master to qualify for college credit and/or placement.

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

AP Psychology Skills

The AP Psychology skills describe what students should be able to do while exploring course concepts. The list that follows presents these skills, which students should develop during the AP Psychology course.

- Concept Understanding
 - ◆ Define, explain, and apply concepts, behavior, theories, and perspectives.
- Data Analysis
 - ◆ Analyze and interpret quantitative data.
- Scientific Investigation
 - ◆ Analyze psychological research studies.

AP Psychology Exam Structure

AP PSYCHOLOGY EXAM: 2 HOURS

Assessment Overview

The AP Psychology Exam assesses student understanding of the skills and learning targets outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours long and includes 100 multiple-choice questions and 2 free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple Choice | 100 Questions | 70 Minutes | 66.7% of Exam Score

- Assesses both the content and skills of the course.

Section II: Free-response | 2 Questions | 50 Minutes
33.3% of Exam Score

- Question 1 is a Concept Application question that assesses students' ability to explain behavior and apply theories and perspectives in authentic contexts.
- Question 2 is a Research Design question that assesses students' ability to analyze psychological research studies, including analyzing and interpreting quantitative data.

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Which of the following scenarios is the best example of the mere-exposure effect?

- (A) After tasting a soft drink for the first time, Frank immediately decides it is his favorite drink.
- (B) A year after beginning her exercise program, Georgina wants to expand her regimen.
- (C) Hal begins to like a certain sports car after seeing it frequently on the road, even though he did not like the car at first.
- (D) Kristy initially thinks her new neighbor is attractive, but once she becomes better acquainted with him, she finds him less appealing.
- (E) After going away to college, Jov finds she is less and less interested in spending time with her old friends from high school.

Correct answer: C

Sample Free-Response Question

To demonstrate an understanding of psychological concepts, perspectives, and research methodology, students must answer the questions clearly, in complete sentences, and within the context of the prompt. Outlines and lists alone are not acceptable responses. Providing definitions of the psychological terms alone may not score points but may help students better apply the concepts. Responses that contradict themselves, involve circular definitions, or simply restate the question are unacceptable.

Abstract

1. We conducted a variation of Asch's (1951) conformity study in which participants made judgments about the length of lines. We randomly assigned participants to one of two conditions and told them that the study involved perceptual abilities. In the first condition, participants estimated the length of lines after hearing five people pretending to be participants (confederates) give inaccurate estimates. In the second condition, participants estimated the length of lines without hearing estimates of confederates. As we expected, participants in the first condition were less accurate in their estimates of line length, demonstrating the tendency to conform to majority influence.

- A) How would each element below be related to the specific content of the experiment reported in the abstract?
- Control group
 - Deception
 - Operational definition of the dependent variable
 - Hypothesis
 - Debriefing
- B) How might participants' estimates of line length in the study be related to the following?
- Cognitive dissonance
 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs