

AP Psychology  
Summer Reading Assignment

**Book Information:**

Title: *Blink, The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*  
Author: Malcolm Gladwell

ISBN: 0-316-17232-4

**Overview:**

The book, *Blink*, serves as an excellent introduction to Advanced Placement Psychology. As is the structure of the course, Malcolm Gladwell approaches the study of psychology according to a multi-perspective synthesis, incorporating biological / scientific principles meshed with abstract psychoanalytic theory and phenomena. Explaining the complexities of the human mind is a daunting task, and *Blink* provides an excellent demonstration of how the symbolic and metaphysical “unconscious” can be explained by behavioral observation, scientific explanation, and biological research.

**Assignment: (100 points)**

The following questions pertain to the main focal points of each chapter of the book. Please submit typed answer responses in complete sentence/paragraph structure for each of the 14 questions. The deadline for this assignment is due at our first class meeting on the first day of school.

**Introduction**

- 1.) Explain the procedures and results of the “Gambling Experiment” conducted by the University of Iowa.
- 2.) Describe the differences between “conscious” and “adaptive unconscious” information processing strategies.

**Chapter 1**

- 3.) Discuss the concept of “Thin Slicing.” Is this rapid cognitive process accurate? Explain.
- 4.) Explain the study conducted by Samuel Gosling in terms of “Thin Slicing” and “Thick Slicing” relative to personality accuracy amongst friends and strangers.

**Chapter 2**

- 5.) Explain the concept of “Priming” as described by John Bargh.
- 6.) Discuss the primary function of the ventromedial prefrontal cortex .

**Chapter 3**

- 7.) Explain the statistical correlation linking a person’s height (or general physical appearance) to leadership positions. What insight can these findings contribute to “snap-shot judgments” and the “adaptive unconscious” of stereotypes?
- 8.) Discuss how applications of these principles can lead to discriminating behaviors?

**Chapter 4**

- 9.) What was the “Cook County Experiment?” Explain why it was so important?

**Chapter 5**

- 10.) Explain how the *Pepsi Challenge* conducted in the early 1980’s pertains to “snap-shot judgments” and rapid cognition. How did this case of “Thin Slicing” affect the billion dollar soft drink industry? How does “Thin Slicing” affect marketing, advertisement, and consumer psychology in general?

**Chapter 6**

- 11.) Discuss the primary focus of research tested by Paul Ekman.
- 12.) Describe the anatomical functions of the fusiform gyrus and the inferior temporal gyrus. Based upon contemporary research, what insight do abnormalities to these structures provide for the understanding of autism?
- 13.) Explain the biological mechanisms and process of “Optimal Range of Arousal” as depicted by the works of Dave Grossman. How does this explain why some people “crack under pressure” when others are able to elevate their abilities?
- 14.) Explain how a heightened sympathetic nervous system arousal impairs judgment and can contribute to police violence and excessive use of force.