

AP Psychology Summer Assignment

Mr. O'Neil – Oakland Catholic High School

☐ [Read 7½ Lessons About the Brain \(Required\)](#)

☐ [Begin reading Man's Search for Meaning \(Strongly Recommended\)](#)

Welcome to AP Psychology. Your required summer reading for this course is 7½ Lessons About the Brain by Lisa Feldman Barrett. This book introduces many of the major ideas we will study throughout the year, including emotion, perception, stress, development, personality, prediction, and social behavior.

You are expected to read the entire book before the first day of school. When we return in August, you will complete an in-class writing assessment connected to the reading. The assessment will focus on your understanding of the major ideas, concepts, and examples from the book. You may find it helpful to keep notes as you read, but formal notes are not required.

If you would like to get ahead and lighten your workload during the first quarter, I strongly recommend beginning Man's Search for Meaning over the summer as well. **This book is not required summer reading, but it will become an important part of our course during the opening quarter.** Written by psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl, the book has influenced millions of readers around the world and has been translated into dozens of languages. It also serves as an introduction to humanistic psychology and explores questions about meaning, suffering, resilience, motivation, and human purpose.

Man's Search for Meaning is a serious and emotionally heavy work based on Frankl's experiences surviving Nazi concentration camps during the Holocaust. Throughout the year, we will connect many of Frankl's ideas to topics in psychology, stress, personality, and human behavior.

AP Psychology is a college-level course, and in many ways it is somewhat different from a traditional social studies class. While we will examine human behavior, relationships, personality, and culture, students will also be expected to engage with scientific research, experimental methods, and basic statistical concepts throughout the year. This is not a math or science course in the traditional sense, but it does involve reading, analyzing evidence, interpreting studies, and engaging regularly with a college-level textbook. The purpose of these summer readings is not simply to complete assignments, but to give you an opportunity to begin exploring some of the major ideas of the course without the normal pace and workload of the academic year. Throughout the course, we will think critically about how human beings think, behave, adapt, suffer, and find meaning in the world around them.