

AP Psychology Summer Work- 2026-2027

Hello and happy summer! Below is the required summer work for AP Psychology. You will need your textbook to fully complete the assignment, but there are some parts you can tackle while you are waiting on your book to arrive. This assignment covers a major portion of the first unit. It is meant to show you how psychology is a science and review the scientific method. You are responsible for the vocabulary (listed below) that goes along with this section of the unit. I recommend making flashcards to help with studying, as you will be **quizzed on the vocab during the first week of school!** Hopefully this assignment and the points on the nature of this class will help prepare you for our first unit! Above all, have fun doing this! This is meant to make psychology come alive and make learning about the components of research design hands on and memorable. If you have questions, you can message me on Teams (Danielle Busche) or email me at dbusche@behs.com. Good luck!

The Nature of the Class:

- ★ AP Psychology is an *elective*, college-level course that will have higher student expectations than the traditional high school courses.
- ★ This course has been designed to help you prepare for and pass the AP Psychology exam.
- ★ You will be expected to complete all assignments, come to class prepared each day, keep up with your reading, and participate in class discussions.
- ★ The ability and willingness to read and study regularly is *essential* for success in this class.
- ★ There is not enough time to cover every term, concept or theory in class, so you will be responsible for learning some information independently.
- ★ **To succeed in this course, you need to be motivated and willing to work.**

Materials Needed:

- ★ Textbook: Myers' Psychology for the AP Course, 4th Edition by David G. Myers, C. Nathan Wall, and Elizabeth Yost Hammer (bfw publishers)- **must be 4th edition!**
 - ★ Your brain
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Task: Naturalistic Observation Assignment

DUE: FIRST FULL DAY OF SCHOOL

Background: Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior. This summer, you will get a taste of how the scientific method is used to learn about behavior. One important research method used by psychologists is *naturalistic observation*. Naturalistic observation is a method that involves observing subjects in their natural environment without interference. The goal is to look at the behavior of individuals/groups/animals in their usual setting without manipulation from the researcher.

I do not expect you to design the perfect naturalistic observation. However, I DO expect you to create a well-written report that conveys what happened during your observation, identifies difficulties that arose during your study, and discusses potential solutions for those problems. See the next pages for directions.

Directions:

1. Pick a behavior that you can easily observe many individuals demonstrating. Some potential behaviors may include people doing things at a mall, the beach, a restaurant, a sporting event, or any other public place you find yourself in this summer. Your location must be safe and ethical and have your parents' approval. Before beginning your observation, form an inquiry question about the behavior. Here are some examples to help you...

- Do more men or women order junk food?
- Are men or women more aggressive while watching sporting events?
- How many people are texting or on cellphones while waiting in a line?
- Which location in the mall food court do most people choose to eat at?
- Do different coaching styles impact player performance?
- Does age determine whether or not a person will hold open a door for the next approaching person?
- How many are on their cellphones sitting in a restaurant?
- How many people driving are on a cell phone?
- How many people go through a yellow light?
- How many people wipe down the gym equipment after they use it?
- How many people return their shopping carts to the cart area?
- What percentage of people order water rather than soft drinks?

2. Decide what you will observe and develop a hypothesis or expectation of what will happen; for instance, "More men than women will order junk food at the mall food court."

3. Select your location and decide exactly how you will observe and collect data *unobtrusively*. Remember you are **NOT TO SPY** on anyone! You may only watch people in PUBLIC PLACES. Do not interfere with anyone or let them know you are watching them... all you do is observe and take notes.

4. Spend at least two hours observing the behavior and collecting data. You do not have to observe for 2 hours consecutively.

5. Read through Module 0.3 and Module 0.4 in your book from pg 0-14 through pg 0-29 in the book (page number includes the unit number for this book- pg 0-14 is Unit 0, page 14)

★ You will use the information you learn from your readings to write your report in the next step.

★ You are responsible for the following vocabulary words. **You will be quizzed on these during the first week of school:**

- Theory
- Hypothesis
- Falsifiable
- Operational definitions
- Replication
- Case study vs naturalistic observation vs survey
- Correlation
- Correlation coefficient
- Experiment
- Experimental group VS Control group
- Random assignment
- Single- blind VS double-blind procedure
- Placebo effect
- Independent VS dependent variable
- Confounding variable
- Experimenter bias

6. Write a report documenting your study. There is no required length, but your report should be **handwritten**. What is most important is that all of the following parts are fully and clearly addressed. The purpose is to convey what you expected, what you did, and what you found as clearly and efficiently as possible.

- ★ You must title each section
- ★ Be concise, specific and clear.

A. Introduction- Write a paragraph about the question you set out to study and what you expected to find. Include your logic for the predictions you made. The last sentence should be your hypothesis. A hypothesis is always a statement, not a question.

B. Methods: Write a paragraph about your method. There should be enough detail in this section (use operational definitions!!!). For instance, you would include the location of your observation, who exactly you observed (30 adults between the ages of 20-45), how long you observed for, what you did to remain unobtrusive, and how you recorded your data, etc.

Include the benefits and drawbacks of using naturalistic observation as a method of observing and describing behavior.

Discuss why it is important to use operational definitions.

C. Results: Write a paragraph presenting your data. No complicated statistics are necessary, but you must include a visual to help the reader understand the data (bar graph, pie chart, table, etc).

Make sure to answer the following questions: Are your 2 variables correlated? If so, what type of correlation is present? What does this tell you about causation?

D. Discussion: This will be the largest and most important part of your report. Nothing is going to go as planned and many confounding variables will pop up during your study. It is also perfectly acceptable for your hypothesis to be proven wrong—all you must do is try to explain why it *might* have been proven wrong.

Does your data support your hypothesis?

What additional questions were raised during the study?

What confounding variables were present?

If you were to do the study again, what would you do differently and why?

E. Future Study: Imagine you could set up an experiment to re-test your original hypothesis. Remember, an experiment requires the manipulation of variables to prove cause and effect. It is a much different research method than naturalistic observation. Restate your hypothesis and then answer the following questions:

What would the independent and dependent variables be? Operationally define your variables.

Which group would be the experimental group? Control group?

Would you choose to run a single-blind or double-blind experiment? Why?

How would you use random assignment in your experiment? Why is this important?