



PLANNED INSTRUCTION

A PLANNED COURSE FOR:

AP Psychology

Curriculum Writing Committee:

Scott Nielsen

Grade Level: 11/12

Date of Board Approval: June 2026

Course Weighting: AP Psychology

Chapter Tests (1 per Unit, 1-2 per Quarter)	100 points each
Homework/Classwork (Weekly)	1-25 points
Quizzes (3-4 per Quarter)	10-25 points

Curriculum Map

Overview:

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with major units of study, including biological bases of behavior, cognition, development, learning, social psychology, personality, and mental and physical health. Throughout the course, students apply psychological concepts and employ psychological research methods and data interpretation to evaluate claims, consider evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

Goals:

- **Marking Period 1 (45 days)**
 - **Unit 0 - Scientific Practices - 12 Days**
 - Concept application
 - Psychological perspectives
 - Cultural norms and expectations
 - Cognitive Biases
 - Research Methods and Design
 - Experimental vs. non-experimental methodology
 - Appropriate research design
 - Ethical procedures
 - Data Interpretation
 - Identifying variables
 - Measures of central tendency, variation, and percentile rank
 - Quantitative or qualitative data from a given table, graph, or chart
 - Argumentation
 - Propose a defensible claim
 - Provide reasoning to defend a claim
 - **Unit 1 - Biological Bases of Behavior - 28 Days**
 - Topic 1.1 Interaction of Heredity and Environment
 - Nature vs. Nurture
 - Topic 1.2 Overview of the Nervous System

- Central and peripheral nervous system
 - Somatic and autonomic nervous system
- Topic 1.3 The Neuron and Neural Firing
 - The parts of the neuron and how they function
 - Neural Firing
 - Psychoactive drugs and their effect on behavior and mental processes
- Topic 1.4 The Brain
 - Parts of the brain and functions
 - Mid brain
 - Cerebellum
 - Cerebral Cortex
 - Split-brain research
 - Brain plasticity
 - Brain scans
- Topic 1.5 Sleep
 - Circadian rhythm
 - Sleep stages
 - Dreams
 - Sleep disorders
- Topic 1.6 Sensation
 - Stimuli
 - Vision
 - Hearing
 - Chemical sensory
 - Touch
 - Kinesthesia
- **Unit 2 - Cognition - 5 Days**
 - Topic 2.1 Perception
 - Bottom-up vs. top-down processing
 - Schemas
 - Gestalt psychology
 - Attention and inattention
 - Visual perception
- **Marking Period 2 (45 days)**
 - **Unit 2 Cognition (continued) - 25 Days**
 - Topic 2.2 Thinking, Problem-Solving, Judgements, and Decision-Making
 - Concepts, prototypes, and schemas
 - Algorithms, heuristics, and insight
 - Mental sets, priming, and framing
 - Gambler's fallacy and sunk-cost fallacy
 - Convergent versus divergent thinking
 - Topic 2.3 Introduction to Memory
 - Explicit, implicit, and prospective memories
 - Long-term potentiation

- Working memory model
 - Multi-store model
 - Levels of processing model
- Topic 2.4 Encoding Memories
 - Mnemonic devices
 - Chunking, spacing effect, and massed practice
 - Serial position effect
 - Primacy effect
 - Recency effect
- Topic 2.5 Storing Memories
 - Storage duration, capacity, and content
 - Maintenance rehearsal and elaborative rehearsal
 - Amnesia and Alzheimer's
- Topic 2.6 Retrieving Memories
 - Recall versus recognition
 - Context-dependent memory, mood-congruent memory, and state-dependent memory
 - Testing effect and metacognition
- Topic 2.7 Forgetting and Other Memory Challenges
 - The forgetting curve
 - Proactive and retroactive interference
 - Tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon
 - Repression
 - Misinformation effect, source amnesia, and constructive memory
- Topic 2.8 Intelligence and Achievement
 - General intelligence versus multiple abilities
 - Intelligence quotient (IQ)
 - Psychological assessments
 - The Flynn Effect
 - IQ variance
 - Intelligence versus achievement
- **Unit 3 Development and Learning - 20 Days**
 - Topic 3.1 Themes and Methods in Developmental Psychology
 - Thematic versus chronological development theories
 - Cross-sectional versus longitudinal studies
 - Topic 3.2 Physical Development Across the Lifespan
 - Prenatal Development - Teratogens, milestones
 - Childhood development - gross motor coordination and psychological milestones
 - Infant reflexes
 - Visual cliff studies
 - Adolescent growth - primary and secondary sex characteristics
 - Adulthood
 - Topic 3.3 Socialization
 - Stereotypes

- Topic 3.4 Cognitive Development Across the Lifespan
 - Piaget's stages of development
 - Sensorimotor
 - Preoperational
 - Concrete operational
 - Formal operational
 - Vygotsky's social learning theory
 - Crystallized and fluid intelligence
- Topic 3.5 Communication and Language Development
 - Language stages
 - Phonemes, morphemes, and semantics
- Topic 3.6 Social-Emotional Development Across the Lifespan
 - Ecological systems theory
 - Parenting styles
 - Attachment styles - Harlow's monkeys
 - Peer relationships
 - Adult relationships
 - Stage theory of psychosocial development
 - Adverse childhood experiences
 - Achievement, diffusion, foreclosure, and moratorium
- Topic 3.7 Classical Conditioning
 - Pavlov's dog
 - Unconditioned stimulus and unconditioned response
 - Conditioned stimulus and conditioned response
 - Higher order conditioning
 - Taste aversion, one-trial learning, and biological preparedness
- **Marking Period 3 (45 days) -**
 - **Unit 3 Development and Learning (continued) - 8 Days**
 - Topic 3.8 Operant Conditioning
 - Positive and negative reinforcement
 - Positive and negative punishment
 - Observational learning
 - Topic 3.9. Social, Cognitive, and Neurological Factors in Learning
 - Social learning theory
 - Insight learning
 - Latent learning
 - **Unit 4 Social Psychology and Personality - 24 Days**
 - Topic 4.1 Attribution Theory and Person Perception
 - Dispositional versus situational attributes
 - Actor/observer bias
 - Fundamental attribution error
 - Self-serving bias
 - Locus of control
 - Topic 4.2 Attitude Formation and Attitude Change

- Stereotype
- Implicit attitudes
 - Just-world phenomenon
 - Out-group homogeneity bias
 - In-group bias
 - Ethnocentrism
- Belief perseverance
- Cognitive dissonance
- Topic 4.3 Psychology of Social Situations
 - Social norms
 - Social influence
 - Persuasion
 - Elaboration Likelihood Model
 - Halo effect
 - Foot-in-door persuasion
 - Door-in-face persuasion
 - Conformity and obedience
 - Asch line conformity experiment
 - Stanford prison experiment
 - Milgram's obedience experiment
 - Industrial-Organization Psychology
 - Altruism
 - Bystander effect
- Topic 4.4 Psychodynamic and Humanistic Theories of Personality
 - Id, Ego, and Superego
 - Ego defense mechanisms
 - Unconditional positive regard
 - Self-actualizing tendency
- Topic 4.5 Social-Cognitive and Trait Theories of Personality
 - Reciprocal determinism theory
 - Self-concept, self-efficacy, and self-esteem
 - Trait theory of personality
 - The Big Five theory of personality
 - Agreeableness
 - Openness to experience
 - Extraversion
 - Conscientiousness
 - Emotional stability
- Topic 4.6. Motivation
 - Drive-reduction theory and arousal theory
 - Self-determination theory
 - Lewin's motivational conflicts
 - Sensation-seeking theory
 - Eating motivation
- Topic 4.7 Emotion
 - Cognitive labeling

- Facial-feedback hypothesis
- Broaden-and-build theory
- Culturally universal emotions
- **Unit 5 Mental and Physical Health - 13 Days**
 - Topic 5.1 Introduction to Health Psychology
 - Stressors
 - Eustress and distress
 - Traumatic events, daily hassles, and ACEs
 - The general adaptation syndrome (GAS)
 - Tend-and-befriend
 - Problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping
 - Topic 5.2 Positive Psychology
 - Gratitude
 - Signature strengths and virtues
 - Posttraumatic growth
 - Topic 5.3 Explaining and Classifying Psychological Disorders
 - Criteria for psychological disorders
 - Level of dysfunction
 - Perception of distress
 - Deviation from the social norm
 - Classifying psychological disorders according to psychological perspectives
 - Eclectic approaches
 - Biopsychosocial model
 - Diathesis-stress model
- **Marking Period 4 (45 days)**
 - **Unit 5 Mental and Physical Health (continued) - 8 Days**
 - Topic 5.4 Selection of Categories of Psychological Disorders
 - Neurodevelopmental disorders
 - Schizophrenic spectrum disorders
 - Delusions
 - Hallucinations
 - Disorganized thinking
 - Disorganized motor behavior
 - Negative symptoms
 - Depressive and bipolar disorders
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Specific phobias
 - Agoraphobia
 - Panic disorder
 - Social anxiety disorder
 - Generalized anxiety disorder
 - Obsessive-compulsive disorder
 - Dissociative disorders

- Trauma and stressor-related disorders
 - Personality disorders
- Topic 5.5 Treatment of Psychological Disorders
 - Psychotherapies
 - Psychotropic medication therapy
 - Psychodynamic therapies
 - Cognitive therapies
 - Hypnosis
- Unit 6 Review/Post-Test Project - 37 Days
 - Practice test
 - Essay practice
 - Review guides
 - AP classroom review practice
 - Students will complete a research project covering topics from the AP Psychology course.

Big Ideas:

- Thoughts and behaviors are shaped by biological, psychological, and social influences. No single perspective is usually complete.
- All behaviors have a biological basis rooted in brain structure, neural activity, and genetics.
- Human development is influenced by both nature (genetics) and nurture (environment).
- Conditioning, observation, and cognitive learning occur through interacting with the environment.
- Personality, intelligence, and behavior differ among individuals in predictable ways.
- Abnormal behavior can be understood through behavioral symptoms, classifications, and possible causes.
- Behavior is often impacted by social interactions and cultural norms.

Textbook and Supplemental Resources:

- **Primary Textbook Name:** Myers' Psychology for the AP course
 - **Textbook ISBN:** 1319070507
 - **Textbook Publisher/Year of Publication:** 2018
- **Supplemental Resources:**
 - AP Classroom
 - [Mr. Sinn AP Psychology YouTube Channel](#)
 - [Kahoot.com](#)
 - YouTube Video clips of individuals displaying behaviors that can be diagnosed with the AP Psychology curriculum.
 - For example:
 - Sheldon Cooper from *The Big Bang Theory* displaying obsessive-compulsive behaviors
 - *Forrest Gump* displaying specific intellectual disability
 - Brick from *The Middle* displaying ASD behaviors

Curriculum Plan

Unit 0-5: AP Psychology Course and Exam Description (Attached)

- <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-psychology-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

Unit 6: Review/Post-Test Project (37 Days)

- **Standards: *College Board's Science Practices Standards***
 - 1. A - Apply psychological perspectives, theories, concepts, and research finding stoascenario.
 - 1.B - Explain how cultural norms, expectations, and circumstances, as well as cognitive biases apply to behavior and mental processes.
 - 2. A - Determine the type of research design(s) used in a given study.
 - 2.B - Evaluate the appropriate use of research design elements in experimental methodology.
 - 2.C - Evaluate the appropriate use of research design elements in non-experimental methodologies.
 - 2.D - Evaluate whether a psychological research scenario followed appropriate ethical procedures.
 - 3. A - Identify psychology-related concepts in descriptions or representations of data.
 - 3.B – Calculate and interpret measures of central tendency, variation, and percentile rank in a given data set.
 - 3.C - Interpret quantitative or qualitative inferential data from a given table, graph, chart, figure, or diagram.
 - 4.A - Propose a defensible claim.
 - 4.B - Provide reasoning that is grounded in scientifically derived evidence to support, refute, or modify an established or provided claim, policy, or norm.

Objectives:

- Connect, design, critique, analyze, create, prove and apply concepts in psychology to research projects, papers, and various psychological activities. (DOK – Level Four)

Core Activities and Corresponding Instructional Methods:

- Students will use their knowledge of psychology to complete various research projects or presentations. Projects can include:
 - Descriptions and findings of well-known psychological studies
 - Parts and functions of the brain
 - Parts and functions of sensory organs
 - Ethical dilemmas in psychology
 - Psychological analysis of a popular film or TV show character
 - Other teacher-student-determined projects

Assessments:

- **Diagnostic:**
 - Participation and answers during class discussion after the presentation of projects and the completion of activities.

- Written reactions to various topics covered in peer presentations.
- **Formative:**
 - Timely and accurate completion of worksheet assignments connected to projects and activities.
 - Accurate completion of classroom activities.
- **Summative:**
 - Cooperative group evaluations determining the value and validity of various types of topics presented to the class or completed during a student activity. They will be graded on a scaled rubric.
- **Correctives:**
 - Complete teacher-made review sheets dealing with the concepts presented during student presentations and activities.
- **Extensions:**
 - Complete teacher-made enrichment worksheets and activities.

Please note that the scheduling of unit days for Units 0-6 may be adjusted based on the date of the AP exam. This provides the opportunity to adequately cover all necessary topics and ensure sufficient time for review and exam preparation.