

10 Things to do to prepare for Psychology in September

1. Download and print off the AQA psychology specification for the exam board.
<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/psychology/specifications/AQA-7181-7182-SP-2015.PDF>
2. Add it to a folder that you will be using to store your notes from the course. Read the specification, highlight it (especially details of the exams - content and length etc.) and if you have any questions about the course make a note and ask your teacher on day one.
3. Look on the AQA exam board's website for past papers and mark schemes. Get familiar with the exam papers and the types of questions you are likely to be asked. Look at the mark schemes, especially the 'generic' mark schemes, for longer questions. These 'generic' mark schemes can be found in the appendices or appear like a large table in the mark scheme booklet. This means that for longer questions, 16 marks for AQA, you will be marked in a similar way for skill, organisation and Assessment Objectives. The content will obviously be dependent upon the exam question given. <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/assessment-resources?f.Sub-category%7CF=Sample+papers+and+mark+schemes>
4. Download the command words from the AQA website. What does the word 'discuss' mean (for example)? This will give you an insight into how you need to structure your answers and the type of language you need to use.
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology/teach/command-words>
5. Download the key terms provided by AQA.
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology/teach/subject-specific-vocabulary>
6. *Social Influence*_Humans behave very differently in groups than when they are alone; the psychology of social influence tries to unravel the processes which cause this to occur. Why do people conform? Why do they obey orders from others, even if they disagree or do not wish to comply? How do some individuals have an impact on others even if their views are not the views of the majority? How does social change occur? These are all questions which Psychologists have tried

to answer. Read the information on this website (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish):

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_influence

And take a look at these videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao5JTMc5GUM>

https://www.ted.com/talks/morgana_bailey_the_danger_of_hiding_who_you_are?language=en

7. *Memory* We all remember things all the time – but do you know how you do it? Becoming aware of memory processes can help us to make our memories better, and might even be able to help you revise more effectively! This topic includes the study of eyewitness testimony and the processes which police use to extract the best evidence possible from their witnesses.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/topics/memory>

https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/memory/

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzpgyIKBS40>

https://www.ted.com/playlists/196/the_complexity_of_memory

8. *Psychopathology* What is meant by mental illness? To answer that we first need to answer a more difficult question – what is meant by mental health? In the broad field of human behaviours, which behaviours should be classified as ‘sane’ or ‘insane’, and which should be medicated or otherwise treated? Perhaps we shouldn’t treat any mental illness and embrace the diversity of human experience? This topic attempts to answer some of these questions, defining ‘abnormal’ mental experience and looking at different ways of approaching psychopathology.

Unsurprisingly, there are hundreds of resources around this topic, so these are just some ideas to start you off!

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/mental-health>

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/pages/newsarticles.aspx?TopicId=Mental+health>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.ted.com/topics/mental+health>

https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_wax_what_s_so_funny_about_mental_illness?language=en

https://www.ted.com/talks/vikram_patel_mental_health_for_all_by_involving_all?language=en

https://www.ted.com/playlists/175/the_struggle_of_mental_health

9. *Attachment* This topic takes a look at our earliest and perhaps most influential relationship – that with our mother. How does this bond form, and why is it so influential later in life? What happens if that bond is weak or broken, or if a mother simply cannot care for her infant? Can we overcome these early setbacks to go on to live a life full of love? Can this field of study tell us why some people appear better-prepared than others for adult romantic relationships?

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/attachment-and-adult-relationships.htm>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2724160/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-26667036>

And take a look at these videos:

<http://ed.ted.com/on/3Pg4IwvN>

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_tells_us_why_we_love_cheat?language=en

10. Online communication is essential in the modern world and all the major researchers working today have their own social media accounts. Update your twitter to keep up to date with developing news or interesting stories:

- David Buss – Prolific Evolutionary Psychologist. @ProfDavidBuss
- Ben Goldacre – GP, and campaigner for better media communication of science, and popular scientific communicator. @bangoldacre
- Richard Wiseman – Magician turned Psychologist! @RichardWiseman
- Elizabeth Loftus – Memory researcher and founder of ‘false memory’ theory. @eloftus1
- Philip Zimbardo – Conducted the Stanford Prison Experiment. @PhilZimbardo
- The Beck Institute – Centre for developing cognitive therapies. @BeckInstitute
- Freud Museum – Follow this to see upcoming events you might be interested in. @FreudMuseum and @FreudMusLondon
- David Eagleman – Neuroscientist who recently had his own series on the BBC. @DavidEagleman
- Michael Mosely – Very popular science communicator and founder of the 5:2 diet. @DrMichaelMosely
- Derren Brown – Magician with an interest in all things psychological! @DerrenBrown
- Stephen Pinker – Cognitive scientist, wrote ‘the Blank Slate’. @sapinker
- Martin Seligman – Founded the area of Positive Psychology. @MartinEPSeligma and @PositiveNewsUK
- Mark Griffiths – Researches the psychology of Addiction. @DrMarkGriffiths
- Daniel Kahneman – Author of Thinking: Fast and Slow, and founder of ‘pop psychology’. @DanielKahneman