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AP PSYCHOLOGY

15 Must Know AP Psychology Concepts

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO GET STARTED



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Introduction

As an AP Psychology student, there's a good chance that you enrolled in the class without previous classroom exposure to the discipline. Most other AP courses build directly on at least a year of prior schooling, so AP Psych is a unique challenge for many. On top of that, Psychology is multidisciplinary and very content rich, which can make it all a bit overwhelming.

This resource is designed to give you a boost and is useful as an early year primer, a supplement to lecture, or a quick review. Each chapter details a crucial AP Psych concept that has shown up time and time again on the AP Exam. We've also included our list of Ultimate Tips for AP Psychology to help you get your studying on the right track.

Within this book, you'll find information from the [Albert Blog](#). If you're looking for additional resources, be sure to regularly check the blog and subscribe to hear about our new posts. Even at the date of this book's launch, there are several great psychology guides nearing publication on the blog. We've also got content for all of your other APs, your college entrance exams, and even college coursework.

E-mail us at hello@albert.io if you have any questions, suggestions, or comment!

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About Us

What is Albert?

Albert bridges the gap between learning and mastery with interactive content written by world-class educators.

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We asked teachers how their students did after using Albert.

Here is what they had to say:



My students had an 81.2% passing rate - the previous year was 76% (the highest rate in our county)! I am thrilled. I had 64 students total, with 6 receiving 5s, 19 scoring 4s, 27 receiving 3s, 10 scored 2s and 2 received 1s.

Susan M., JP Taravella High

70% of my students scored 3 or higher. This is up from last year, and is also well above the national average. Needless to say, I am very happy with my students' success. I used Albert more intentionally this year. In the beginning of the year, I wanted students simply to answer questions and practice. Once they had 150-200 questions answered, we looked for trends, strengths, and weaknesses and worked on addressing them. Students were tasked with increasing their answer accuracy no matter how many questions it took, then they set their own goals (some wanted to focus around tone; others needed practice with meaning as a whole).



Bill S., Lapeer High School



Last year 40% passed with 3s and 4s. This year 87% passed, most had 4s and 5s. We used the stimulus-based multiple choice questions throughout the year and as review for the exam. I think it helped tremendously.

Alice P., First Baptist Christian Academy

Why Students Love Us

We asked students how they did after using Albert.

Here is what they had to say:



Albert allowed me to get extra practice and be exposed to questions similar to that on the AP exams. Overall, I did great this year with passing all my exams with 5's and 4's!

Shwan N., Central Gwinnett High School

Last year was my first year taking an AP test, and unfortunately I did not do as well as I had hoped. The subject had not been my best, and that was definitely displayed on my performance. However this year, I made a much higher score on my AP test. The previous year had been AP World History and I had made a 2. For this year it was AP English Language, and I scored a 4. There was a definite jump in my score, because Albert pushed me to focus on my weaknesses and form them into strengths.



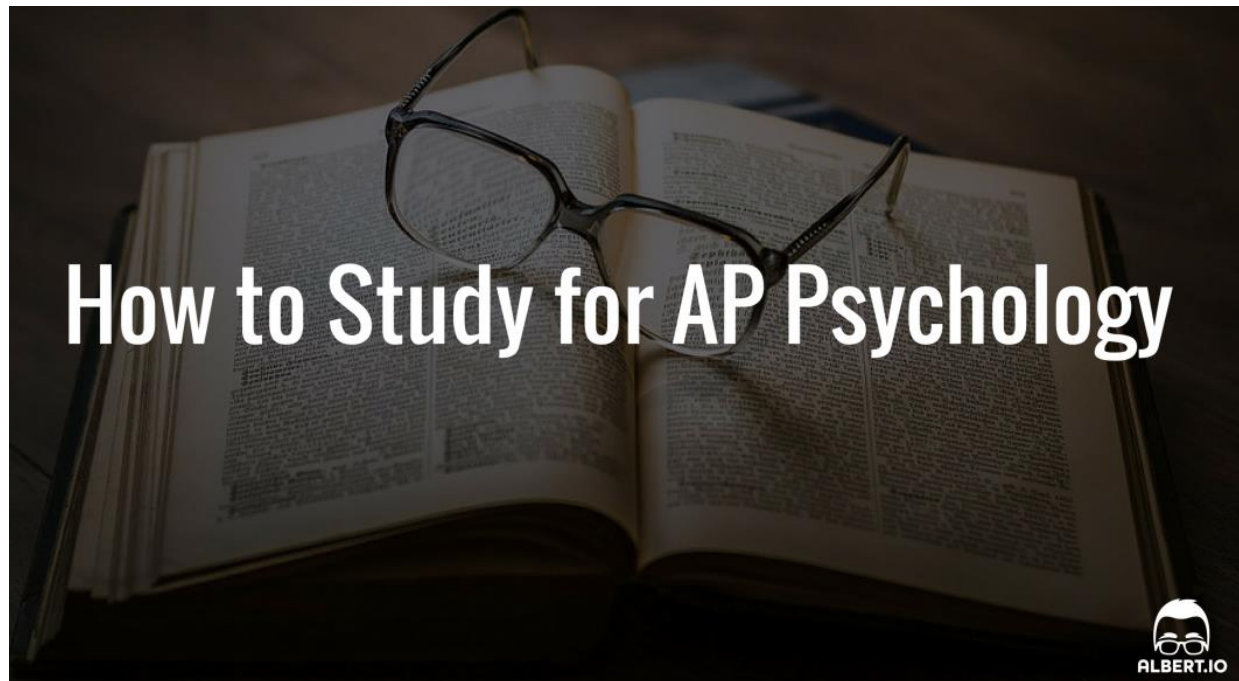
Charlotte R., Rome High



I scored a 4 on AP Biology, much higher than expected. Albert was an effective resource to guide me through AP Biology. Keeping up with it consistently all year as I learned the lesson in class was crucial to reinforcing my understanding and long-term memorization of Biology. After class each day, Albert helped to sink in the ideas that I was taught in the morning.

Lily O., Wake Forest High School

How to Study for AP Psychology



Introduction

So, you've decided to take an AP Psychology course, and now you're wondering how on earth you're meant to go about studying for the exam. Well, you've come to the right place. AP courses are never an easy undertaking, especially when they cover a topic as complex as the human mind, but hopefully, through this simple guide, we can help you create an AP psych study plan that will prepare you for getting that well-deserved 5 on the exam.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Through this AP Psychology study guide, we'll take you through three super easy steps to make sure that you've got all your bases covered on the day of the exam. The steps are: figuring out exactly what content will be covered on the exam, understanding the format of the exam, and finally practicing by testing yourself over and over again. You might be thinking that these seem like pretty generic steps. You're right. You can apply these steps to pretty much any AP exam, but what makes this guide unique is that we've already done all the research for you! We'll go through the steps providing you with all the information, resources, and AP psychology tips specific to the exam. Let's get started.

AP Psychology Study Guide Step 1: Figure Out What's on the Exam

While you might have taken other AP exams before, it's important to remember that the format for each different AP course exam is not always the same. Make sure you are aware of what to expect for this particular exam, so you are not caught off guard and are able to tailor your AP Psych study plan the right way.

AP Psychology Topics and Learning Objectives

The AP psychology course is made up of 14 key topics and concepts, all of which you should obviously incorporate into AP psych study plan. The problem many students tend to have, however, is not knowing how much time to put into studying each of the 14 topics. This is exacerbated by the fact that many high school courses don't actually cover each of the topics, or spend very little time on some while many spending many weeks on others.

Below, we'll list each of the topics in order of what percentage of the exam they are likely to take up, as well as the main points you'll need to know. For each one, we'll link a set of flashcards, a review video, and some crash courses too. This way, you will be able to better create your own AP psych study plan based on the relative importance of each topic as well as your own strengths and weaknesses. Be aware though, that the bullet points of resources may not cover everything you need to know about that topic.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Topic 1: Research Methods

Approximate number of questions on exam: 8-10

This is a topic you should make sure you know inside and out because not only will it be a big part of the multiple choice section, but you can almost certainly count on it being at least part of one of the free response questions. The most important points you'll need to know according to the CollegeBoard are:

- A) The ethics of research on humans and animals
- B) The differences between descriptive and inferential statistics
- C) The different types of research studies (experimental, correlational, clinical, etc.)

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- [Review Video](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Review:**
 - [11 Tough Vocab Terms for AP Psych Research Methods](#)

Topic 2: Biological Bases of Behavior

Approximate number of questions on exam: 8-10

The vast majority of the AP Psychology course focuses on behavior – but all behavior has a biological basis. You'll be expected to have a basic understanding of neuroanatomy and the physiological and genetic processes that drive behavior. These are the main areas you should focus on according to the CollegeBoard:

- A) Organization and Function of the Nervous System
- B) Neural Transmission
- C) Neuroanatomy
- D) The Endocrine System
- E) Genetics

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

- F) Imaging Techniques
- G) Neuroplasticity
- H) Evolutionary Psychology

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Neurons](#)
 - [Brain Areas](#)
 - [General](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Reviews:**
 - [The Cerebral Cortex](#)
 - [What's the Difference Between Afferent and Efferent](#)

Topic 3: Social Psychology

Approximate number of questions on exam: 8-10

Social psychology is a big topic with lots of different terminology for similar processes. Make sure you know the subtle differences between the terms and are able to give examples – either real world ones or studies that were done by researchers – for each one. Here are the main points you should focus on according to the CollegeBoard:

- A) Attitudes and Attitude Changes
- B) Aggression and Anti-social Behavior
- C) Group Dynamics
- D) Attribution Processes
- E) Interpersonal Perception
- F) Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience
- G) Cultural Influences
- H) Organizational Behavior

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Social Thinking](#)
 - [Social Influence](#)
 - [Prejudice and Discrimination](#)
 - [Group Dynamics, Aggression, Altruism](#)

Topic 4: Cognition

Approximate number of questions on exam: 8-10

Cognition is a general term for how we are able to think, learn and remember. Since the AP Psych curriculum gives learning its own category, what you should focus on for the cognition topic is primarily memory and its associated disorders, as well as language and problem solving. Here are the main points of focus given by the CollegeBoard:

- A) Thinking
- B) Problem-solving and Creativity
- C) Language
- D) Memory

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- **Flashcards:**
 - [Thinking](#)
 - [Memory](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Memory Part 1](#)
 - [Memory Part 2](#)
 - [Cognition](#)
 - [Language](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Review:**
 - [The Flynn Effect](#)

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Topic 5: Learning

Approximate number of questions on exam: 7-9

Although learning is a part of cognition, the AP psych course has given it its own category, which should give you a hint about how important it will be on the exam. This is another topic that is a favorite for the free response questions. Make sure you can give good examples for all the different types of learning and conditioning and that you are able to design a training program or an experiment using those concepts. Here are the main points for this topic from the CollegeBoard:

- A) Cognitive Processes
- B) Classical Conditioning
- C) Operant Conditioning
- D) Social Learning
- E) Biological Factors

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Behavioral Conditioning](#)
 - [Social-Cognitive Learning](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Reviews:**
 - [Classical Conditioning](#)
 - [Operant Conditioning](#)

Topic 6: Developmental Psychology

Approximate number of questions on exam: 7-9

Developmental psychology looks at the way the mind develops and cognitive limitations that children have. There are lots of important studies that have been done in the field of developmental psychology, so make sure you are familiar with them and their implications.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

It is also good to be able to describe the different stages of development according to different psychologists. Here is what the CollegeBoard recommends you know for the exam:

- A) Developmental Theories
- B) Dimensions of Development (Physical, Cognitive, Social, Moral)
- C) Sex and Gender Development
- D) Heredity-Environment Issues
- E) Life-span Approach
- F) Research Methods

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [General Development:](#)
 - [Attachment](#)
 - [Adolescence](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Reviews:**
 - [Gender Typing](#)

Topic 7: Abnormal Behavior

Approximate number of questions on exam: 7-9

The vast majority of the topics in the AP Psych curriculum focus on normal behavior, that is, how people 'should' behave. As you are probably aware, this doesn't always work out, and there are a wide number of psychological disorders that lead to the manifestation of abnormal behavior. For this topic, you'll be expected to know the symptoms for a variety of these disorders and have a basic understanding of how they are diagnosed. The treatment of abnormal behaviors is its own category, as you will see later on.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

According to the CollegeBoard, these are the main points you should know about abnormal behaviors:

- A) Definitions of Abnormality
- B) Diagnosis of Psychopathology
- C) Theories of Psychopathology
- D) Types of Disorders:
 - a. Anxiety
 - b. Bipolar
 - c. Depressive
 - d. Dissociative
 - e. Eating
 - f. Neurodevelopmental
 - g. Neurocognitive
 - h. OCD
 - i. Personality
 - j. Schizophrenia and Psychotic Disorders
 - k. Somatic
- l. Trauma/Stress Related

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - ▶ [OCD and Anxiety](#)
 - ▶ [Depressive and Bipolar Disorders](#)
 - ▶ [Trauma and Addiction](#)
 - ▶ [Schizophrenia and Dissociative Disorders](#)
 - ▶ [Eating and Body Dysmorphic Disorders](#)
 - ▶ [Personality Disorders](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Reviews:**
 - ▶ [Schizophrenia](#)
 - ▶ [7 Things to Know About Abnormal Behavior](#)

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Topic 8: Sensation and Perception

Approximate number of questions on exam: 6-8

Behaviors generally occur as a response to some sort of stimuli. For that to happen, however, we need to be able to sense and perceive those stimuli, which is the focus of this topic. You should have a basic understanding of the major sensory pathways (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) as well as how our perceptions can change the way we process signals from each one. The CollegeBoard recommends you focus on these main points:

- A) Attention
- B) Sensory Mechanisms
- C) Perceptual Processes
- D) Thresholds and Signal Detection Theory

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Sensation](#)
 - [Perception](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Reviews:**
 - [Gestalt Principles](#)

Topic 9: Motivation and Emotion

Approximate number of questions on exam: 6-8

Why people behave the way they do is a big question in psychology, and you will be expected to be able to describe some theories on this in the AP Psychology exam. According to the CollegeBoard, the main areas you should focus on when studying are:

- A) Theories of Motivation
- B) Theories of Emotion

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

- C) Biological Bases
- D) Social Motives
- E) Hunger, Thirst, Sex, and Pain
- F) Stress

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Motivation](#)
 - [Emotions Part 1](#)
 - [Emotions Part 2](#)
- **Albert.io Crash Course Review:**
 - [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)

Topic 10: Personality

Approximate number of questions on exam: 5-7

Most of the AP psych curriculum's focus on personality revolves around the different methods used to assess and measure it. Make sure you can list the pros and cons of each one. It's also good to be able to describe how personality can influence a person's behavior in a situation. The CollegeBoard lists these topics as important to know:

- A) Theories and Approaches
- B) Assessment Techniques
- C) Growth and Adjustment

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Personality General](#)
 - [Measuring Personality](#)

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Topic 11: Testing and Individual Differences

Approximate number of questions on exam: 5-7

It's kind of strange to have you test on the theories behind testing, but here we are. The main focus of this topic tends to be specifically on intelligence tests. Know what they are as well as their limitations. Have a good understanding of the differences between reliability and validity. This topic has a lot of overlap with the Research Methods topic, so it should not take up too much of your review time. Here is what you should review according to the CollegeBoard:

- A) Intelligence
- B) Types of Tests
- C) Reliability and Validity
- D) Standardization and Norms
- E) Ethics and Standards in Testing

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Intelligence and Individual Differences](#)
 - [Testing and Bias](#)

Topic 12: Treatment of Abnormal Behavior

Approximate number of questions on exam: 5-7

You've reviewed the symptoms and diagnosis of abnormal behaviors, but now it's time to look at treatment. Have an understanding of the pros and cons of each approach and be able to justify why you use one over the other in certain situations. Be able to describe an example of how you would implement one of these treatments, as that is a common free response question.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Here is what the CollegeBoard suggests you know for this topic:

- A) Community and Preventative Approaches
- B) Modes of Therapy
- C) Treatment Approaches:
 - a. Behavioral
 - b. Cognitive
 - c. Biological
 - d. Humanistic
 - e. Psychodynamic

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Psychotherapy](#)
 - [Biomedical Treatments](#)

Topic 13: States of Consciousness

Approximate number of questions on exam: 2-4

Questions on states of consciousness are a relatively small part of the exam, but luckily you aren't expected to know that much about it, and the information is pretty easy to remember. Here is what the CollegeBoard recommends you review before the exam:

- A) Psychoactive Drug Effects
- B) Sleep and Dreaming
- C) Hypnosis

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- [Flashcards](#)
- **Review Videos:**
 - [Consciousness](#)
 - [Sleep](#)
 - [Altered States](#)

Topic 14: History and Approaches

Approximate number of questions on exam: 2-4

If you're really behind on studying and don't have much time or motivation left, here's an AP Psych tip: this is the topic to skip. There is a TON of difficult to remember information you are expected to know, including a bunch of long names and specific dates, with very little reward (it could be as little as 2% of the exam). That's not to say that this information isn't valuable. Being able to insert the name of the psychologist who came up with a theory into your free response answer could certainly get you some extra points, not to mention that having a knowledge of the history and approaches will give you a better overall understanding of psychology as a whole, but remember to prioritize your studying. Here is what the CollegeBoard expects of you for this topic:

- A) History of Psychology
- B) Approaches:
 - a. Behavioral
 - b. Cognitive
 - c. Humanistic
 - d. Psychodynamic
 - e. Biological
 - f. Sociocultural
 - g. Evolutionary
 - h. Biopsychosocial
- C) Subfields in Psychology

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Here are some resources you can use to study:

- Flashcards:
 - [History](#)
 - [Approaches](#)
- [Review Video](#)
- Crash Course Reviews:
 - [The Cognitive Perspective](#)
 - [The Humanistic Perspective](#)
 - [The Psychoanalytical Perspective](#)
 - [The Behavioral Perspective](#)
 - [The Evolutionary Perspective](#)
 - [The Socio-Cultural Perspective](#)
 - [The Biological Perspective](#)

AP Psychology Study Guide Step 2: Understand the Exam Format

The AP Psych exam consists of just two sections and lasts a total of two hours. The first section is the multiple-choice part. You will have 70 minutes to complete 100 multiple-choice questions that range across all the various topics covered in the course. This part is worth two-thirds (66.6%) of your score.

After the first section, you will have a ten-minute break. The second part of the exam will then be the free response questions. You will have 50 minutes to write an essay style answer to **two** questions. Each question will usually have multiple parts you will have to address. This section is worth a third (33.3%) of your score.

Now all this might seem pretty straight forwards, but there are a few test-taking strategies you might want to keep in mind in order to maximize your time, especially if you are a slower reader or writer.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

AP Psychology Tips for the Exam: Multiple Choice

For the first section, you will have 70 minutes to answer 100 questions. This gives you, on average, just under a minute (42 seconds to be precise), for each question. If you haven't studied much and each question is a challenge, then that's not a lot of time. Luckily, the fact that you're reading this is a sign that you plan to be well prepared for this exam. For many of the questions, you should be able to answer well within that limit, leaving you more time to think about the handful of more difficult questions you will encounter.

For those more difficult questions, it's important to remember that you will NOT be deducted points for wrong answers! If you are unsure about an answer, eliminate the options you are sure can't be correct and then pick your best guess from the remaining options. ALWAYS put down a choice though – even a 25% chance is better than 0%.

AP Psychology Tips for the Exam: Free Response

For the free response questions, make sure you take a minute to read *both* questions and briefly outline in your head how you are going to answer them. This way you will have a better sense of how to divide up your time between them, because a 50-50 split in your time may not always be the best option. If you think one question will take up more of your time, then make sure you leave yourself that time! Check your watch when you start writing the response to your first question, set a time limit for yourself, and stick to it!

For these free response questions, make sure you answer each part if there is more than one. Remember, if the question itself is divided up into A, B, C, you don't have to make it all flow together in a single essay – you too can label parts A, B, and C and answer each question on their own. You are still expected to use complete sentences however and make coherent arguments. Always include examples if you can.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

The free response questions will tend to start with directive words. These will give you an idea of how much detail you need to go into, as well as how much time you should spend on each part. If a question starts with the words *explain*, *discuss*, or *relate*, you should give a more lengthy answer that includes definitions as well as examples of the topic, as well as its relevance to a bigger picture. If a question starts with *show* or *describe*, you are expected to give an example of the concept in question that demonstrates your understanding of it. If the question just says something like *identify*, you only need to name the concept and don't need to go into too much detail (if you have time left however, this never hurts).

If for some reason you do run out of time, and you're still far from being done when the examiner announces, "10 minutes remaining," there's still a way for you to earn some points, as long as you don't panic. Rather than rushing to finish your essay as fast as you can with sloppy handwriting and having to close your booklet in the middle of a sentence, make an outline of the main points you were going to include (try to write short but complete sentences if you have time). Remember, the reviewers are not scoring your spelling, grammar, writing style, or prose; they are scoring your knowledge of psychology. If you're short on time, skip the fancy language and just stick to the facts.

AP Psychology Study Guide Step 3: Test Yourself!

As you've hopefully already learned through your AP Psych course, the key to solidifying any behavior is practice and repetition. This isn't just a fact you need to remember for the exam – it's also something you can apply in your studying! The best way to prepare for the AP Psychology exam is to test yourself using practice exams from previous years and review questions from other sources.

When you're first starting out with your reviewing and studying, don't worry too much about setting a time limit on your practice exams. You may even find it helpful to have your notes or a review book right next to you so you can immediately look something up that you don't remember. This will help you out in the beginning stages of your study plan.

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

Eventually though, as you get closer to the exam date and in order to get the most out of these practice sessions, it's important that you set it up just like you would if it were the real thing. Sit at a desk in a quiet room with no distractions. Yes, that means turn your phone off and put it aside as well. Set an alarm to give yourself only the amount of time you would have for each section if it were the real thing: 70 minutes for the multiple choice and 50 minutes for the free response. Take your practice tests seriously; they will show you what areas you need to work on the most in your study plan.

After you've completed your practice test, go over your answers carefully. Don't just count up your score and call it a day, because the real learning comes from going back and finding the correct answers to the questions you got wrong. Make sure that you understand why it is that the answer you chose was incorrect. Was your knowledge of the material lacking or did you fall into a trap set by confusing wording? Being able to recognize what kind of tricks previous exams have used will help you prepare for them in your own exam.

Another helpful thing to do may be to note to which of the 14 key topics each of your incorrect answers is related to. You may notice a pattern that shows you that you need to spend more time reviewing a specific area than you thought.

AP Psych Practice Test Resources:

- The [Albert.io AP Psychology section](#) offers hundreds of questions aligned to the topics and objectives of the AP Psychology exam.
- You can find some official sample questions from the CollegeBoard [here](#) in their course description booklet. The questions start on page 17.
- You can see the free response questions from previous years as well as their scoring guides [here](#) on the CollegeBoard website.
- If you create a CollegeBoard account, you can login and download free AP Psychology practice exams [here](#).
- You can find general AP psych review questions (organized by key topic) at [this link](#).

How to Study for AP Psychology Cont.

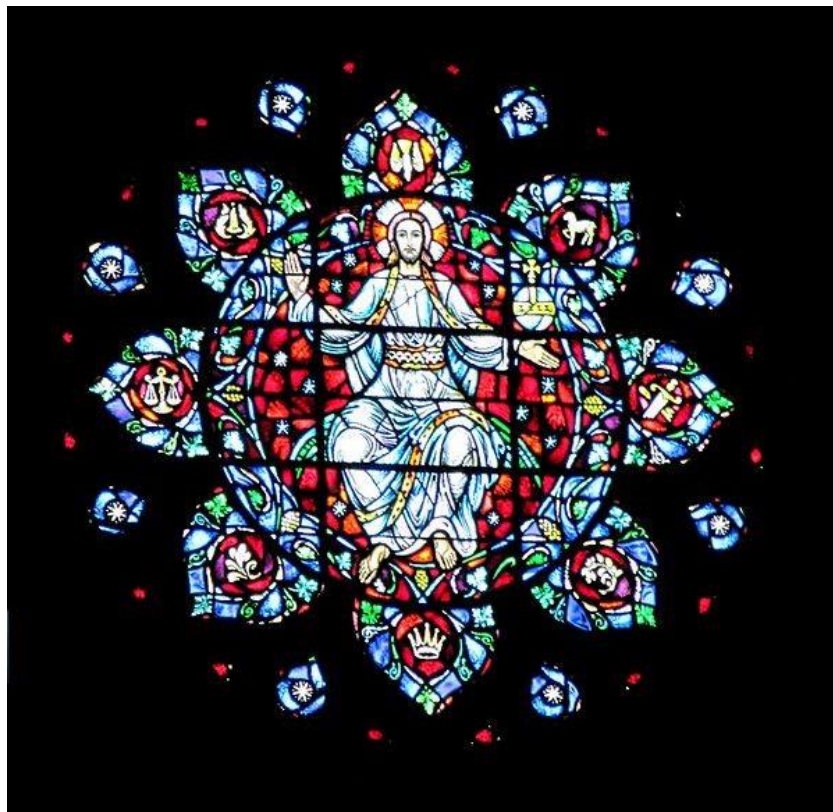
- You can find a list of 35 frequently tested AP psych terms [here](#).
- Finally, review books are a great resource for study questions and usually have at least one entire practice exam. You can find our list of the five best AP Psychology review books [here](#).

Wrapping Up

Hopefully, you've found this AP psychology study guide helpful in directing your study plan and providing you with the information you need to excel on the exam. You now have a way of organizing your studies by the 14 key topics and have plenty of resources to refresh any areas in which you need more work. If you still want even more exam prep or want just a few more AP psychology tips to be really certain that you get that 5 on the exam, why not check out some of our other articles on AP psychology?

- [The One-Month AP Psychology Study Guide](#)
- [5 Approaches to AP Psychology Review](#)
- [The Ultimate List of AP Psychology Tips](#)
- [How to Rock Your AP Psych FRQ](#)

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

The behavioral perspective is all about acting throughout life as a result of some form of motivation or incentive. It relates to the reasons that an individual will participate in any given act rather than the way that they react. This perspective seeks to better explain the physiological needs of any living organism, as well as the way motivation can impact behavior. It considers different types of motivation and how different levels of motivation can impact the amount or type of work or effort that an individual will be willing to put forth.

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

This AP Psychology crash course will prep you for the free response questions that you will see on your AP Psychology exam. It will look at why someone will work harder for a better outcome. Though it hasn't been on the AP Psychology exam's free response section for some time, there have been questions on the differences between the behavioral perspective and other psychological perspectives.

Defining the Behavioral Perspective

Any living organism has certain needs that must be met in order for it to survive. These can include sleep, food and water. If these criteria are met, the organism will be able to sustain a level of homeostasis. According to the behavioral perspective, a desire for this homeostasis is what drives and motivates an individual.

The drive for homeostasis also affects the actions of an individual in another way. If, at any point, homeostasis is interrupted or changed, the individual will be motivated to act. This motivation will continue until they are able to achieve the same level of homeostasis again. This relates to feelings of hunger, for example, if an individual is hungry they will seek out food.

Another aspect of motivation is related to learned behaviors. An individual will learn certain behaviors such as anxiety because of conditioning. In fact, Neal Miller is best known for creating the theory of [operant conditioning](#). This theory states that an individual can be taught to do something because they are working towards or against a specific action.

Finally, there is incentive motivation. This theory says that an individual can be motivated to action by something that is outside of themselves. For example, getting a new car will motivate a teenager to graduate high school. Getting money will motivate an adult to go to work every day.

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Different types of motivation can be used in different ways. By combining each of these types of motivation it is possible to understand why a person will act the way that they do.

Who Founded the Behavioral Perspective?

This perspective was contributed to by a number of important and well known psychologists including; Ivan Pavlov, Edward Lee Thorndike, John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner.

Different aspects of the behavioral perspective have been founded by different psychologists. The unlearned drive, which states an individual will do what is necessary to regain homeostasis, was founded by Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson and Clark Hull. He created a specific equation to explain the relationship between learning and drive.

The learned drive, which states that an individual can be taught to participate in a specific action, was founded by B.F. Skinner. His theory of [operant conditioning](#), based on studies conducted with rats, allowed him to begin research into types of behaviors that must be learned.

Incentive motivation was founded most for Kenneth Spence. He explained that the value of the incentive itself will also increase the type of response that is given. For example, an individual will work harder at their studies if they are getting a brand new car than they will if they are getting \$50.

Examples of the Behavioral Perspective

Example 1:

Andrew is planning on taking the AP Psychology exam. He knows that if he gets a 5 on the exam it will look good when he is applying to college. If this happens he will be more likely to get into any college he chooses.

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

He decides to study in order to get the good grade, but when a friend wants him to go skiing he decides to stop studying for the weekend to leave town. He has studied for a week and has worked through his study materials. He believes he can get a good enough score without studying anymore.

According to the behavioral perspective, and more specifically incentive motivation, Andrew has a motivator to achieve a good grade, so that he can get into a good college. He wants to achieve this goal and therefore he will work towards it. But this motivator could be improved if, for example, his mother offers him a new car in exchange for a 5 on his exam. Because this incentive is larger than the one he would currently gain by achieving a 5, he would likely choose to spend more time studying in order to achieve it.

Example 2:

Eliza wants to be the star of the ballet recital next month. Her teacher has stated that not everyone will even be in the recital and everyone will have to practice hard in order to get a spot. If she practices once a week she will be able to be in the recital. If she practices three times a week she knows that she will get the star role. The star role may mean that she is signed to a ballet company. If she is only in the recital she will likely not be noticed and will not get into a ballet company. Because Eliza's dream is to be in a ballet company, she decides to practice three times a week.

The behavioral perspective states that Eliza has a motivating factor sufficient to push her into working hard. The motivation for getting into the recital is not great enough to prompt her to work as hard as necessary because she will still not achieve her dream, but getting into a ballet company is enough of a motivation. Because getting signed to a ballet company is important to her, she decides to work harder to achieve that goal. This external motivation is sufficient for her.

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 3:

When Mark comes home for school every day he is very hungry. His lunch is often at 10am and when he gets out of school at 2:30pm he has to go to soccer practice. By the time he gets home it is after 5pm and he hasn't eaten in several hours. Usually his mother makes sure there are snacks in the cupboard or on the counter, waiting for him.

Today there are no snacks waiting but he is still very hungry. Usually Mark does not cook at home. He waits for his family to get there and his parents will cook. Today, however, there are no snacks and no one is home to make dinner. There are ingredients for a pizza in the fridge. Mark sets out to make a pizza for himself.

Because Mark is hungry, his body is not at a level of homeostasis. He is determined to reach that homeostasis (to not be hungry anymore) and therefore decides to make something to eat. The motivation of being hungry, an unlearned behavior, is enough to make him do something to reach a level of homeostasis again, even though he normally would not engage in the activity (i.e. cooking).

What else to Know about the Behavioral Perspective

This perspective has several stages which make up different aspects of the human mind. By combining all of these types of motivation, an individual will continue to work towards bettering themselves as well as making themselves more happy and secure. In general, humans want to achieve homeostasis and they want to achieve a pleasant situation. As a result, they will continue to use motivators to achieve these goals.

The AP psychology exam will require you to understand the differences between the behavioral perspective and other perspectives which are similar. These include psychodynamic and biological perspectives. You will need to know the similarities and differences between these theories, the importance of each of them, and how they were founded.

Behavioral Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

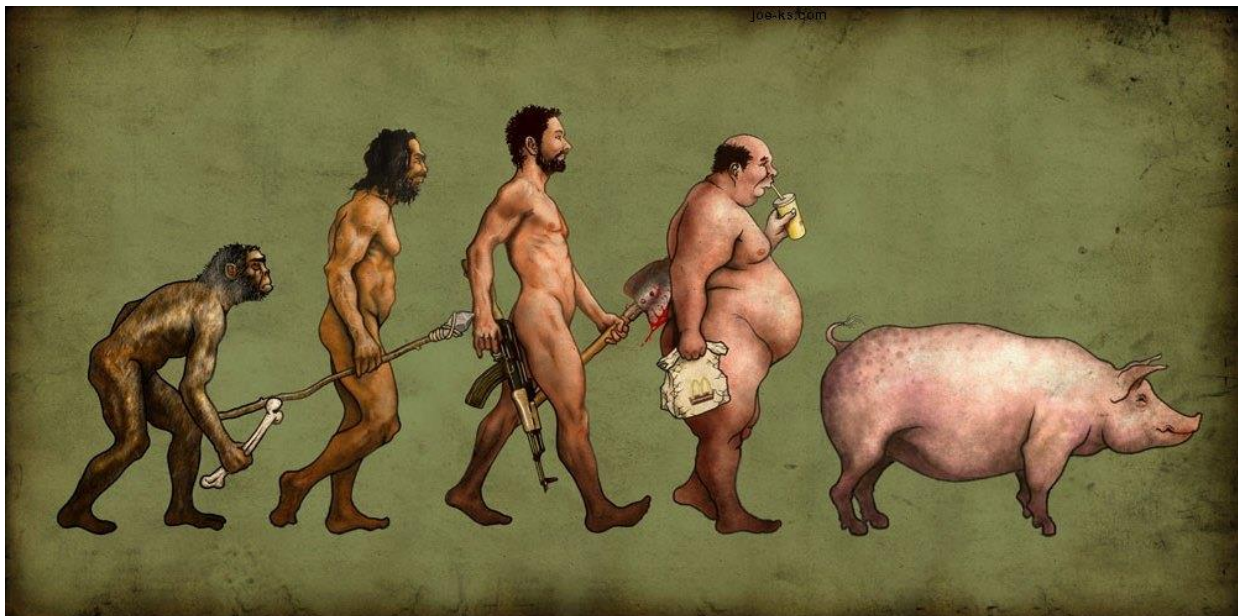
Conclusion

The behavioral perspective is still used today. It has been studied further than it was at the original time of its inception in the 20th century. This theory emerged as the answer to psychoanalytic theory, which was based in a similar area of thought.

So here's a quick AP Psychology review for the behavioral perspective. It was founded by B.F. Skinner, Ivan Pavlov, Edward Thorndike and John B. Watson, the behavioral perspective has four different parts; drive theory, incentive motivation, unlearned drive and learned drive. It also relates to achieving a state of homeostasis and the intrinsic motivation of the individual.

This theory, though sometimes considered outdated, still has merits as a way of understanding the reasons that an individual will act the way that they do. It has been replaced in some instances by newer theories; however, it has still remained valid based on the studies and research done in the Little Albert case as well as through B.F. Skinner's research with rats.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



[Image Source: Flickr](#)

Introduction

The evolutionary perspective is related to the scientific understanding of evolution. It considers the way that different traits within any individual will change throughout different generations and eras. This perspective relates to the concept of natural selection and how it has changed many things about the way that the mind works. It is believed to relate to absolutely any human or humanoid as well as animals and organisms in history and modern day.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Basics of the Evolutionary Perspective

The evolutionary perspective considers many different traits which include memory, perception and language. In this perspective, however, it considers these traits as adaptations that have occurred within the human body over time. With the evolutionary perspective scientists look at the way a new trait will evolve in the average person.

Evolution means natural selection and that means things that are good continue on while things that are not useful are pushed out. For example, traits of memory continue to evolve through each generation while other instincts are devolving. Natural selection gets rid of some of the traits that are no longer necessary while ensuring that important ones are pushed on in the future.

This perspective can be used with any type of organism as natural selection has been proven to affect all living organisms. Psychologists however, will consider the way that this perspective affects the general human population rather than other organisms or animals.

The evolutionary perspective is based on the foundations of cognitive psychology as well as evolutionary biology. It considers genetics, ethology, anthropology, biology and other aspects of science as well. The combination of these forms resulted in the creation of the evolutionary perspective in the 19th century.

According to the evolutionary perspective, the only reason that the human race continues to survive and continues to function in the best way possible is through natural selection. This is believed to be the way that the human race has come from the caveman era to the modern era as far as skills, traits and abilities.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Who Founded the Evolutionary Perspective?

This perspective was founded in part by Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection. His theories began to gain additional traction throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In this way, other psychologists increased their own research of these ideals.

Throughout the next several centuries, the evolutionary perspective has been expanded upon though a number of different theories have arisen over time. This perspective concentrates on the consciousness, sensation and perception, learning and facultative adaptations, emotion and motivation, cognition, personality, language, emotions and more.

Examples of the Evolutionary Perspective

Example 1:

Two boys are exactly the same age. The first boy lives in 12,000 B.C while the other lives in the year 2000. While they are the same age, 15, their roles are entirely different. The boy living in 12,000 B.C is a hunter for his tribe and for his family. His primary goals are survival and feeding himself. These traits take precedence over any others and he does not speak what would now be considered an intelligible language or worry about educating himself. His brain is not as developed as what is found in modern times.

The second boy, living in 2000 does not have these responsibilities. He is not a natural hunter and instead, his brain is made for holding important information and gathering more knowledge. He spends his time in school where he learns more and his brain concentrates on remembering the things that he is learning as he goes along.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

The traits of memory and speech have evolved over time. The second boy has more intelligence (at least what we would call so in a modern era) while the other boy has natural instincts for hunting and protecting his family. These traits are not needed in a modern era however, and natural selection has all but eliminated them in modern humans. The traits of the modern era were not important in history and therefore did not exist. They came to be through time only when they were required.

Example 2:

When Marcy walks into the science lab she sees one of her friends standing at a table. Her friend does not see her so she decides to walk up and startle them. She wants to make sure they don't hear her coming so she makes sure to walk very quietly and gets behind them before they realize she is there. She then reaches out and puts her hand on her friends back. The sudden action makes her friend jump and scream in surprise because she thought she was alone.

This is an example of evolutionary psychology as well because the instinct to jump and scream at a sudden change is just that, instinct. Marcy's friend never learned to be afraid when someone startles her; this is an instinctual reaction that everyone has. It was learned in ancient times because of the inherent dangers everywhere. This trait has aided in the survival of the human race and, as such, it has continued to be passed down through natural selection into modern times.

Example 3:

Every winter, northern states within the United States and areas of Canada will witness thousands of birds flying to the south. These birds fly in a 'V' shaped pattern which may extend very long but they always fly in this pattern and they always fly south. Every so often the lead bird will switch out and another will take their place. These actions repeat every year when the weather starts to get cold.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

This is an example of the way that the evolutionary perspective applies to animals. Likely, no one had to teach these birds that they need to fly south for the winter. These birds intrinsically know that they need to go to a warmer climate and they know how to do it. They also intrinsically know that they need to fly in a certain formation in order to travel faster and when their lead bird gets tired they know to switch out for someone else. These behaviors are not as much learned as intrinsically known by the birds because they are key to their survival. This is also natural selection at work.

Other Important Facts about the Evolutionary Perspective

This perspective has continued to be used because it does create a thorough understanding of how evolution works and how it applies to psychology. The way in which the memory works, for example, is tied to the way that our ancestors were required to remember important information in order to find food. Other behaviors that were important to our ancestors however, have been weeded out of the modern human mind or reflex because they are no longer necessary.

This perspective takes a stance that, over time, nature will weed out unneeded psychological reactions however; it will also help new ones to form as well as keeping those that are important at the time. This is how the brain has grown bigger and how specialized sections for memory and emotion have formed. These were not as important in the days of cavemen; however over time they came to be more important in the modern day.

Finally, the evolutionary perspective considers that only important characteristics will continue to develop and, as they become more important, they will develop more fully. In this way, the human race, in 100 years, will only have the traits that are necessary for their life rather than all of the traits that our current generation has.

Evolutionary Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

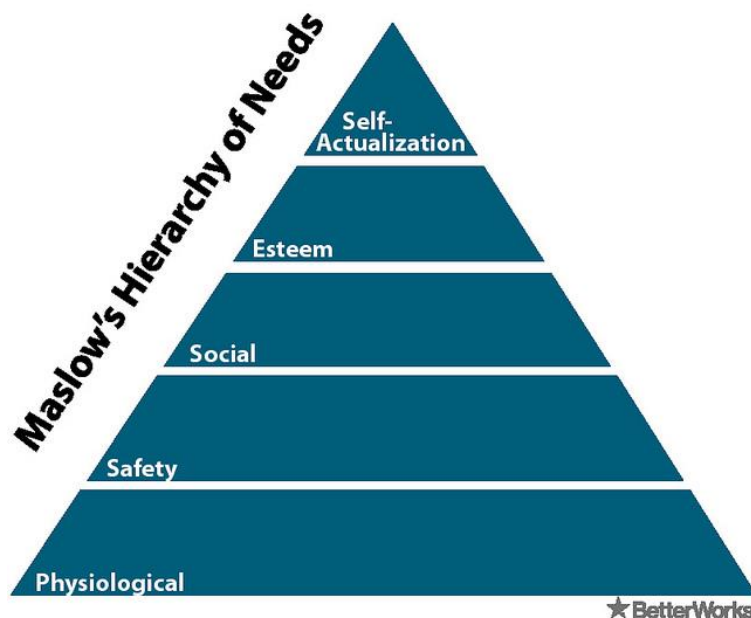
Wrapping up the Evolutionary Perspective and AP Psychology

The evolutionary perspective considers how the human race has managed to survive for this long and how it has managed to become better as time goes on. This theory, which is found in psychology as well as biology, considers evolution as a necessary aspect of turning into a stronger human race.

1. The evolutionary perspective relates to the way that cognitive behaviors go through the process of natural selection just as the human body has done.
2. This perspective also considers the way that emotions, memory, perspective and more have been used in history and have evolved in the current era. This also considers how much is necessary for the future when it comes to changes in the psychology of the human race.
3. The evolutionary perspective was founded by Charles Darwin in the 19th
4. This perspective has brought the mind through the caveman era to the modern era much as the biological version brought the body through these eras.

This theory is still in use today in many ways and most especially when it comes to the biological area of evolution. The theory considers a number of ways that different people will continue to grow and develop throughout each consecutive generation. This has occurred throughout history and will continue to occur throughout the future that will contribute to the potential of evolution. Make sure to review this along with other perspectives to best prepare for your AP Psychology exam.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



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Introduction

The humanistic perspective is a way of evaluating an individual as a whole, rather than looking at them only through a smaller aspect of their person. It is a branch of psychology that relates to the idea of being entirely unique and your own individual. This theory is still relatively new and looks at the way the hierarchy of needs impacts what you do in your life and what you want for your own future as well.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

What is the Humanistic Perspective?

This perspective relates to the way that an individual acts or behaves as well as the way that they think or feel related to those acts and behaviors. Psychologists under this perspective feel that a complete understanding of the needs of an individual is extremely important to understanding the reasons that an individual will continue acting in any particular way.

The humanistic perspective considers the hierarchy of needs that an individual has and then considers which are the most important. There are a number of different needs that an individual will have. Each of the needs listed below are important to the overall needs and wants of any member of the human race. They are listed below in order from the least important to the most important according to this hierarchy. These needs include:

1. Physiological
2. Safety
3. Belonging/love
4. Esteem
5. Self-actualization

Each of these needs is crucial to the happiness of the individual. Each one of these needs is slightly different in importance though each is necessary to some effect. First, physiological needs include hunger and thirst. These are very important to life however, they are actually less important to the individual than other needs. An individual will work towards getting food and liquid that they need in order to survive, however, they don't find this as important to their wellbeing as other aspects on the hierarchy of needs.

Safety comes next in importance and refers to an individual being able to feel secure in their life. Belonging is next important because of an intrinsic need within the human race to belong and feel loved by someone.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

This is followed by the importance of esteem or feeling like one is recognized for the things that they are capable of and the things they have done. By feeling recognition as well as feeling positive about yourself, one can accomplish the esteem necessary for happiness.

The final aspect of the hierarchy of needs is the most important, self-actualization. This is where an individual will achieve their full potential and it is actually what an individual will work towards more than anything else. If an individual is able to reach self-actualization they will be better able to achieve happiness.

Who Founded the Humanistic Perspective?

The humanistic perspective was founded by Abraham Maslow as well as Carl Rogers. Maslow is best known for creating the hierarchy of needs which is used as a basis for the humanistic perspective. This theory was founded in 1943 and was actually published in a paper titled, A Theory of Human Motivation. This paper introduced the basic foundation of this theory.

Next, Carl Rogers considered the ideal of self-concept which pushes an individual to work towards self-actualization, the last step in the hierarchy of needs as founded by Abraham Maslow. The therapy aspect of this theory relates to focusing on unconditional positive regard and support of the client no matter what is said during the session. In this way, an individual is better able to feel self-actualized and better about themselves.

Examples of the Humanistic Perspective

Example 1:

Margaret is attending college in her town. She is trying to get a degree in nursing because she really wants to become a nurse. She has always felt like she could really help others and like she should try everything possible to become a better person. When she does become a nurse she plans to fulfill her dream of working with underprivileged people.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Margaret is working towards self-actualization and achieving her full potential. She is also working on helping her own self-esteem as well as her feeling of belonging. She wants to feel important but she really wants to make sure she's helping other people.

Example 2:

Brandon is feels like there is nothing going well in his life. He goes to work and goes to school but he doesn't do much of anything else. He doesn't spend a lot of time with friends or going out and is very bored most of the time. As a result, his life seems to be very unfulfilling. He wants to do something about this but isn't sure where he should start.

The idea that Brandon wants to change things in his life in order to get rid of the bored feeling is another point in favor of the humanistic perspective. He wants to make changes so that he can get the benefits of a happy and fulfilling life. The changes he makes will increase his self-esteem as well as his self-actualization.

Example 3:

Kelsey is new in her school. She is worried about fitting in and about making new friends. Her first day at the new school she decides to join a few clubs to help her meet new people. She steps outside of her comfort zone to talk to more people and finds a few that become her friends very quickly.

Kelsey is reacting to an intrinsic need for friendship, self-esteem and self-actualization. This requires her to reach out to other people and try to make new friendships as she gets used to the new place to live. The humanistic perspective says that in order to be happy, Kelsey has an inherent need to adapt her life and become even happier. She will work towards these changes because of those inherent needs.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Other Important Facts about the Humanistic Perspective

This perspective looks at the way an individual will look at their own future and their own hopes for the future. It considers children as well as adults when looking at these perspectives. For example, a child will create their own condition of worth by understanding behavior that they are the recipient of as well as behavior that they see. This helps them understand how they can deserve positive emotions and whether they deserve those emotions from others.

When children are younger they will view the ways that their parents treat them as well as how their parents or friends treat other people. This will increase the way that they feel about themselves for the rest of their lives. If they don't get a good idea of themselves and what they can accomplish it could actually influence their own perception on themselves. This can affect them throughout the rest of their childhood as well as their adulthood.

Those who are not able to achieve all aspects of the hierarchy of needs will not be able to achieve true happiness in their lives. They will feel unhappy and unfulfilled no matter what they are actually able to accomplish. The important aspect of the hierarchy of needs is that they are absolutely necessary. Without every one of them being accomplished 100% there is no possibility of living a 100% fulfilled life. This requires continued achievement of each of these aspects.

If an individual feels self-actualized at one point but the feeling disappears they will not be achieving all of the aspects of the hierarchy of needs. As a result, they will not be able to be 100% happy and fulfilled.

Humanistic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Conclusion

The humanistic perspective considers the basic human needs of an individual and how important they really are to the overall happiness of that person. This considers aspects that are relevant to life and liberty.

1. The humanistic perspective considers physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs.
2. This perspective was based on the hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow.
3. The humanistic perspective was also expanded upon by Carl Rogers' theory of self-concept and its impact on self-actualization.
4. The humanistic perspective is still being used in modern times though it has been updated over time as well to reflect other changes in psychology.

This perspective is considered relevant even currently. It is related to the way that any individual will live their life. They will work towards a level of happiness as well as a new level of self-actualization and life in their life. Every one of us has an intrinsic desire to live a positive life and we will do everything we can to achieve that according to the humanistic perspective.



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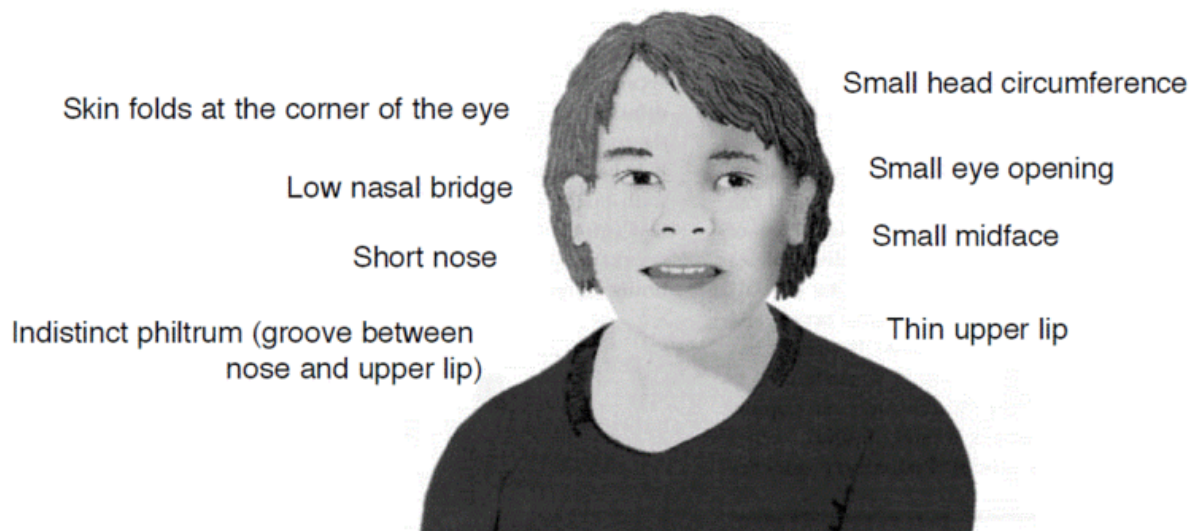
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Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course

Craniofacial features associated with fetal alcohol syndrome

Facial features of FAS



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The neuroscience/biological perspective relates to the way that genetics and evolution affect human behavior and natural selection. In order to get a 5 on your AP Psychology test you will need to understand the neuroscience/biological perspective, which considers a new reason for individuals to behave the way that they do.

Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

What to Know about the Neuroscience/Biological Perspective

The neuroscience/biological perspective relates to the way that people act in terms of how they came to be. With this perspective, genetics in the human body affect the way that they react to certain situations or the way that they act in different situations. This means that the genetics that have been passed down to that individual as a result of their parents will influence the way that they act throughout their entire life.

On the other hand, this theory also looks at the way that the nervous system and immune system operate to understand fully the basis under which the body continues to evolve and function. By understanding these aspects of the body it is believed that an individual will be capable of understanding why they react the way they do but often takes away some of the freedom that many believe that they have.

Under the neuroscience/biological perspective, actions are less the result of an individual choice and more the result of a genetic background. This makes it more difficult to change actions in a more positive light, though not impossible. In many instances, this perspective can be used to gain a thorough understanding of human behaviors.

The neuroscience/biological perspective is about the way that a person is. Instead of believing that external factors help to shape an individual, this perspective, instead, believes that the internal aspects of an individual are far more important to their actions. This perspective considers the external effects on the individual as being lesser and not as influential on the way they turn out.

With this perspective, the care and attention that an individual is given when they are being brought up and even into their adult life will still not affect them as much as what their genetic code states. This is often considered to be a flaw in the neuroscience/biological perspective as it is studied and has been addressed as this theory continues to be used. Other perspectives consider this aspect of the human condition and its influence on the individual.

Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

What is the Neuroscience/Biological Perspective Used For

This perspective has many different applications. These include genetic research, the influence of specific drugs on the body and more. Through this theory it is possible to understand the way that a specific drug, for example, will interact with any chemicals in the body to cause changes, or side effects. By understanding this it is possible to market the product in a more truthful way.

Another example of this theory at work is to look at individuals who exhibit different disorders such as anger. A believer in this perspective would look at the genetic makeup of the individual to see if they have received a trait from either parent which would contribute to these feelings of anger.

As a result of this theory however, we have been able to create the many psychopharmaceuticals that are utilized for those suffering from mental illness. We have also been able to develop brain scan tools which help even more with these types of developments. This is because of this perspective.

This theory utilizes the scientific method in order to test all variables. This means that it is a very limited field of research as only situations that can be completely controlled are able to be studied. The researcher must be able to gather a group of individuals who do not have a specific trait or experience as well as those who do in order to reach a satisfying resolution. This cannot be done in many situations because of safety standards as well as research requirements.

Who Founded the Neuroscience/Biological Perspective

This theory was actually founded by Charles Darwin. This scientist studied the way that genetics and evolution interact within any society and the way that natural selection continues to provide ways for the human species to grow and to change. Because some genes are selected to be passed on and others are not, certain individual traits continue on through a line of people while other traits are pushed out. This, according to Darwin, is natural selection at work and ensures that the next generation will be superior to the one before it.

Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Examples of Neuroscience/Biological Perspective

Example 1:

Throughout her life, Megan has always been an angry person. No matter what happens, she seems to get angry very fast. She has tried to calm herself when she gets angry but it doesn't seem to work. Her friends often avoid her now because she is prone to angry outbursts. Megan recognizes the problem but she doesn't know what else she can do about it. She can't even stop herself when she gets angry though she knows that she should.

A believer in the neuroscience/biological perspective would say that Megan has a genetic predisposition towards anger. Even though she knows it's a problem, there is nothing she can actually do to stop herself from being angry unless she takes medication. The fact that she is angry is because she inherited this trait when she was born.

Example 2:

John was abused as a child by his father. Whenever he would do something wrong his father would often hit him. He also witnessed this behavior with his mother and his siblings. His father would often hit them as well. Now that John is an adult, he is worried that he will be a bad father because of the abuse that he suffered because of his father. He is worried that he will become exactly the way that his father was and treat his children in the same way.

A believer in the neuroscience/biological perspective would look at John's genetic code. They would view the way that John has been genetically programmed to act. Even though his father abused him, this does not necessarily mean that John will continue the cycle of abuse. It does mean that he has a higher likelihood of it than others, according to this perspective.

Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 3:

Brandon is well liked by all of his friends because he is a happy person. No matter what happens around him, Brandon is always happy and his friends like him for it. When something goes wrong, Brandon is able to look at the bright side and see the silver lining to what is happening. Though sometimes this can rub others the wrong way, they like that he is fun to be around.

Brandon likely inherited his ability to look on the bright side from his family. This is a trait that one or both of his parents passed down to him through the genetic code. It is likely that one of his parents is positive in this way as well, this is where he inherited the trait.

This is a positive trait and it is important to understand that this perspective can relate to positive traits as well as negative ones. Passing down of genetic information does not lead only to passing down negative traits such as abuse or anger.

The AP Psych Exam and the Neuroscience/Biological Perspective

This perspective has been represented on the AP Psychology exam several times over the last few years. Each of these free response questions considers an individual or group and considers how the neuroscience/biological perspective applies to the situation that they find themselves in. For example, in 2006 a question was raised as to a young woman named Zoey who is looking for a new car. It then considers how different aspects will affect the decision that she makes regarding the car she wants.

Neuroscience/Biological Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Conclusion

It continues to be used to study human behavior. As a result, it is likely that it will be represented on your AP Psychology exam. This perspective has three main points to remember:

1. It was founded by Charles Darwin.
2. It relates to the way genetics influence behavior.
3. It is limited by the scientific method.

This theory operates with the understanding that genetics play the most important role in creating an individual as the person that they will be throughout their life. Under this theory, it is possible to change but it is very unlikely because of the influence that your genes have on you. According to Darwin, it would also be a bad idea to attempt changes to your genetic predispositions because this is natural selection at work and should be continued.

To get a 5 on your AP Psychology exam you will need to know many of the nuances of this perspective. The essay portion of your exam will count for a large part of the points that you earn and the more detail you are able to provide the better score you will be able to receive.

Psychoanalytical/ Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



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Introduction

What is the psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective? This perspective relates to an understanding of the past and the way it impacts an individual. The AP Psychology test is going to have a section on this perspective and you will need to understand the basics.

Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Defining the Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective

The psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective relates to not just the behavior that an individual engages in, but why they engage in it. According to this perspective, there is a reason for everything an individual does and it is related directly to something that has occurred in that individual's past. By understanding the incident that occurred in the past, it is possible to learn a way to overcome it in the present. This is the basis of understanding the psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective.

That doesn't seem so difficult right? Well it's not. This is actually a rather simple perspective to understand. The basics are something in the past causes something in the present. If you understand that, then you are already a good way towards understanding this theory and getting a good score on this part of your AP Psychology test. Of course, there is a bit more to it than just that (at least there's more you'll need to be able to do in order to get that high score you're looking for). You need to understand how to apply this theory and you'll need to know more about where it came from.

Founders of the Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective

Sigmund Freud founded the idea of psychoanalysis, which has evolved into the psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective. He believed that unconscious thoughts or motivations of an individual would directly correlate with the way they behaved in their conscious actions. Therefore, if an individual underwent trauma in their childhood, it would affect the way that they behaved throughout their adult life. The memory from childhood could potentially be positive or negative and still affect the individual in a negative way.

By delving into the unconscious mind, Freud believed one could unlock those unconscious memories and motivations. By doing so, it would be possible for the individual to overcome problems that were expressed through depression or anxiety disorders. Freud believed that it was necessary to unleash all of those repressed thoughts and feelings in order to become a healthy adult.

Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Examples of the Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective

The psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective may seem simple in theory but here are a few examples of it in practice to help you understand what it really means:

Example 1:

Jennifer was physically abused as a child. Her father would get very mad at her whenever she would not do something he had asked of her. Sometimes he struck her with his hand and sometimes with a belt. Jennifer would get very upset when this happened and withdraw into herself. She would strive to do everything she could to make him happy the next time he asked her to do something.

Now, Jennifer is an adult. She is married and has a house of her own. One day, her husband asked her to pick up a cake at the store for him to take in to work. Jennifer was busy at work and forgot to stop on her way home. When her husband gets home, he asks where the cake is and Jennifer realizes she forgot to get it.

Based on the psychoanalytical/psychodynamic perspective, Jennifer would react to her forgetfulness in the same way that she used to react when her father would ask her to do something and she forgot to do it. She would likely retreat into herself and work hard to become “better”.

For her husband, this would likely be a confusing reaction. Even if he were angry that she forgot, he would not expect her to react in this way. Jennifer, being withdrawn, would not explain to him why she didn't get the cake or why she is suddenly withdrawn.

Over time, this can cause a rift between the two of them. Without facing up to the thoughts and experiences she had as a child, Jennifer would not be able to have a healthy relationship with her husband.

Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 2:

When Mark was young, his mother left the family. She never told him she was going to leave. But one day, when he got home from school, she wasn't there. His father would tell him that she was a selfish person and that she abandoned them. He told Mark that all women would leave eventually and that you should never get attached to one because they would not stay.

Now, Mark is a carefree bachelor. He is going on 30 and even though his friends are all settling down, Mark can't find a woman he wants to spend his life with. He thinks he wants to start a family but always finds himself pushing women away when he starts to feel close to them.

Because Mark was told as a child that all women will leave, he is afraid to fall in love. He doesn't want to get too attached to a woman because, based on his past, he believes that any woman that he would love will eventually leave him.

In order to overcome this feeling, Mark must revisit his past and consider the events that occurred when he was younger. He will have to think about his mother leaving and will need to consider what it means for his future. Until he learns that not all women are going to leave, or becomes willing to take the risk, he will not be able to settle down and have a family.

Example 3:

Megan and Kelsey are sisters who have grown up in the same household. When they were young, Kelsey fell out of a tree and broke her leg. It never healed properly and she has walked with a limp ever since. Megan was with her when the incident happened and watched her fall though she was able to climb out of the tree safely herself.

Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Now, the two are adults. Kelsey is not affected by her fall (other than the limp) but Megan is afraid of heights. She finds herself terrified of tall buildings, bridges and has never climbed trees again. She worries every time her children climb on the playground or if they attempt to climb the tree in their backyard.

Because Megan witnessed the fall that changed Kelsey's life, she is incapable of removing the fear that it will happen in her own life. She understands that the injury occurred because of the height of the fall and this has impacted her greatly.

Until Megan is able to understand that the fall is no one's fault and that Kelsey is okay, she will not be able to overcome her own fear of heights. The psychoanalytic/psychodynamic perspective would tell us that the incident that she witnessed in her past led to her current fear.

Finding More Information on Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Theory

If you're looking for even more information on this theory, you may want to check out [Barrons AP Psychology 6th Edition](#). This is the most recent edition of the book which is inexpensive and also has an option for supplementary flashcards. This is considered one of the best prep books available and the cards have the distinct advantage of being easy to carry around.

This book contains a lot of information about the many theories in psychology which includes psychoanalytic/psychodynamic theory as well as a variety of other theories. You'll also find definitions of commonly used terms, practice tests and free response questions that you can practice with. A large number of AP psychology students have used this tool and recommend it for others looking to get a 5 on their test. If you prefer online resources, you may want to consider [Albert.io's Guide to AP Psychology](#).

Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Conclusion

Psychoanalytic/psychodynamic perspective is based on a belief that the past will dictate the future. In order to fully understand this theory, it's important to understand that the way a person acts is a direct reflection of an experience they had when they were younger. It doesn't have to be a childhood experience. It could be an experience from earlier in adulthood. It may even be an experience that was witnessed and not experienced personally.

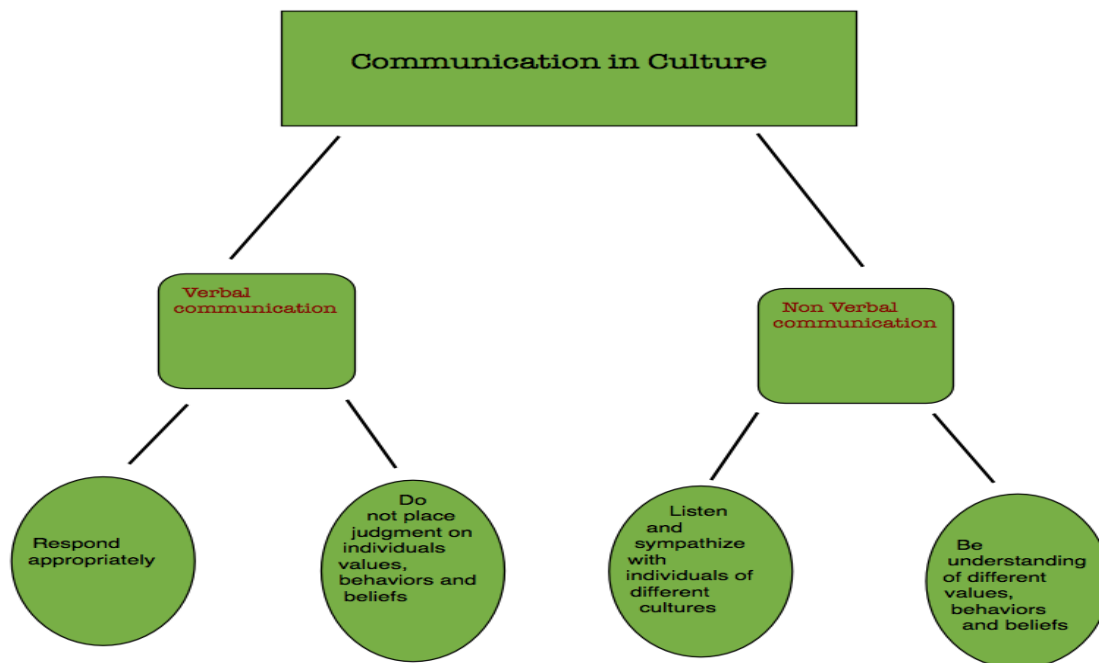
One thing is certain when you're studying for your AP psychology test: this theory will definitely be on it. As you begin your AP Psychology review, remember these key points:

Behavior is directly related to the past

1. Unconscious must be made conscious to resolve the problem
2. Sigmund Freud is the founder of psychoanalysis

Obviously, the more information that you are able to remember, the better you will be able to do. Remembering the basics will enable you to get a decent score and likely allow you to get at least a passing score of 3. If you're looking to get a 5, you'll want to remember as many nuances as possible. This exam includes an essay portion and the more in depth information you are able to provide on your essay, the better the score you will receive.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



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Introduction

In the social-cultural perspective, an individual is evaluated based on the social groups they belong to. Your AP psychology exam will require you to understand the basics of who founded this perspective, what it really means and how to diagnose different characteristics of this theory.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

You'll want to consider different types of social groups that occur in society. These can include age groups, gender groups and many others.

Any group that restricts some individuals, including clubs or organizations, can also impact an individual. This means that belonging to a band, a gym, or a dance troupe can influence the way that you develop as well as religions and gender groups.

This perspective will be represented in you AP psychology exam through multiple choice as well as written questions. This means you'll need to consider the way that this theory relates to other theories and also how it will impact different parts of life for any individual. It considers not just childhood but adult life as well since different social groups will come into the life of an individual at any aspect of their life. These groups can still impact your life even if you are an adult.

What is the Social-Cultural Perspective?

The social-cultural perspective considers the way that different individuals interact with their social groups and how these social groups influence different individuals and how they develop throughout their lives.

The social group can consist of any group that the individual is a part of. In fact, most people belong to a large number of different social groups. These include gender groups, racial groups, religions and more. For example, your peers can influence you in a dramatic way but so can your family, your social class and your ethnicity. Given all other characteristics exactly the same, a female will develop differently than a male. A wealthy female will develop differently than a poor female.

Different situations that you will find yourself in have a different impact on the way that you continue to develop. For example, as you grow from childhood into adolescence your social groups will affect you differently.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Most find that family impacts the childhood of an individual more than peer groups. When you get older however, such as in adolescence, peer groups are more of an influence than family.

In the social-cultural perspective all of the groups that an individual belongs to will influence their future. Only by understanding the full impact of social groups and understanding every group that the individual is involved in will a psychologist be able to fully understand what that individual will do. This will allow you to understand the behaviors of an individual both in the past and in their future.

Who Founded the Social-Cultural Perspective?

Let's get into an AP psychology review of this perspective to help you better understand what's going to be on your exam. The social-cultural perspective was founded by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist. Also known as the sociocultural perspective, this theory emphasized how a child would grow to become an adult and come to develop thoughts, behaviors and beliefs.

Vygotsky felt that children were born with different beliefs in their minds. However, those beliefs are subject to interpretation and change based on the groups that the individual belongs to and which groups they are raised into. His theory was based off of Piaget's perspective concerning cognitive development.

This theory believed that the interactions of children into the world were the way that they primarily learned and developed. On the other hand, Vygotsky focused more on social interaction rather than singular interaction. By considering the differences between these two perspectives it is easier to understand the ways that children come to understand and complete different actions.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Examples of Social-Cultural Perspective

Example 1:

Megan grew up in the country. Her family has always raised animals and she is responsible for feeding the chickens every morning. The chickens get up early and they need to be let out of their pen before breakfast. She also needs to make sure that the eggs are gathered before she goes to eat her own breakfast. So every morning Megan gets up at 6 am because that's when she needs to start her chores.

Eliza grew up in the city. Before she eats breakfast all she needs to do is get dressed. She hates getting up early and so often she doesn't even get up until 7:30 am so that she can eat breakfast quickly and catch the bus at 8 am.

The two girls are the same age and they both have to go to school but they get up at different times of the day because of the way they were raised. They have different actions that need to be completed and they also have different interests. Eliza doesn't like to get up early and she doesn't need to, her social groups don't require her to do so. Megan does like to get up early however and her social group definitely does require her to do it.

Example 2:

Peter is Catholic and grew up going to church every Sunday. He never misses a church service and makes sure that he prays before he eats any meal. His family has taught him this and they make sure that he continues to follow all of these traits. Even when his family is not present however, Peter continues to follow these same traits and continues to pray and attend church. The traits that Peter follows began as something that his parents pushed him into. As he grew older however, he continued to carry out these traits. He did this because he was interested in what he had been raised into and he believed that it was something he wanted to continue. The social group he was raised in (Catholic) influenced his life and his behavior even as he grew older.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 3:

Andrew's family puts a lot of emphasis on education. From the time he was able to read his family encouraged him to do so. They pushed him to study as much as possible and also made sure that he did his homework as quickly as possible. As a result, he was able to get excellent grades in all of his classes. As he enters college he is able to take his pick because he received excellent grades. When he goes away to college he spends most of his time in his dorm room studying, even though his roommate tries to convince him to go out and party instead. His feelings about studying are influencing the way that he continues to live his life. This shows how the sociocultural perspective influences him.

More about the Social-Cultural Perspective in AP Psychology

This perspective can influence everything that you do throughout your life. As you continue to grow your social groups will change. As a child you may have some friends and then you may have different friends as you get older. This means that your groups will influence you in different ways.

Understand the way that the social cultural perspective influences an individual as a child, an adolescent and an adult. This theory has still been found to be important and it's found to be relevant as well. As a result of this theory, there is a better understanding of your way of thinking and looking at the world.

According to the social-cultural perspective the zone of proximal development is also extremely important. This zone is based on a distance between actual development level and potential development. These things help to understand better the way that the individual will develop in the future as well as how they have developed already.

Vygotsky believed that the human mind will continue to learn from others and learn from different groups that they are involved with socially no matter what else is happening in their life or even if they are rather isolated in their lives.

Social-Cultural Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Different cultures will influence in different ways simply because these cultures will have different important factors.

One culture may put emphasis on intelligence while another may put more emphasis on memorization. Because of these differences, the social cultural perspective will emphasize the most important aspects of each social group.

Conclusion

This AP psychology crash course evaluates the social-cultural perspective of development. The social-cultural perspective requires you to look at the upbringing that an individual has but also at their social groups. Every social group that an individual belongs to is going to impact the way that they develop and these groups are going to influence the way that they look at life. On the other hand, every group will impact the individual slightly differently.

As a result, an individual who is Catholic, African American and female will have a slightly different outlook on life than someone who is Protestant, African American and female. Each social group provides a different influence and those social groups will interact in different ways.

1. Social-cultural perspective considers the many different social groups that an individual belongs to and how those groups influence them throughout their life.
2. This perspective was founded by Lev Vygotsky as an emphasis on the theories of Piaget.
3. The zone of proximal development is an important aspect of this perspective.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course



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Introduction

If you're about to take the AP Psychology test you're going to wonder what the cognitive perspective is. It is a popular theory and will be on your test. In order to get the score you want on your test you will need to understand how the cognitive perspective relates to the actions of an individual. You will also need to understand the way in which it was founded and why it is considered different from other perspectives in psychology. It is very commonly used to understand how and why someone will react to any given situation based on their upbringing.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Defining the Cognitive Perspective

The cognitive perspective, as you will learn further in this AP psychology crash course, operates on the belief that the brain is the most important aspect in relation to the way that an individual behaves or thinks. This perspective states that to understand someone, you must first be able to understand what is happening in their mind. Once you are able to do this, you will be able to understand how they will act in other situations as well.

The basis for this foundation is on the way that information that is heard or learned by the individual is processed by the brain. It is important to understand that, though a number of people may hear the same information, they will not all process it in the same way. As a result, in order to determine the way in which a specific individual will process information and respond to it, it is important to understand the way in which they process other information.

This theory is also interested in the memory, perception (both of the self and of others), and problem solving. It then considers the way in which each of these areas relates to the behavior of the individual in any given situation.

By considering the way that an individual has gathered information throughout their life and the way that they process that information it is possible to understand them better. This requires knowing the type of memories the person has as well. Even the same memories from different people will be processed differently. Two individuals who went through the same events will also have different memories of those events. As a result, every individual will have a different method of action through the cognitive perspective.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Who Invented the Cognitive Perspective?

So here's a little AP psychology review. This perspective came to light in the 1950's-1960's. It is believed to be primarily the brainchild of Ulric Neisser. Neisser believed that behaviorism was an incorrect and outdated theory and, therefore, a different understanding was necessary to better understand the ways in which an individual cultivated information and reacted to it.

At the same time Neisser did not want to truly discredit the theory, which focused only on outward behavior of an individual rather than the inward behaviors and beliefs of the individual. He determined it was better to offer a different way of thinking. His goal, in touting the cognitive perspective, was to create an alternative to the popular theory of behaviorism.

Other scientists who were interested in this theory and studied it as well were Jean Piaget, Noam Chomsky, Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner. These scientists continued to study the theory throughout the next hundred years and continued to expand upon it. The cognitive perspective has continued to be used, though updated, until more recent times.

Neisser was not the only person to tout the idea of the cognitive perspective at the time, but he did write a book on the topic which caused him to be named as the founder. His book helped others to better understand the new perspective and the way that it could be used to understand the way that any individual would make a decision and execute an action.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Examples of Cognitive Perspective

Example 1:

Emily started college last summer and has not been able to improve her grades as much as her friends think she could. What they don't know is that Emily herself is not studying. Emily has never been good at school and, as a result, believes that she can't do well. Because of this, she does not have high self-esteem and refuses to put in the work necessary to succeed.

The way that Emily feels about herself is related to an event that has happened in her past. This event or memory has influenced the way that she continues to behave even in the present. Because she has a feeling about herself that is negative she has trouble overcoming this feeling to accomplish more in the future.

Example 2:

Tom wants to impress his boss with his next presentation but every time he thinks about practicing the presentation he gets anxious. He decides not to practice because he doesn't like the feeling. In the past Tom completed a presentation for his boss and the boss did not like it. Tom feels anxious that the boss will not like his next presentation either and does not practice.

Because Tom has had a bad experience with his boss in the past his subconscious mind has tied this in with his present experience. He is convinced that the next experience will be the same as the past experience because his mind continues to make the connection between a presentation with the boss and the last presentation that he made. Until he can overcome this connection he will not be able to create a positive presentation that the boss will like.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 3:

Jennifer always quits her job just before she's going to get a promotion. She tells herself that she doesn't like the job but the truth is that she feels too much pressure. In high school Jennifer was voted president of her class but she didn't do well. Now she is afraid to take on any additional responsibilities because she feels she can't succeed.

When Jennifer was in high school she had an experience that was very negative. As a result, she continues to associate that experience with any position of power. She feels that this is a statement about her ability to be in charge and does not believe that she can grow or continue to get better with anything that she does. She will not be able to succeed at a position of influence until she is able to convince herself that she should try.

What to know About Cognitive Perspective

What you need to know for your AP psychology exam is that this perspective can be used to better understand learning style, attention, and language acquisition as well as the way people forget things. With this perspective it's possible to look at the best ways to teach different people as well as considering how to gain the attention of a group of individuals. Through the cognitive perspective it is possible to develop new teaching styles.

The modern study of cognitive perspective states that the mind is similar to a computer system. With this understanding, it is better possible for psychologists to understand the way that the human mind works in general in relation to the mind of another being. By understanding the processes of decision making as they relate to a general foundation, it is possible to realize what should be done in regards to treating the conditions that may arise in the psyche of a healthy individual or an unhealthy one.

Cognitive Perspective: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

This perspective is often closely tied in with the field of neuroscience as it relates so closely to an understanding of the brain and the way in which the brain functions both on a scientific and psychological level.

The Cognitive Perspective and the AP Psychology Exam

The cognitive perspective has been represented on the AP psychology exam a number of times. Free response questions with this perspective include discussing the theory of anxiety, and explaining how this perspective would affect the way that a child tells a story. This perspective has been used as part of a free response question in six of the last 13 years. In the prior 10 years it was used several times as well because this is a very common perspective. In general, questions on this perspective consider how any individual will react to a situation based on it.

Wrapping up the Cognitive Perspective and AP Psychology

The AP Psychology exam is intended to ensure that you have a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive perspective as well as other perspectives in psychology. The cognitive perspective is a way of understanding the actions of an individual. The actions are believed to be based upon the memory as well as the feelings that an individual has gone through in their past. The most important factors are:

1. Cognitive perspective relates to the way the past dictates the present of an individual.
2. Created by Ulric Neisser.
3. It replaced the Behaviorism Perspective.
4. Relates to the way an individual feels and understands on the inside as important to the way that they act externally.

In order to fully develop a free response answer you will need to understand the full cognitive perspective, which we've gone over in this AP Psychology crash course. A basic understanding will give you what you need for multiple choice sections of your test and get a better score on the essay portion of the test.



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Classical Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course



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What is Classical Conditioning?

Classical conditioning is a type of learning where the organism learns to associate two stimuli. Association begins when a neutral stimulus happens and an unconditioned stimulus produces a response. The unconditioned stimulus naturally and automatically triggers a response that psychologists call the unconditioned response. The unconditioned response is the unlearned, naturally occurring response to the unconditioned stimulus. Through classical conditioning the neutral stimulus is then associated to become the conditioned stimulus, causing a conditioned response. The conditioned response is reinforced as the process is repeated.

Classical Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Being a type of associate learning, classical conditioning is all about bringing stimuli and responses together. This mode of learning looks at the effect that the stimuli has on organisms as well as the relationships made with the stimuli. Now, all of these terms can be a little confusing, so let's look at some examples that utilize the idea of classical conditioning.

Example 1: Pavlov's Dogs

The original experiment that Ivan Pavlov did to form this classical conditioning idea was with German Shepherds. Pavlov began the experiment by giving the dogs their food. The food is the unconditioned stimulus in this case. When introduced to the food the dogs began to salivate, which is the unconditioned response.

Then, Pavlov started to ring a bell every time before he introduced the food. The bell is the neutral stimulus and it is attributed to the food, the unconditioned stimulus, which results in the dogs salivating, or the unconditioned response. This association is called acquisition and must take place in order for classical conditioning to happen. Without acquisition the unconditioned stimulus and the conditioned stimulus will not be associated with each other. It is very important that the bell was rung every time to fortify this association.

Once the dogs fully associate the food with the bell, then the dogs will salivate whenever the bell is rung. This makes the bell the conditioned stimulus and the salivation the conditioned response.

Example 2: Scent Association

Classical conditioning, however, is not just for training dogs. Let's look at another example of classical conditioning that uses humans. The subject, we will call him Dave, went on a date last night, and his date wore cologne. The date turned very passionate. When Dave got in his car and smelled the remnants of the cologne he became overcome with excitement and happiness.

Classical Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Here the unconditioned stimulus would be the passionate date, which led to the unconditioned response of an exciting and happy reaction. When the cologne is introduced it becomes the conditioned stimulus, or the stimulus that is attributed to the passionate date. The cologne then triggers the happy and excited reaction, or the conditioned response.

This response of happiness and excitement may fade in time, or become extinct. Extinction happens, because the unconditioned stimulus of the passionate date is no longer associated with each other. An example of this may be when the next date does not go well. After that, Dave may no longer get excited when he smells the cologne.

Although, if Dave and his date have another passionate date after extinction has occurred, then spontaneous recovery could happen. This means that Dave may once again learn to associate the cologne with a passionate date.

Example 3: Bitten

Jane was walking down the street when she was bitten by a German Shepherd. Now whenever she walks down the street and sees that dog she becomes fearful. Jane, however, is not afraid of her own dog at home.

The unconditioned stimulus here is the bite from an English Bulldog. The unconditioned response to that bite is fear. When she walks down the street and sees the dog again, then that is the conditioned stimulus. As Jane sees that dog she becomes fearful. That fear is the conditioned response. Now every time Jane sees that dog she will become afraid.

The reason that Jane is not afraid of her own dog at home is a term called discrimination. Here discrimination means that Jane can distinguish between the dog that has made her fearful and her own dog. She separates the two entities and does not make a connection between all dogs and fear. If Jane had made the connection with fear to all dogs, a phenomenon called generalization, then she would have been fearful of her dog as well.

Classical Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Why is Classical Conditioning Important for the AP Psychology Exam?

Ivan Pavlov's classical conditioning is very important to the AP Psychology exam, because the open ended portion of the exam often contains questions about identifying the learning style in a certain scenario. This means that student may be given a scenario that involves one of the styles of learning that may include classical conditioning. Being able to pick out the unconditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, conditioned stimulus, and conditioned response could determine the difference between a score of a 3 or of a 5.

Classical conditioning is on the AP Psychology exam so often in the free response questions as well as the multiple choice section, because the AP Psychology exam puts an emphasis on psychology as a science, and the classical conditioning experiments done by Pavlov exemplify this idea. Pavlov's experiments and conclusions also gave a springboard for B.F. Skinner to come along and perform his experiments of operant conditioning.

Knowing the difference between classical conditioning and its other learning counterparts such as operant conditioning and observational learning will really showcase your knowledge.

Wrapping up Classical Conditioning and AP Psychology

Classical conditioning is vital for the AP Psychology exam. You need to be able to recognize if classical conditioning is occurring. A great way to do that is to be able to identify the unconditioned stimulus, the unconditioned response, the conditioned stimulus, and the conditioned response. If you cannot relate those terms to the prompt, then you may not be looking at classical conditioning. Other terms that will be helpful are generalization, discrimination, extinction, and spontaneous recovery. Knowing all of these terms will be sure to assist your answering the multiple choice section of the AP Psychology exam.

Operant Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course



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B.F. Skinner, the father of operant conditioning, determined that operant conditioning is a mode of learning. This mode of learning causes behaviors that are rewarded to be reinforced and behaviors that are punished to be weakened. In this AP Psychology review on operant conditioning we will journey through operant conditioning, examples of this mode of learning, the terms associated with operant conditioning, and why it is important to know for the AP Psychology exam.

Operant Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Example 1: The Toddler in the Grocery Store

Everyone has seen that little boy or girl that throws a temper tantrum in the checkout line. The toddler screams and cries when the parent tells the kid that he or she cannot have candy. The parent reacts by either giving the child the candy or telling the child no once again.

Let's say that the parent gives in and gives the child the candy. By doing this, learning is happening by operant conditioning. The child learns that by throwing a tantrum he or she will get candy. The candy here is the positive reinforcer, which is a pleasurable stimulus that strengthens the action, or in this case, the tantrum. Therefore, by giving the child the candy, the parent is rewarding the bad behavior. This is why new parents are often told not to give into their children when they cry and scream.

If the parent did not allow the child to have the candy, then operant conditioning would have still taken place but in a different way. The child, by not receiving the candy, would have continued to scream; however, the tantrum would not be rewarded. Let's say the parent then took away the child's television privilege. This is a negative punishment, meaning that a pleasant stimulus such as television is removed in order to show the child that the behavior is bad. The parent could also use a positive punishment, or adding an adverse stimulus to decrease the unwanted behavior. An example of this would be spanking, although positive punishment has been known to be less effective than others.

Example 2: Teaching a Dog to Roll Over

Another example of operant conditioning is teaching a dog to roll over by rewarding the dog with a treat every time he or she performs the trick. This is operant conditioning at work, because the dog's behavior of rolling over is rewarded by the positive reinforcer, or the treat.

Operant Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

The trainer could also utilize the operant conditioning technique of shaping as well. Shaping is when the trainer guides the dog closer and closer to the wanted behavior, meaning the dog would be given a treat every time it gets closer to rolling over. This reinforces the behavior continuously until the dog associated the treat with rolling over.

Once the dog learns to roll over, the trainer must be sure to keep up with giving the dog positive reinforcement, otherwise extinction will occur. Extinction happens when the dog no longer rolls over. This is usually because the behavior is no longer enforced.

Some trainers also utilize positive punishment when teaching dogs. Positive punishment is when an adverse stimulus is given to reduce the behavior happening. An example of this would be hitting the dog every time that the dog does not roll over. This is not advised, because the dog may become easily frustrated and aggressive. The dog will not only learn to roll over ineffectively, but the dog will also learn that the trainer is abusive. Tolerance for getting hit will only last for so long until adverse reactions occur; therefore, it is advised to stay away from positive punishment.

Example 3: Buckling Up

Have you ever tried to drive without your seatbelt buckled? In most automobiles an annoying buzzing noise begins until you buckle that seatbelt. This is also an example of operant conditioning, because the idea of the negative reinforcer, or the buzzing, enforcing the behavior of buckling your seatbelt is within the behavior and reinforcement model of operant conditioning. A negative reinforcer is not the same as a punishment. This is because a punishment is used in order to reduce a behavior, while a negative reinforcer strengthens a behavior. If you begin buckling your seatbelt once you hear that buzzing, then the negative reinforcer is doing its job. You feel that buckling the seatbelt is an easier task than waiting until the irritating buzzing stops. Through this reinforcement you are trained via operant conditioning to stay safe and buckle up.

Operant Conditioning: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Why is this Important for the AP Psychology Exam?

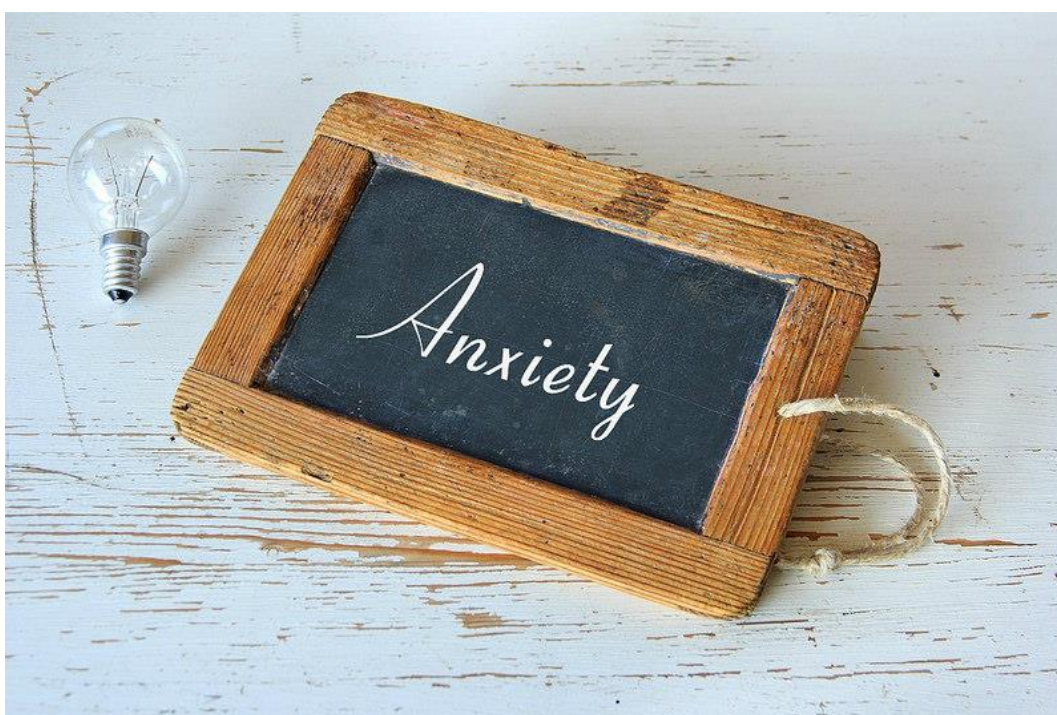
Operant conditioning is a large part of how organisms learn, making it extremely important for the AP Psychology exam. This mode of learning is basic to how we as humans develop along with classical conditioning and observational learning. Knowing the difference between these modes of learning is vital for performing well on both the multiple choice section and the free response questions. The multiple choice questions often entail a scenario of a subject learning, and the student must then choose which mode of learning the scenario is conveying.

A great way to tell if the scenario is operant conditioning is to look for reinforcers or punishments, because operant conditioning deals with strengthening or weakening behaviors, which is done through reinforcing and punishing behaviors.

On the free response section of the AP Psychology exam, operant condition and the other modes of learning are also prevalent. The exam frequently asks the students to compare modes of learning and to give the benefits and drawbacks of each of them. The benefit to using operant conditioning is that there is control of what behaviors are being strengthened or weakened, unlike classical conditioning and observational learning. The drawback to operant conditioning is that punishment within operant conditioning may result in disdain between the trainer and trainee.

So commit operant conditioning to memory before exam time! If you do, then you will be rewarded with the positive reinforcer of a 5 on the AP Psychology exam.

Anxiety Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course



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The abnormal psychology section of the AP Psychology course can feel never ending. There are so many different disorders, each with their diagnostic criteria, possible causes, and treatments. Anxiety disorders can seem like just one more thing for you to know for the exam. But have no fear, in this AP Psychology Crash Course Review, we will tell you exactly what you need to know about anxiety disorders for the AP Psychology exam!

Anxiety Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

What are Anxiety Disorders?

Anxiety Disorders are a classification of mental disorders (within the abnormal psychology section of your course) that are characterized by the anxiety and fear they cause.

There are five types of anxiety disorders that you will need to know for the AP Psychology exam: phobias, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

1. Phobias

There are three common kinds of phobias: specific/simple phobias, agoraphobia, and social phobia. Phobias, in general, are put into the anxiety disorder classification because the object or situation of the phobia causes the person anxiety.

A specific or simple phobia is an intense fear of something specific, can be an object or a situation that is often irrational and can be disruptive to the person's everyday life. Examples of specific phobias are claustrophobia, which is the fear of enclosed spaces, or arachnophobia, which is the fear of spiders. Now, you may be thinking that you don't exactly enjoy enclosed spaces, and you certainly don't like spiders, but that doesn't necessarily mean you have a specific phobia. Many people have things they don't like or that they fear, but it becomes a phobia when it begins to disrupt your daily life.

Agoraphobia is another common kind of phobia; agoraphobia is a fear of open or public spaces. Another aspect of agoraphobia is a fear of being in a situation where escape would be either too difficult or too embarrassing. People who suffer from severe agoraphobia will often be too afraid to leave their homes.

A social phobia is a fear of social situations; this can often be performance anxiety or a situation where someone could get embarrassed in public. For example, someone with a severe fear of public speaking could be diagnosed with a social phobia.

Anxiety Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

2. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is characterized by excessive and constant low levels of anxiety, often accompanied by continuous tension and apprehension. Usually, the person suffering from this disorder has difficulty controlling their anxiety and tension (which can often lead to increased levels of worry and distress). To be diagnosed with GAD, the individual has to be suffering from this constant level of stress and arousal for at least six months.

3. Panic Disorder

Panic disorder is, in some ways, the opposite of Generalized Anxiety Disorder. While someone with GAD will feel almost constant levels of nervousness and anxiety, a person with panic disorder experiences short, unexpected episodes of panic attacks that cause intense feelings of fear and anxiety. Panic attacks typically last 10-30 minutes and the accompanying symptoms can include palpitations, dizziness, chest pain, and fear of dying. Panic disorder is part of the anxiety disorder classification due to both the anxiety felt during the panic attack, and the anxiety felt towards future attacks.

To be diagnosed with panic disorder, the person must be exhibiting four or more of the following symptoms during their panic attacks: palpitations, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, choking feeling, chills/hot flashes, chest pain/discomfort, nausea, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, derealization (feeling detached from yourself), fear of loss of control, fear of death, and feelings of tingling or numbness). This has to be accompanied with subsequent worry about having another panic attack or behavior changes to avoid future attacks.

4. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

A person who has OCD suffers from a cycle of obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are unwanted and repetitive thoughts that cause anxiety, a common example of which is contamination or a fear of germs and dirt.

Anxiety Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Compulsions are actions taken to help try and reduce the obsessions, such as washing your hands over and over. It is hard to break from the stereotypical idea that someone with OCD is just a clean freak. The reason that this disorder is in the anxiety disorder classification is that it is characterized by the cyclical process between having obsessive thoughts that drive the feelings of anxiety, and the compulsive actions that are taken to reduce the anxiety, even for just a brief period.

5. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Most people stereotypically link this disorder to veterans of war, which is valid because it occurs after a person has seen or been involved in a deeply traumatic event. The disorder is classified as an anxiety disorder because memories of the trauma or related events cause the person suffering from PTSD anxiety. A person with PTSD often has nightmares and/or flashbacks of the event that drive the continued feelings of anxiety. Flashbacks can often be accompanied by physical symptoms such as heart pounding and sweating.

What we stereotypically think of with PTSD symptoms are the hyperarousal symptoms, which cause the person suffering from this disorder to be easily startled, feeling on edge, or having angry outbursts. An individual with PTSD will often avoid situations or places that will trigger a memory or a flashback, as well.

So, what Causes Anxiety Disorders?

There are four different perspectives for you to know about the causes of anxiety disorders for the AP Psychology exam: behavioral, psychoanalytical/psychodynamic, biological, and cognitive.

1. Behavioral

Essentially, the behavioral perspective for the causes of anxiety disorders relates to the overarching idea that all behaviors are learned.

Anxiety Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

This could be from either classical conditioning, operant conditioning, observational learning, or any other learning concept. A behaviorist would say that anxiety is learned because an individual has associated the feelings of fear with a specific object or situation, thus creating the learned fear response.

2. Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic

The psychoanalytic perspective views the causes of disorders as unresolved conflicts in our unconscious. Remember Freud and the Id, superego, and ego? Well according to psychoanalytic theorists, our anxiety manifests from our repressed desires and subsequent conflicts between the three sections of our unconscious.

3. Biological

The important thing to remember for the AP Psychology exam when dealing with the biological perspective and abnormal psychology is that for the most part, disorders will occur when there is either a chemical imbalance in our brain, a genetic predisposition, or both. And this holds true for anxiety disorders as well. It is not essential that you know exactly what neurotransmitter or hormone can affect anxiety but know that a chemical imbalance in the brain that affects the nervous or endocrine system can instigate anxiety. You should also know that studies suggest there is a genetic predisposition to anxiety disorder, but that you don't inherit anxiety or specific fears.

4. Cognitive

If you are a cognitive theorist (which, if you're studying for the AP Psychology exam, you're probably not quite there yet), then you believe that disorders, such as anxiety disorders, are due to an individual's dysfunctional thinking. Essentially, that a person's anxiety is caused by the way they think and interprets the world around them; these anxiety-inducing thoughts will be negative, unhealthy, and irrational and feed into the individual's anxiety.

Anxiety Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

How do You Treat Anxiety Disorders?

We will look at the treatment of anxiety disorders through the same perspectives from the previous section (behavioral, psychoanalytic, biological, and cognitive).

1. Behavioral Treatments

Treatment of anxiety disorders from the behaviorist perspective uses classical conditioning techniques to reduce anxiety or counter-conditioning. Two common forms of counter conditioning that are good to remember are systematic desensitization and aversive conditioning.

Systematic desensitization works by gradually associating some form of relaxed state while gradually increasing the anxiety-inducing stimuli; this is most often used in the treatment of phobias. Aversive conditioning works by associating an unpleasant state with the behavior that a person wants to reduce; a common example of this is introducing a nausea-producing agent with alcohol as a way to decrease alcohol consumption.

2. Psychoanalytic/Psychodynamic Treatments

Treatment of anxiety disorders through the psychoanalytic perspective is mainly related to talk therapy. Specific examples of this are free association, dream analysis, or even hypnosis. Psychoanalytic treatments are operating under the idea that there is conflict in your unconscious, and so the treatments are geared with that in mind.

3. Biological Treatments

For this treatment, just remember that the main point of the biological perspective is that there is a chemical imbalance in the brain. So, to fix that, the treatment is often a form of medication such as anti-anxiety or anti-depressant drugs.

Anxiety Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

4. Cognitive Treatments

In general, the important aspect to understand for cognitive treatments is that the aim is to change an individual's way of thinking. It's not just about going through therapy to think different thoughts, but it's about replacing the negative dialogue in your head with positive dialogue instead.

Anxiety Disorders on the AP Psychology Exam

Of the available Free Response Questions on AP Central, two of them have to do with anxiety disorders. One from [2012](#) asks students to relate how agoraphobia could affect an individual deciding where she would apply to college.

The second, from [2001](#), asked directly about the causes of anxiety disorders. Students were asked to discuss the cause of anxiety based on each of the four perspectives outlined in this AP Psychology Crash Course (behavioral, psychoanalytical, biological, and cognitive), as well as discuss a treatment from each of the four perspectives that professionals would use to reduce an individual's anxiety.

Overview

Anxiety disorders probably feel like a lot to know on top of all the other disorders in the abnormal psychology section of your AP Psychology course, but trust me when I say you'll be fine. Whether or not you feel unsure about anxiety disorders when you're studying for the exam, concentrate your efforts on understanding the concepts outlined in this crash course and you'll be fine!

First, know the five main anxiety disorders: phobias, generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. For the exam, you should understand what each of the disorders are and also what makes it a part of the anxiety disorders classification. For example, OCD is included because the obsessive thoughts an individual has causes them anxiety.

Anxiety Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Second, know the theories for the cause of anxiety disorder from each of the four perspectives (behavioral, psychoanalytical, biological, and cognitive). For each one, you should know the theory of the cause, and how the perspective as a school of thought relates to it.

Tip: for the AP Psychology exam as a whole, you should understand the different perspective of psychology, even unrelated to a specific disorder or class of disorders. Your greatest asset to doing well on the exam is understanding over memorization. If you can't remember exactly what this crash course said about behaviorist theories about the cause of anxiety disorder, but you know that the behavioral perspective says that all behavior is learned, then that can help you make connections in your head to lead you to the right answer.

Third, just like with any abnormal psychology disorder, you should be able to give treatment options to reduce anxiety. Specifically for anxiety disorders, it would be helpful to be able to understand the treatments from each of the different perspectives.

So that's it for this AP Psychology Crash Course Review on Anxiety Disorders! If you felt confident after reading the overview, then you're good to go! If not, calmly review this crash course again, and you'll figure it out in no time. Are there other topics you're struggling to understand? Check out more of our AP Psychology Crash Course Reviews (like this one on [Classical Conditioning!](#)).

Is there a topic you want us to review in a crash course? Please let us know!

Good luck on the exam!

Somatoform Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course

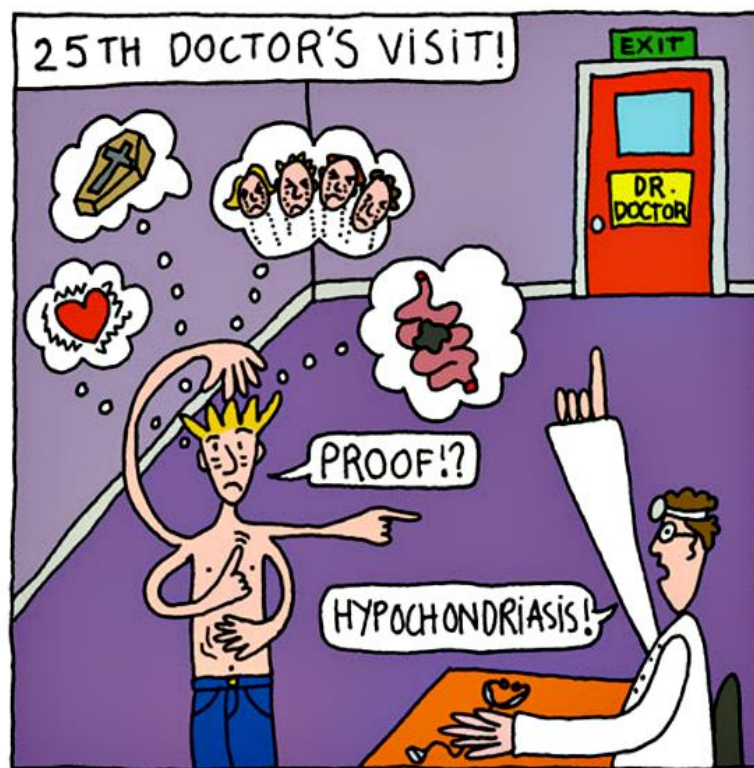


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If you are studying for the abnormal psychology portion of the AP Psychology exam, and you are beginning to feel intimidated by the amount of information, then know you are not alone. There can be a lot of overlap with the different disorders, whether it is similar symptoms, causes, or treatments. And when you are learning about a disorder that has so much uncharted territory, it can make it increasingly difficult to understand it and distinguish it from other disorders. For example, the classification of Somatoform Disorders.

Somatoform Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

If you are looking for an explanation of this type of disorder and how it will be tested and applied on the AP test this May, then you are in the right place. In this AP Psychology Crash Course Review, we will cover everything you need to know and understand about Somatoform Disorders for the AP exam.

What are Somatoform Disorders?

What makes Somatoform Disorders so unique is that it occurs when an individual displays a physiological symptom that occurs from a psychological problem (as opposed to a direct physiological one). A distinguishing factor about this disorder is that although it presents itself as a physiological symptom, there is a complete absence of any physiological cause. Another important thing to understand is that the physical symptoms the individual with a somatoform disorder is experiencing are completely real to them. The lack of physical cause can lead people to believe that the person is making it up or faking somehow, but it is entirely true to the person affected. The two types of Somatoform Disorders you will need to know for the AP Psychology exam are hypochondriasis and conversion disorder.

Hypochondriasis

Hypochondriasis is a more well-known of the Somatoform Disorders. A person who has **hypochondriasis disorder** will often misinterpret and be more sensitive to routine or minor physical issues. Usually, the individual will believe that a minor symptom is indicative of some severe or terminal illness or that there is something physically wrong with them. Examples of this could be a headache or normal aches and pains, and the individual may believe it is a tumor or a degenerative disease. However, when doctors assess the situation or perform tests on the individual, there is no indication that they are suffering from a severe illness. A person suffering from [hypochondriasis](#) is convinced they have a severe illness.

Somatoform Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Conversion Disorder

Conversion disorder is the more severe out of the two disorders under the somatoform disorder category. An individual who is suffering from conversion disorder will exhibit a serious physical ailment without any actual physiological cause.

- This is the major difference between hypochondriasis and conversion disorder; someone who is suffering from hypochondriasis will believe a minor physical ailment is indicative of a severe illness, and someone who is suffering from conversion disorder is displaying a severe physical issue.
- The similarity between the two disorders in the somatoform disorder category is that they both lack a physiological cause.

The two most common physical issues that present themselves in conversion disorder are paralysis and blindness, although other severe ailments can occur as well (often ailments that affect your senses, such as deafness or inability to swallow). Conversion disorder is commonly triggered by trauma or a stressful event.

Possible Causes

The various explanations of causes for Somatoform Disorders depend on your psychological school of thought.

- For example, the psychodynamic theory would interpret the physical ailment exhibited in either of the Somatoform Disorders are due to unresolved unconscious conflict.
- Someone from the behaviorist school of thought may believe that someone with hypochondriasis or conversion disorder are being reinforced in some way for their physical symptoms. This can be that the role of being a patient or being sick rewarded by being able to avoid responsibilities or the attention that is given from friends, family, and medical professionals.

Somatoform Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

- Some researchers believe that there also can be some contributing personality factors, such as histrionic personality traits, that make an individual more predisposed to suffering from a somatoform disorder. Someone who has histrionic personality traits will be more receptive to being in the center of attention, and is more likely to be dramatic or emotional.
- Researchers have also determined that there may be some cognitive factors to the development of Somatoform Disorders as well. These cognitive factors can include that they tend to pay more attention to bodily function and symptoms than your average person, or that they believe normal healthy people never have any discomfort or unusual symptoms.

Most often, stress is determined to be the cause of the disorder. Stress can be due to school, peers, parents, or related to a traumatic event. Unfortunately, little else is known about the cause of Somatoform Disorders. Doctors and researchers have determined that since there is no physiological basis for the symptoms, it is psychological. However, it can often be distressing to the individual suffering from these disorders to hear that it is, essentially, “all in their head.” To the patient, it may feel that their doctors aren’t listening or aren’t taking them seriously, and this can cause patients to bounce from doctor to doctor, searching for answers or a diagnosis.

How are Somatoform Disorders Diagnosed?

Diagnosing either hypochondriasis or conversion disorder can cause the individual suffering from either disorder increasing levels of stress and anxiety. The only real way to diagnose a somatoform disorder is for a doctor to rule out any other possible physical cause. This can come in the form of many medical tests, such as MRIs, EKGs, having blood drawn, etc. Once physical tests come back negative, and the doctor has confirmed that there is no physiological cause for the patient’s symptom, the individual will then have an examination by a mental health professional.

Somatoform Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Treatment

The treatment for Somatoform Disorders is managing symptoms while improving day-to-day functioning. Some doctors will prescribe antidepressants as a way to improve the symptoms the patient may feel as well as dealing with the stress and anxiety surrounding the idea. Usually, doctors will avoid prescribing pain medications (if pain is part of the physical issue being exhibited) because of the possibility of side effects and abuse of the medication. Most often, a mental health professional will suggest the individual go through some form of therapy, either psychotherapy or cognitive behavioral therapy. Through talk therapy, the individual can learn what makes their symptoms worse and their coping mechanisms.

Overview for the AP Psychology Exam

Next, in this AP Psychology Crash Course Review is our summary of the AP Psych exam. Abnormal psychology and abnormal behavior is 7-9% of the test, and the CollegeBoard suggests that you should be able to discuss all the major disorder categories in the DSM, which includes Somatoform Disorders. Treatment of abnormal disorders and behavior is 5-7% of the test. So, the chances are high that you will be asked about either conversion disorder, hypochondriasis, or Somatoform Disorders in general. A good example of a question you may be asked is one from the [1999 AP Psychology Exam](#). The question asked:

A man who experiences sudden blindness on witnessing the death of his wife is probably suffering from a:

- a. Type of paraphilia*
- b. Psychosis*
- c. Multiple Personality Disorder*
- d. Panic Disorder*
- e. Conversion Disorder”*

Somatoform Disorders:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

From reading this AP Psychology Crash Course, you should know that blindness is one of the common symptoms that manifest in a person suffering from conversion disorder. Because so little is still known about the cause of this disorder (and subsequently, how to accurately treat it), you will most likely be asked a question similar to this; one that will test your knowledge of the differences and the symptoms of hypochondriasis and conversion disorder. Luckily, if you feel unsure about this classification of disorders, then concentrate on understanding this AP Psychology Crash Course!

Review

- For the AP Psychology exam, it's important that you understand that Somatoform Disorders are psychological disorders that are exhibited through physical symptoms, for which there is no physiological cause.
- The two types of Somatoform Disorders that are important to know for the exam (which are detailed in this crash course) are hypochondriasis and conversion disorder.
- It is essential that you understand the difference between the two; a person with hypochondriasis believes that normal or minor physical symptoms are indicative of a severe illness, while a person with conversion disorder has manifested their stress/anxiety into a severe physical symptom such as paralysis or blindness.
- You should know that the only way for doctors to diagnose this disorder is by ruling out physical symptoms first, and then having the patient consult with a mental health profession.
- Also, what makes Somatoform Disorders easier to study for the AP Psychology exam is that unlike other disorders, it doesn't have a serious of complex theories about the cause of the disorder. Rather, it's better if you understand that researchers and healthcare professionals have no clue what causes the disorder.
- Lastly, for the treatment of Somatoform Disorders, know antidepressants are often prescribed as a way to improve day-to-day functioning. Also, understand that different versions of talk therapy are used as a way to get to the root of the stress or anxiety that may be causing the physical symptoms and as a way to help the patient find ways to cope.



Somatoform Disorders: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

So, you made it through the AP Psychology Crash Course Review on Somatoform Disorders. If you got to the overview and felt as though you understood everything, then you are ready to go! If you still feel unsure, take a deep breath and read through it again. Do you find yourself struggling to understand specific topics for the exam? Check out our series of AP Psychology Crash Course Reviews, including this one on the [Psychoanalytical/Psychodynamic Perspective](#)! Do you have a particular topic you want us to cover in a crash course? Let us know!

Remember you know more than you think, and good luck!



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Schizophrenia: AP Psychology Crash Course



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Schizophrenia can be particularly tricky because there are so many misconceptions about this disorder in society, that come exam day, it can be hard to distinguish between what you thought previously, and what you actually learned in your class. So, in this AP Psychology Crash Course Review, we will cover everything you need to know and understand about this topic for the AP exam.

Schizophrenia:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is one of the more complex and severe disorders that you will learn in AP Psychology. The main characteristics of this disorder are distorted thoughts and behaviors, which often manifest as delusions or hallucinations.

Delusions are beliefs that are not real; if you are experiencing delusions, you can't understand that they have no basis in reality. There are two different kinds: delusions of grandeur and delusions of persecution. If you truly believe that you are the President of the United States, but in reality, you're a junior in high school, then you are experiencing delusions of grandeur. And if you believe that there is a secret group out to get you, then you have delusions of persecution.

Hallucinations are any type of sensory experience that does not have an actual external sensory stimulation. Hallucinations are the classic symptom that people associate with schizophrenia, and it can range from hearing voices or feeling someone touching you when there is no one around.

Tip: Don't confuse schizophrenia with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)! DID is a split between the conscious personalities of a person's brain; It is a split between reality and the individual's distorted sense of reality.

Types of Schizophrenia

There are four different types of schizophrenia, each of which is critical to understand for the exam. They are disorganized, paranoid, catatonic, and undifferentiated.

Disorganized Schizophrenia has two main characteristics: odd use of language and inappropriate affect. Odd usage of language can either mean making up words or stringing together words that rhyme. Inappropriate affect is when you have an entirely inappropriate reaction to a situation, like if you laughed at a family member's funeral.

Schizophrenia:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Paranoid schizophrenia has one key symptom: delusions of persecution. Previously I described delusions of persecution as believing there is a group that is out to get you; when someone is diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, it means that type of delusion is fairly consistent in that person's life.

Catatonic schizophrenia's main characteristic is unusual body movement. The individual suffering from this may either jerk around or not move for hours on end. A symptom of this type of schizophrenia is waxy flexibility; this means that when the individual is motionless for an extended period, a person will allow someone else to move his body in a different way and will continue to be motionless, but in that new pose.

Undifferentiated schizophrenia is when an individual demonstrates disordered thoughts and behaviors, but they don't have any of the specific symptoms that are characteristic of the other three types of schizophrenia.

Positive vs. Negative Symptoms

It is important that you know that positive and negative symptoms are not referring to good and bad symptoms. Instead, understand positive and negative as plus or minus. Positive symptoms are added or excessive experiences that someone without schizophrenia would not have. These include delusions, hallucinations, inappropriate affect, and odd usage of language. Negative symptoms are things that a non-schizophrenic person would experience, but someone with schizophrenia would not. The unusual body movements and waxy flexibility associated with catatonic schizophrenia are both negative symptoms because the person with schizophrenia *lacks* normal body functioning. Another negative symptom is flat affect, which is the absence of any emotion.

Schizophrenia:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Possible Causes & Genetic Basis for Schizophrenia

If you only have room in your mind for one possible cause of schizophrenia, remember the **dopamine hypothesis**. It is the most common theory for this disorder, and it essentially states that increased or abnormally high levels of dopamine in the brain can cause it.

If you have enough room in your mind for more than the dopamine hypothesis, remember that there is evidence for a **genetic basis** for the disorder. The genetic basis for this disorder is exhibited in twin and family studies, where people who have relatives with schizophrenia show an increased rate of having the disorder themselves. It is important to remember for the exam that the closer the relative with schizophrenia, the higher the prevalence of schizophrenia is in an individual. For example, twin studies show that there is a higher rate of schizophrenia in identical twins than in fraternal twins.

Tip: there is not one specific gene that causes schizophrenia. Instead, several genes have been linked to the disorder.

The **diathesis-stress model** is another theory that you should remember for the AP Psychology exam in regards to schizophrenia. It fits in with the idea that some disorders are nature and nurture. Essentially, the theory is that an individual may have a genetic predisposition for schizophrenia, but the disorder will present itself when external or environmental stressors are placed on the individual.

Another interesting theory that has a biological basis is the idea that individuals with schizophrenia have enlarged ventricles in the brain, or the sides of their brain are asymmetrical.

For the AP exam, it is better to be able to fully understand and grasp the most relevant theories (like the dopamine hypothesis and the genetic basis) rather than learn a little about all of the theories.

Schizophrenia:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Treatment

Understanding how schizophrenia is treated is why it's essential to remember the dopamine hypothesis. **Antipsychotic medication** is a typical treatment for someone suffering from this disorder, but its primary job is to reduce dopamine activity in the brain. However, because of the severity of the medication, using these drugs has presented some serious adverse side effects, such as muscle tremors and tradeoff dyskinesia. In your class, your teacher may have gone into further detail about ways to treat schizophrenia, but for the exam, concentrate your efforts on understanding that antipsychotic medications are used to block or reduce dopamine activity.

Bracing Yourself for the AP Exam

Next up on this AP Psychology Crash Course Review are some practical tips to prepare you for the AP Psych exam. It's almost unavoidable that some questions on schizophrenia will end up on your exam in May. It is an interesting and complex disorder and will most likely be used to test your understand and memorization of the main psychological disorders.

In 2007, one of the [Free Response questions](#) was solely on schizophrenia. The question asked students to present information similar to what is covered in this crash course. Students had to give a few characteristic symptoms, describe the genetic basis and the dopamine hypothesis, what the medication used in treatment is trying to do, and the differences between dissociative identity disorder and schizophrenia. Although you will most likely not get a replica of this question in the upcoming exam, it's a good basis and outline for what the exam expects you to understand about schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia:

AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

Overview

Schizophrenia is complex and is an important disorder in the abnormal psychology section of your AP Psych course and, subsequently, the AP Psych exam. If you come around to studying for the exam, and you feel unsure about it, then concentrate your efforts on this crash course!

- First, know that there are four different kinds of schizophrenia (disorganized, paranoid, catatonic, and undifferentiated) and know the key symptom for each.
- If you get to the exam, and you're presented with specific examples of behavior that is related to schizophrenia, know that they usually can be traced back to delusions or hallucinations, so know the difference between the two. If you get confused on a question, take a step back and remind yourself of the difference.
- Also, make sure you understand positive and negative symptoms! Remember they are not good and bad, they are an excess of behavior or a lack of behavior.
- When it comes to possible causes, the dopamine hypothesis should be enough to guide you home. It is the most common theory and logically would be the most likely to show up.
- However, try to understand the reasoning behind the genetic basis shown in twin and family studies.
- And again, if you still have room in your head after all that studying, squeeze in the diathesis-stress model (remember it's explaining nature *plus* nurture).
- Lastly, when it comes to treatment of schizophrenia, the most important thing to remember is that the antipsychotic medication is used to decrease the excess levels of dopamine that are associated with schizophrenia.



Schizophrenia: AP Psychology Crash Course Cont.

So that's it for this AP Psychology Crash Course Review on schizophrenia! If you read the overview and your first thought was "Oh I got this," then you'll be fine! If that wasn't your first thought, then go back and check it out again, and remember you'll still be fine. If you've been struggling to study for the AP Psychology exam, then check out more of our AP Psychology Crash Course Reviews (like this one on [Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)).

Don't see a topic that you think we should cover in a crash course? Let us know!

Good luck on the exam!

Who was Wilhelm Wundt? AP Psychology Guide



[Image Source: Wikimedia Commons](#)

Introduction

The foundation of psychology as a branch of study is credited primarily to Wilhelm Wundt, due to not only his research into the topic, but the creation of the very first textbook and laboratory related to its study. For this AP Psychology review, we will seek to consider the many ways in which Wundt managed to develop psychology as a field of study and in which ways his contributions and research evolved into modern psychology as we know it today. These are all concepts which are likely to be represented in the AP Psychology exam. It is also likely to consider the ways that his influence applied to many future psychologists.

Who was Wilhelm Wundt?

AP Psychology Guide Cont.

Early Life

Born, in 1832, the fourth child of Maximilian Wundt and Marie Frederike, Wilhelm Wundt lived much of his childhood at Heidelberg, located in Baden-Wurttemberg. His father was a Lutheran minister, and his mother was a homemaker, but his grandfather, Friedrich Peter Wundt, was best known as Professor of Geography and the pastor of Wieblingen. This somewhat humble beginning led to Wundt pursuing his education strongly, attending not only the University of Tübingen but also The University of Heidelberg and the University of Berlin, after which he became an assistant for Hermann von Helmholtz, a physicist, and physiologist.

During this time, he began writing and completed Contributions to the Theory of Sense Perception and a textbook on human physiology. Yet he continued to research in other fields, primarily pathological anatomy. This pursuit manifested further when he was granted a professorship in 1867, teaching students about physical needs related to a medical investigation. Later he became the Professor of Inductive Philosophy, this time in Zurich rather than at Heidelberg, where he had obtained his medical degree prior to beginning his teaching. It was during this period that he met the woman who would become his wife. The two would go on to marry and have three children, one of whom would become a philosopher himself.

Teaching Experiences

While teaching at the University of Heidelberg, Wundt was in charge of the very first course in scientific psychology, emphasizing experimental methods from natural science and the physiological relationship which occurred within the human brain and mind. He was then promoted to a position of Assistant Professor of Physiology within the university, becoming inspired by two of the other founding fathers of psychological branches, Weber and Fechner (researching in Leipzig), to pursue psychology further himself.

Who was Wilhelm Wundt? AP Psychology Guide Cont.

He went on to publish a book of his own, *Principles of Physiological Psychology*, which became one of the most influential in the entire history of psychology. In fact, it was the first textbook ever written about the field and Wundt claimed it was intended to mark psychology as an aspect of science. His book considered immediate experiences related to consciousness according to internal perception and went on to become a truly influential book for those who would one day continue to study the field. It was after this that Wundt traveled to Leipzig himself, to continue his research.

Throughout the course of his time as a teacher, Wundt actually trained a number of students with nearly 200 being graduate students who aided in the development of his theories as well as his other work. Over 100 of his graduate students were specifically in the field of psychology, including Edward Titchener, who would go on to work on the concept of structuralism. In fact, Titchener based much of his concept on what he learned from Wundt and was responsible for much of the translation of his teacher's work into English. His translations, however, were often intentionally false and intended to advance his own psychological theories.

Father of Psychology

Upon reaching Leipzig, where Weber and Fechner had already been working, Wundt chose to create his own laboratory. It was 1879, and he was presently working with the University of Leipzig when it opened, the very first lab ever to be devoted solely to the study of psychological study. It was, therefore, the beginning of the topic as its own independent field and it became exceedingly popular almost immediately, with graduate students flocking in to aid in the research and learn about this entirely new branch of science that had just been created, right in their very own backyard.

Who was Wilhelm Wundt?

AP Psychology Guide Cont.

Wundt's Manner of Study

Wundt believed that the best way to understand psychology was to use the consciousness. In order to make it work, the consciousness must be broken down into its parts, relating to elemental sensations as well as feelings. He would analyze the mind through introspection, where a subject would be required to consider and evaluate their experiences and this information would be used to form an understanding of the consciousness itself. Though the first method used for this type of study, it was quickly determined to be unreliable as it required a subjective review rather than an objective one.

Though he had first come to the University in 1876, Wundt did not begin to conduct his own experiments, outside of those necessary for the classes he taught, until 1879, when his lab officially opened. He claimed that this made his lab a true laboratory of psychology, rather than merely a classroom for his students. It took several more years before the University itself recognized the lab as such or recognized it as a building within the campus grounds, but Wundt continued to carry out his experiments there with his students and on his own.

Prior to this time he carried out experiments for the purposes of teaching his students and always accomplished them in his lab as the transport of materials to the classroom was too complex. He was also known for distributing various pieces of equipment to each of his students so they could develop new experiments using them.

He was further able to utilize objective measurements to monitor conscious processes though it took time for the development to occur. In fact, he used reaction time methods that had been developed by Helmholtz and required participants to respond automatically to tones without requiring any form of interpretation. It was the first time that psychologists were able to prove the use of scientific techniques for the development of a better understanding regarding conscious processes. This also developed into a belief in the developmental conception of mind, though he believed that this was related to an unfolding reason with a logical backing.

Who was Wilhelm Wundt?

AP Psychology Guide Cont.

The Controversy

Many within the scientific sphere did not believe that psychology truly was a science, and they believed that introspection was an unreliable concept. Even still, Wundt managed to grow his laboratory and continue to attract students, though his philosophies and beliefs came to be much affected after his death, with many of his students and others incorrectly translating his findings or even misrepresenting them entirely, leading to much of the work being disregarded by psychologists at the time and especially those abroad with no recourse to review the original work.

Wrapping up Wilhelm Wundt and AP Psychology

Through the course of the AP Psychology exam, you'll likely need to know not only the amazing discoveries made by Wundt, but also the ways he has impacted society. Overall, Wundt was an extreme influence, creating the basis for psychology as we know it and most definitely the field of experimental psychology. The exam could ask you to look at the different aspects that he has been a part of as well, especially the creation of the first psychology textbook and the first laboratory specifically for its study.

The examination will consider not only these factors but potentially also the psychologists that were influenced by him. Though many today will say that his theories were not what they could have been and that they do not have much bearing on the world as it is today, he did have a dramatic influence. This is important to the study of psychology that we have now because he first introduced psychology as a form of science and this led to the continued study and development of the field. It also led to the development of other branches of psychology, an important aspect of our history.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology

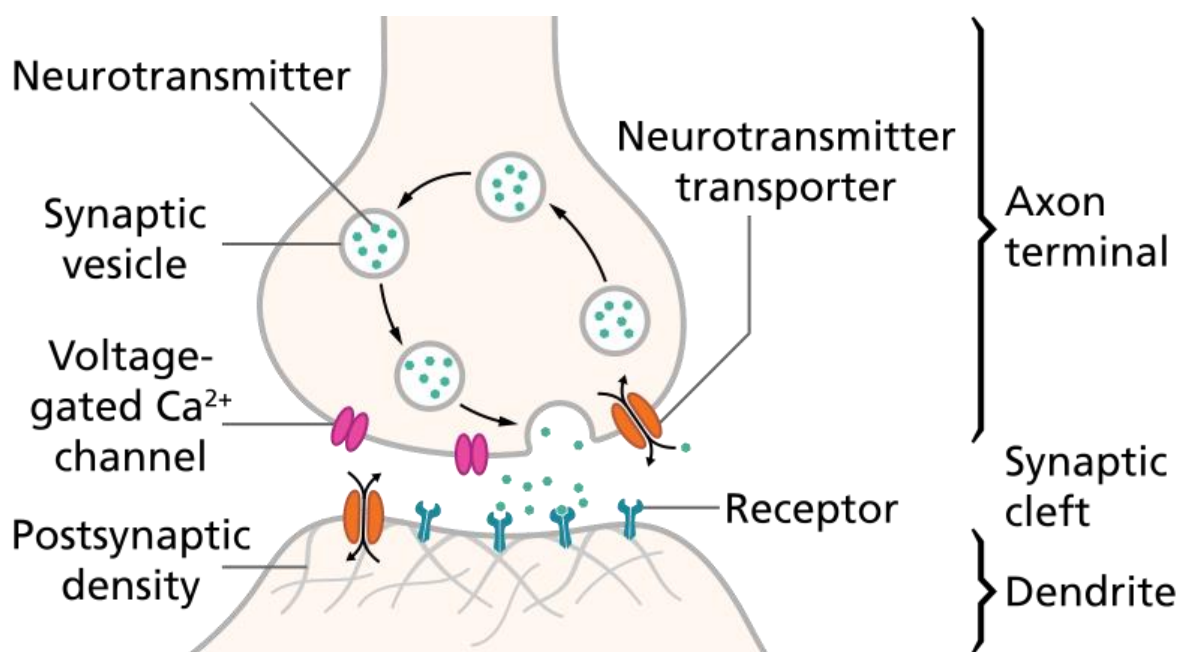


Image Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Are you getting ready to take the AP Psychology exam? Are you nervous about keeping all those pesky neurotransmitters straight? Have no fear, because the ultimate AP Psych guide to neurotransmitters is here.

First Things First: What are Neurotransmitters?

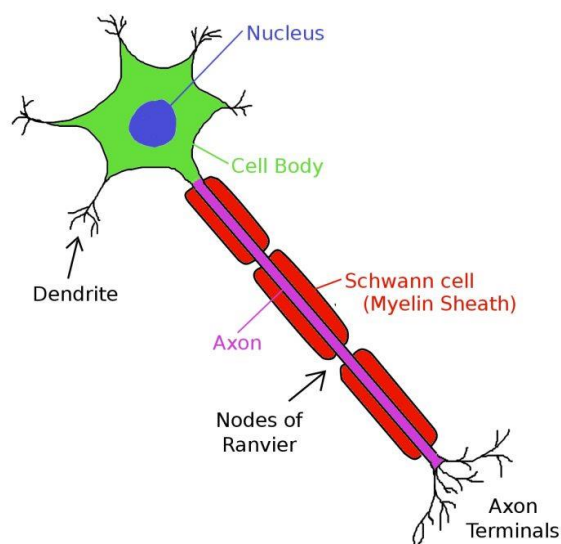
A **neurotransmitter** is a chemical messenger inside the body. Neurotransmitters carry messages between neurons. They are produced only in the neurons, and because they are a rarer chemical in the body, neurons will recycle the neurotransmitters through a process called re-uptake.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Remember: **neurons** are the nerve cells that create a giant communication network in our nervous system. There are two major types of neurons, **motor neurons** and **sensory neurons**, that allow us to (you guessed it) move around and feel things.

But how do these neurons talk to each other? That's where the neurotransmitters come in. They are contained in a part of the neuron called the **axon terminal button** until they are sent to another neuron. Neurons never touch each other, so to get to that other neuron, the neurotransmitter has to cross a small gap called the **synapse**. The neurotransmitter then crosses over to the neighboring neuron and signals it to activate with an electrical impulse.

When a neuron is not "firing," it is at its resting potential. When a neuron is signaled by a neurotransmitter to "fire," leading to an action potential. This means that a neuron sends information down the axon of the neuron – the part that looks like a tail – away from the cell body. An action potential is sometimes referred to as an impulse.



[Image Source: Quora.com](#)

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Another important part of the neuron to remember when you're thinking about neurotransmitters is the **myelin sheath**. The myelin sheath is a layer of fatty cells – also called glial cells – that surround the axon fibers of the neuron. The myelin sheath is important because it acts as a conductor and insulator, which makes the electrical impulse triggered by the neurotransmitters travel faster down the neurons.

In terms of neurotransmitters, the most important part of the neuron is the synapse. The synapse, or synaptic gap, is where the end of one neuron meets the beginning of another neuron. At the synaptic terminal, **vesicles** containing neurotransmitters connect to the **synaptic membrane**, releasing the neurotransmitters into the **synaptic cleft**. Then, the neurotransmitter binds to receptors on the **postsynaptic** side of the synapse – the dendrites of the next neuron. That receptive neuron then becomes more or less likely to fire an action potential, depending on the excitatory or inhibitory function of the neurotransmitter.

So that's how the neurons use neurotransmitters to send messages to the brain. So far, researchers have identified about 15 to 20 neurotransmitters. In general, neurotransmitters can be divided into two types: excitatory and inhibitory. These categories are based on how a neurotransmitter behaves at the synapse – what it signals the next neuron to do. **Excitatory neurotransmitters** send signals that stimulate the brain. **Inhibitory neurotransmitters** send signals to calm the brain down and create balance. If they become overactive, excitatory neurotransmitters can easily overshadow the inhibitory neurotransmitters and reduce their effect.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Important Neurotransmitters to Know for the AP Psych Exam

Neurotransmitter	Type	Function	Problems w/ Surplus	Problems w/ Deficit
Acetylcholine (ACH)	Excitatory	Muscle function, Learning and Memory, Attention	Muscle spasms	Alzheimer's disease
Dopamine	Inhibitory	Mood and emotion, Arousal	Schizophrenia, drug addiction	Parkinson's disease
Serotonin	Inhibitory	Mood regulation, hunger and sleep	Hallucinations	Depression and mood disorders
Norepinephrine	Excitatory	Arousal and alertness, especially in fight-or-flight response, mood elevation	Anxiety	Mental disorders, specifically depression
GABA	Inhibitory	Brain's main inhibitory neurotransmitter, regulates sleep-wake cycles	Sleep and eating disorders	Anxiety, epilepsy, insomnia, Huntington's disease

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Neuro transmitter	Type	Function	Problems w/ Surplus	Problems w/ Deficit
Glutamate	Excitatory	Brain's main excitatory neurotransmitter, basis of learning and long-term memory	Overstimulation of brain, which can cause migraines and seizures	N/A
Endorphins	Inhibitory	Pain control, stress reduction, positive emotions	Artificial highs, inadequate response to pain	Potential involvement in addiction, especially opiates

Agonists and Antagonists

Neurotransmitters don't always act on their own. Drugs can affect the degree of a neurotransmitter's impact. This effect on the neurotransmitter occurs at the synapse.

If a drug increases the effect of a neurotransmitter, it is called an **agonist**. So if an agonist acts on an excitatory neurotransmitter, the excitatory effect will increase. Here are some examples of common agonists:

- Caffeine: agonist for ACH.
- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs): agonists for serotonin. SSRIs increase the amount of serotonin available to the brain, and are commonly prescribed for depression.
- Adderall, methamphetamine, cocaine, and speed: agonists of norepinephrine. When these drugs increase the excitatory effects of norepinephrine, they create feelings of euphoria and extreme alertness.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

- Benzodiazepines and alcohol: agonists of GABA.
- Opiates (morphine, oxycodone, heroin, etc.): agonists of endorphins.

If a drug decreases the effect of a neurotransmitter, it is called an **antagonist**. So if an antagonist acts on an excitatory neurotransmitter, the excitatory effect will decrease. Here are some examples of common antagonists:

- LSD: antagonist for serotonin.
- PCP: antagonist of glutamate. PCP causes a dissociative state that inhibits memory and learning.
- Some drugs that are dopamine antagonists are used to treat psychosis, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

Be careful: agonists and antagonists **do not** change the type of change a neurotransmitter causes. An antagonist will not change an excitatory neurotransmitter into an inhibitory one; it will just lower the degree of the excitatory response.

Reuptake Mechanisms

Sometimes, there are extra neurotransmitters left in the synapse. To avoid wasting these precious chemicals, the axon terminal will suck up the excess neurotransmitters to be recycled.

Some drugs are **re-uptake inhibitors**. These drugs do exactly what their name suggests – they prevent the axon terminals from engaging in the re-uptake of neurotransmitters. Cocaine, for instance, is a re-uptake inhibitor for dopamine. Its stimulating effects are caused by extra dopamine leftover in the synaptic gap.

What You Need to Know for the AP Psychology Exam

Biological bases of behavior, including the function and types of neurotransmitters, make up about 8-10% of the total exam.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

According to the College Board's AP Psych [course description](#), AP Psych students should be able to talk about not only the different types of neurotransmitters, but also about the effects of drugs on their effects. This includes agonists, antagonists, and re-uptake mechanisms.

Neurotransmitters can also come into play on the AP Psychology exam in discussions about sensation and perception, memory and learning, motivation and emotion, and abnormal behavior. Because of the wide variety of ways to think about neurotransmitters, it is important to understand both their functions and the problems associated with their surplus or deficit.

The College Board does not release multiple-choice questions from past AP Psych exams. However, consider the following sample [multiple-choice question](#) from the AP Psych course description:

Treating a patient for Parkinson's disease includes administering a chemical that will lead to increases in the patient's

- (a) monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)*
- (b) acetylcholine*
- (c) norepinephrine*
- (d) dopamine*
- (e) serotonin*

The correct answer choice is D, dopamine. If you have studied our neurotransmitter chart, then you know that insufficient dopamine production is associated with Parkinson's disease. However, your knowledge of other neurotransmitters, and the effect of drugs on their messages, can also help you narrow down possible answers in this kind of multiple-choice question.

Answer choice B is incorrect. Deficits of ACH are associated with Alzheimer's disease, not Parkinson's – dopamine is not associated with memory. Answer choices C and E, norepinephrine and serotonin, are both associated with mood disorders.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Now that you know norepinephrine and serotonin are not the correct answers, you also know answer choice A cannot be correct. Monoamine oxidase inhibitors, or MAOIs, are antidepressants that function by increasing the amounts of serotonin and norepinephrine, as well as blocking MAO, which breaks down many neurotransmitters.

Your knowledge of neurotransmitters may also be important on the Free-Response Section of the AP Psych exam. Neurotransmitters are most likely to appear in a discussion of abnormal behavior, psychological disorders, and their treatment.

For instance, here is a past [AP Psych FRQ](#) that asked students to discuss neurotransmitters:

Often misunderstood, schizophrenia is a psychological disorder affecting one percent of the population. In addition to treating the disorder, psychologists work to identify its nature and origins.

- Identify two characteristic symptoms used to diagnose schizophrenia.
- Discuss a research finding that supports a genetic basis for schizophrenia.
- What is the dopamine hypothesis regarding the origins of schizophrenia?
- Describe how medications used to treat schizophrenia affect the actions of neurotransmitters at the synapses.
- Identify a risk inherent in using medications in the treatment of schizophrenia.
- People sometimes confuse schizophrenia with dissociative identity disorder (DID). Identify two key characteristics that differentiate DID from schizophrenia.

You will need to know about more than just neurotransmitters to completely answer all parts of the prompt, but in this crash course review we will focus on the importance of neurotransmitters in understanding and treating schizophrenia.

The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

The third point of this prompt asks you to explain the dopamine hypothesis. The dopamine hypothesis is that schizophrenia is caused by an over activity or excess of dopamine. A more specific way to answer this question is to explain that drugs that block dopamine decrease symptoms, and drugs that increase dopamine increase symptoms.

To answer the next point of the FRQ, you must explain that schizophrenia medications work by reducing dopamine activity. You can say this in any of the following ways: the medications lower levels of dopamine, prevent the release of dopamine, block dopamine receptors, or are dopamine antagonists. Just choose the explanation that makes the most sense to you. Remember to be clear and specific, and answer the question asked of you.

In other types of FRQs, you could be asked to connect the function of a specific neurotransmitter to its physical location. Here is another example [FRQ](#):

For each of the following pairs of terms, explain how the placement or location of the first influences the process indicated by the second.

- *Rods, peripheral vision*
- *A list of unrelated words, word recall*
- *Serotonin, reduction of depression*
- *Retinal disparity, depth perception*
- *Motor cortex, body movement*
- *Presence of others, performance*
- *Proximity, perception*

Notice how the prompt asks you to explain how the placement of serotonin, not just its function, impacts the reduction of depression. It isn't enough to say that serotonin is in the body. To answer this part of the prompt completely, you must indicate that increased amounts of serotonin **in the brain** are linked to reduced depression. You could also indicate that serotonin is located in the nervous system, neurons, synapses, receptors, or other neuron-related locations.



The Ultimate Guide to Neurotransmitters for AP Psychology Cont.

Phew – now you’ve made it through our crash course review of neurotransmitters. It’s a lot of information to take in, but we’ve given you all the tools you need to build a knowledge of neurotransmitters and apply your skills to multiple-choice questions and FRQs on the AP Psychology exam.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology

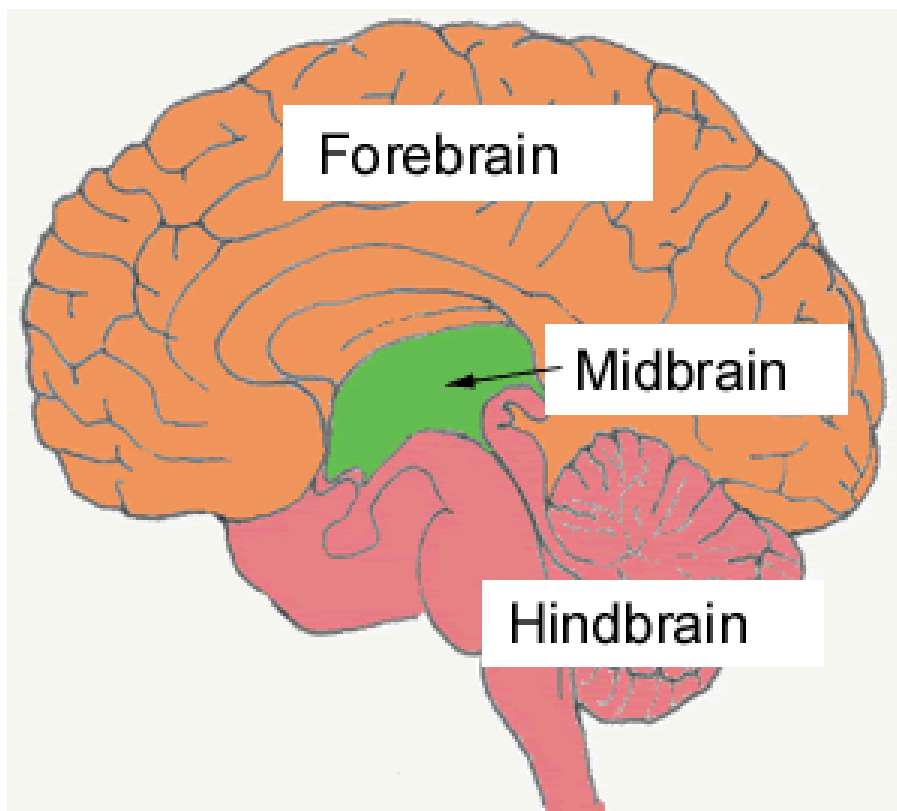


[Image Source: Flickr](#)

The brain is an immensely complicated and intricate organ, and by far the most complex organ to understand in the human body. Unfortunately for anyone who is taking AP Psychology, it's also something that you're expected to understand for the AP Psychology Exam. Luckily, you stumbled across this ultimate guide to the brain for AP Psychology that we have prepared for you. In this AP Psychology crash course review, we will provide a summary of the anatomy and function of the major areas of the brain.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

The brain is divided into three main parts: the **forebrain**, the **midbrain**, and the **hindbrain**.

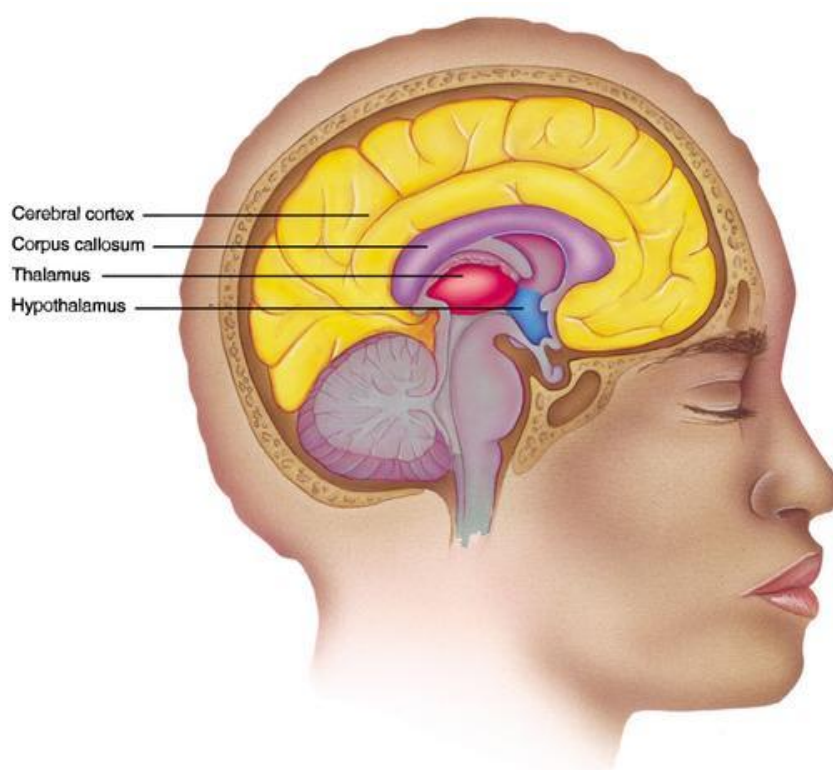


[Image Source: Wikispaces](#)

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

The Forebrain

The forebrain consists of the **thalamus**, **hypothalamus**, **amygdala**, and the **hippocampus**. The hypothalamus, amygdala, and hippocampus make up what we call the **Limbic System** of your brain.



[Image Source: McGraw-Hill Education](#)

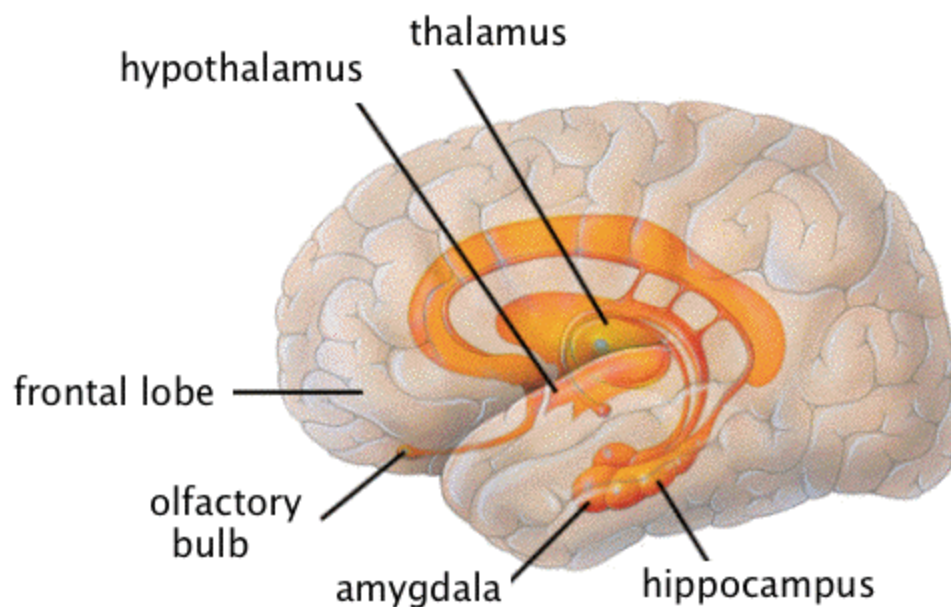
Thalamus

The thalamus is located between the cerebral cortex and the midbrain. It is made up of nuclei that receive different sensory and motor inputs. The thalamus then relays these signals to various areas of the cerebral cortex. The thalamus also regulates consciousness, sleep and wakefulness, feeding and satisfaction and alertness.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Limbic System

The Limbic System is a group of brain structures that regulate basic emotions such as fear and rage and drives such as hunger and sex. The brain structures that make up the limbic system are somewhat controversial; however, the general consensus of the limbic system contains these three main structures: **the hippocampus, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus.**



[Image Source: Shippensburg University](#)

Hippocampus: The hippocampus is vital for long-term memory formation, particularly declarative memories, or memories that can be purposely recalled like facts and events. Loss of function to the hippocampus results in the inability to form new memories.

Hypothalamus: Similar to the thalamus, the hypothalamus is made up of multiple nuclei with many different functions. The hypothalamus regulates the autonomic nervous system by producing and releasing hormones. Through its influence on the endocrine system, it can regulate sleep-wake cycles, respiration, and other autonomic responses.

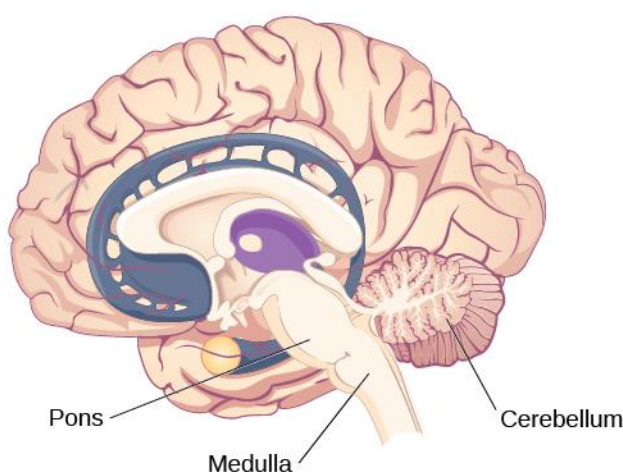
The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Amygdala: The amygdala is the center of emotion and motivations. The amygdala is responsible for fear responses and learning out of fearful situations. The amygdala is also involved in regulation of memory consolidation or the process of turning a memory into long-term memory. The amygdala has also been linked to sexual and aggressive behavior and anxiety.

The Midbrain

The midbrain is made up of several smaller structures. It supports multiple functions including vision, hearing, motor control (especially eye movement), sleeping and waking, alertness and temperature regulation. For the **AP Psychology** test, it is most important that you understand the functions I just listed and be familiar with the **reticular formation**. This structure controls our body's general arousal and our ability to focus, and it is a collection of cells spread throughout the midbrain.

The Hindbrain



[Image Source: OpenStax](#)

The hindbrain is the most primitive part of the brain. It regulates all of our most vital processes with three structures: the **medulla**, **pons**, and **cerebellum**.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

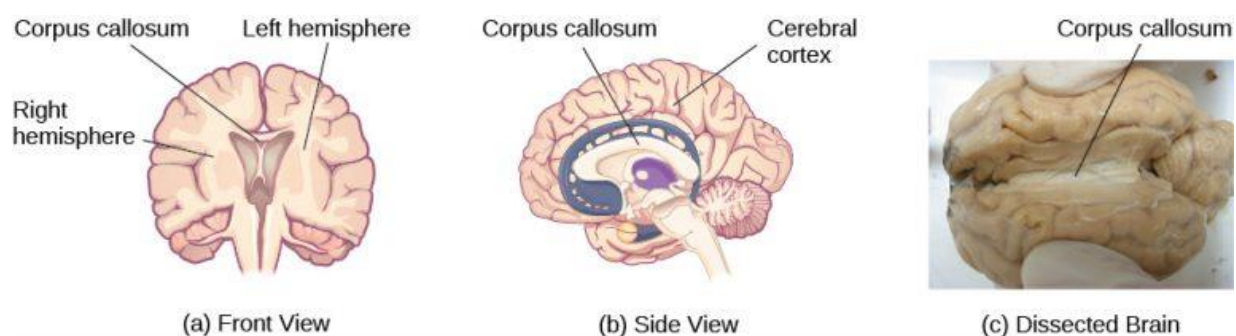
The **medulla** controls automatic (involuntary) functions of the body, such as breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure.

The **pons** is part of the brainstem. It regulates several functions including hearing, equilibrium, taste and facial sensations and movements.

The **cerebellum** plays a role in motor control and movement including balance, subtle movement, and equilibrium. It also plays a role in cognitive functions such as attention and language.

The Cerebrum & the Cerebral Cortex

The **cerebrum** is the largest part of the brain. It is made up of two cerebral hemispheres (the left and the right hemispheres) that are separated by a large groove called the medial longitudinal fissure. The hemispheres are mirror images of each other, with some exceptions (Broca's Area, Wernicke's Area) which we will mention later. The hemispheres can share information with each other through a thick bundle of nerves running between them called the corpus callosum.



[Image Source: OpenStax](#)

Each hemisphere is made up of the **cerebral cortex**, or the outer layer of tissue of the **hemispheres**, and smaller subcortical structures. These subcortical structures include the **hippocampus**, **basal ganglia**, and **olfactory bulbs**.

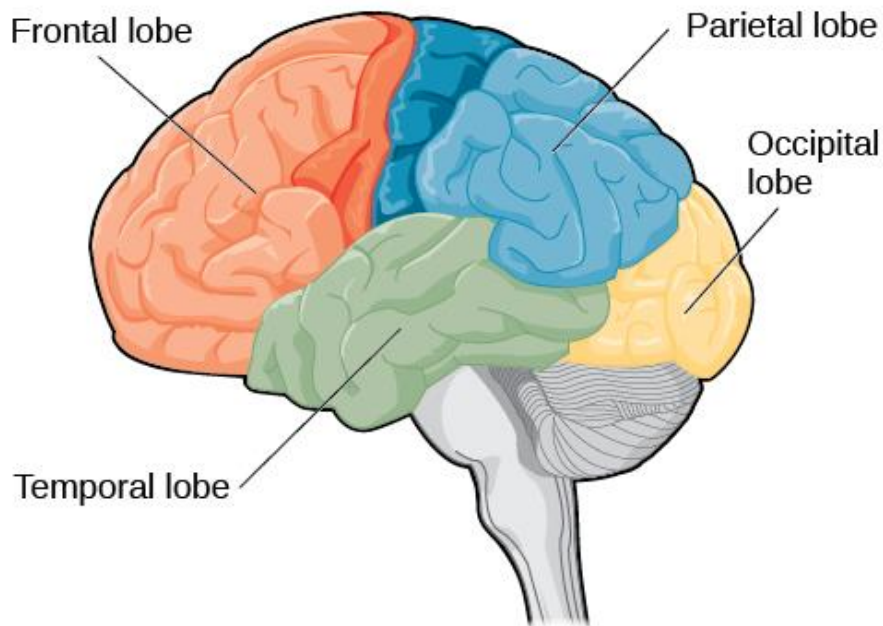
The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Each hemisphere is made up of the **cerebral cortex**, or the outer layer of tissue of the **hemispheres**, and smaller subcortical structures. These subcortical structures include the **hippocampus**, **basal ganglia**, and **olfactory bulbs**.

The **basal ganglia** is a group of nuclei that function as a unit. It plays a role in the goal-directed control of voluntary movements (like picking up a piece of fruit with your hand) and routine behaviors. The **olfactory bulbs** are structures involved in our sense of smell.

The **cerebral cortex** is what you picture when you think of what a brain looks like; it is the wrinkled surface of the brain that is a layer of neurons. As we grow and learn, the neurons in our cerebral cortex grow and connects with other neurons. The cerebral cortex is made up of four lobes: **Parietal, Occipital, Temporal, and Frontal**.

The Lobes of the Brain



[Image Source: OpenStax.](#)

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

The **parietal lobe** is located at the top of the brain, between the frontal and occipital lobe. It consists of the somatosensory cortex and is responsible for integrating sensory information from different parts of the body, especially visual information related to navigation and spatial orientation.

The **somatosensory cortex** is located right behind the primary motor cortex. This cortex is a system of nerves that respond to stimuli or changes to different areas of the body. Similar to the motor cortex, different areas of the cortex respond to stimuli of different parts of the body. The larger the body part on the image above, the more sensitive that part of the body is.

The **occipital lobe** is located in the back of the cerebral cortex. It is home to the primary visual cortex and the central area for visual processing, visual perception, and color recognition.

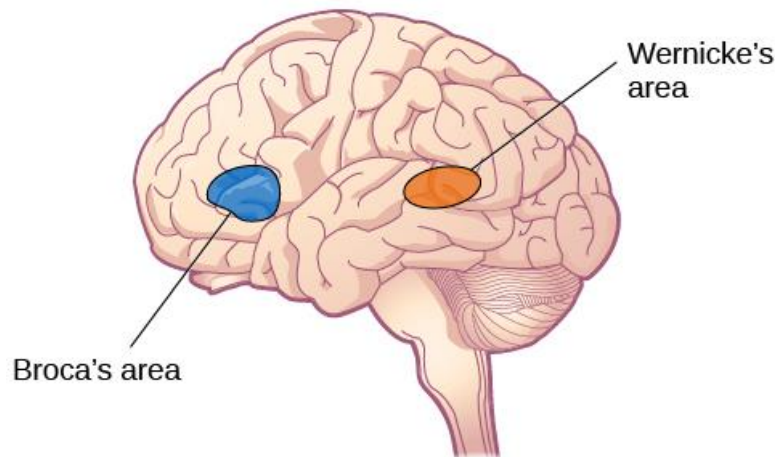
The **temporal lobe** is located beneath the lateral fissure on the cerebral hemisphere. Its primary function is processing auditory sensory input and is the location of the **primary auditory cortex** and **Wernicke's area**. However, it also plays a role in interpreting meaning from visual stimuli and object recognition.

The **primary auditory cortex** is located only in the left temporal lobe, and it is important for understanding semantics in speech and vision.

Wernicke's area is located in the back of the temporal lobe near the occipital lobe of the left cerebral hemisphere and is involved in understanding written and spoken language. Damage to this area results in the person being able to speak using proper grammar, syntax, and intonation, but the words they use will not make any sense.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Broca's Area and Wernicke's Area



[Image Source: OpenStax](#)

The **frontal lobe** is located at the front portion of the brain and is home to many important brain structures including the **primary motor cortex, prefrontal cortex, and Broca's area.**

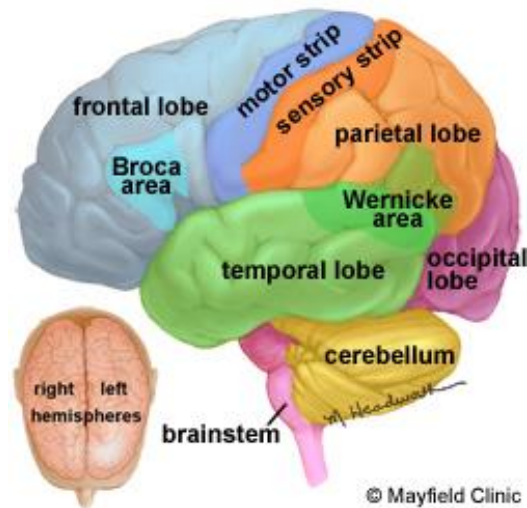
The **primary motor cortex** regulates voluntary movements such as walking. Different areas of the cortex control different areas of the body.

The **prefrontal cortex** is located at the very front of the frontal lobe, and it controls executive functions or a set of abilities that are needed to control cognitive behaviors. These behaviors include attention, inhibition, working memory, problem-solving and planning.

Broca's area is located in the left hemisphere in the frontal lobe. This area is responsible for speech production and language comprehension. Damage to this area can result in Broca's aphasia. This is a condition in which you know what you want to say, but when you say it, it does not make sense.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

The Four Lobes and Structures

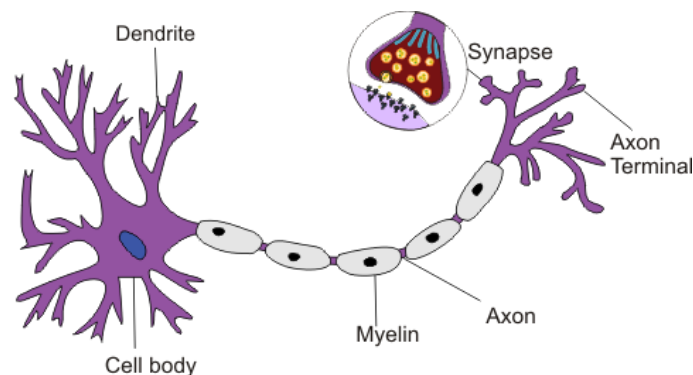


[Image Source: Mayfield Clinic](#)

How Do the Parts of Our Brain Connect?

An important thing to understand about the brain is how different sections communicate to each other. Information is conveyed from one brain region to another through brain cells called neurons. Neurons are made up of three main parts: the **dendrites**, the cell body, and the **axon**.

Neuron



[Image Source: 4mylearn](#)

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Dendrites: The dendrites are short branched projections of the cell that receive electrochemical stimulation from neurons. This electrochemical stimulation causes a change in the electrical potential across the membrane of the cell. If the change in membrane potential reaches a particular threshold, it will cause a rapid and drastic change in potential called an **action potential**. The action potential causes a spread of the electrical activity through the cell body and down the cell's axon.

Axon: The neuron axon is a long projection at the end of the cell opposite the dendrites. In some cases, the axon is insulated with **myelin sheaths**. These enable action potentials to travel down the axon faster because it only occurs in the spaces between the myelin sheaths rather than the whole axon. At the end of the axon are the axon terminals. These are branches at the end of the axon that spread signals to other cells. When the action potential reaches the axon terminals, it stimulates a release of chemical messengers called neurotransmitters onto another cell. The junction between the axon terminal and the dendrite of the receiving cell is called a **synapse**.

Typically, the neurotransmitter will excite the receiving cell causing the formation of an action potential and thus spreads the signal on to the next cell. However, some neurotransmitters can be inhibitory by preventing the formation of an action potential and thus ending the propagation of the signal.

Neurotransmitters

Some of the major neurotransmitters in the brain that you should be aware of for the **AP Psychology** exam are listed below:

Acetylcholine: This neurotransmitter is typically released by **motor neurons** or neurons that activate muscles. It is also released inside the brain as a neuromodulator. That is a chemical that alters the way brain structures process information. It plays a significant role in arousal, attention, and motivation. It is also used by the autonomic nervous system for both sympathetic (fight or flight response) and parasympathetic (rest and digest) responses.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Dopamine: Dopamine is produced by dopaminergic neurons in the midbrain and the hypothalamus. Dopamine is typically used by the brain's reward and pleasure centers. Its release motivates you to seek out pleasurable activity, whether it's food, sex or drugs. It is also involved in regulating movement.

Norepinephrine: This neurotransmitter is the main neurotransmitter used by the sympathetic nervous system. It is used to activate whatever organ it is released on, to put it into a "fight or flight", active state.

Serotonin: In the brain, serotonin is mainly released in the brainstem. Serotonin functions to decrease appetite, linked to reduce aggression and mood stabilization.

GABA: Also known as gamma-Aminobutyric acid (γ -Aminobutyric acid, GABA acts as an inhibitory transmitter, and thus prevents stimulation of the cell the GABAergic neuron projects onto.

Endorphins: Endorphins are endogenous opioids. They function by inhibiting release of GABA resulting in an increase in dopamine in the brain. Because dopamine is associated with pleasure, the feeling of pleasure typically follows the release of endorphins. The receptors for these neurotransmitters are heavily concentrated in the pain neurocircuitry.

Other Cells in the Brain

Although neurons play a crucial role in the brain, this would not be possible without the other brain cells called glia or glial cells. Glial cells are the cells that support the neurons in many different ways. There are three glial cell types: astrocytes, oligodendrocytes, and microglia.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

Astrocytes are star-shaped cells that perform several supportive functions to neurons and other cells in the brain. For example, astrocytes support endothelial cells that make up the blood-brain barrier, contribute to the repair and scarring process following an injury to the CNS, and act as guides for migrating neurons during brain development. **Oligodendrocytes** wrap myelin sheath around the axons of neurons in the brain. **Microglia** is the macrophages of the CNS. They are the primary form of immune defense in the brain and maintain the brain environment.

The Brain and the AP Psychology Exam

The brain is the basis for the entire course, so you should anticipate seeing multiple choice questions on various aspects and structures of the brain.

Here is a [sample question](#) from AP Central that would be similar to what you could see on the **AP Psychology** exam:

Damage to the cerebellum would most likely result in which of the following problems?

- a) Aphasia*
- b) Increased aggression*
- c) A loss of vision*
- d) A loss of motor coordination*
- e) A change in personality*

The cerebellum (located in the hindbrain), plays a role in your motor control and movement, which would make the answer **D**. Multiple choice questions on the brain in the exam will most likely be similar to this one; the exam tests how well you can understand and relate the structures of the brain to their functions.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

It is also likely that some aspect of the brain and its structures could come up in the free response questions as well. There is enough information to know about the brain that it could be an entire FRQ by itself, but in the last seven years students have been asked to use or relate a structure of the brain in five different FRQs. In [2009](#), students were asked to relate several factors, including the cerebellum and the reticular formation, to someone taking a driver's education course. In [2010](#), the exam had a question where students had to explain the behavior and perceptions of participants in a pep rally using a list of concepts, one of which was the occipital lobe. In [2011](#), one of the FRQs asked how Broca's area related to the success and performance of someone who was learning a foreign language. In [2012](#), the first FRQ asked students to describe how the prefrontal cortex (among other concepts) related to a student making a decision about college. And again in [2015](#), the **AP Psychology** exam had an FRQ that wanted to know how the prefrontal cortex could relate to a couple buying a new home.

Overview

What makes the different areas of the brain so complex to keep track of is that they are all connected in some way; this is great for our ability to think and learn, but not so great when you're trying to remember if one structure is in the frontal lobe, the forebrain, or both. However, it will be best for your success on the exam to generally understand the different sections of the brain and more specifically understand the functions of the different structures reviewed in this **Ultimate Guide to the Brain**.

First, remember that the brain is split into three different section: the **forebrain**, the **midbrain**, and the **hindbrain**.

The structures in the **forebrain** include the thalamus, hypothalamus, amygdala, and hippocampus. The latter three are all part of the **limbic system**, which generally regulates basic emotion such as fear and rage. The **midbrain** generally supports multiple functions such as vision, hearing, and motor control; the only important structure in the midbrain that you need to know is the **reticular formation**.

The Ultimate Guide to the Brain for AP Psychology Cont.

The important structures in the **hindbrain** that you will need to know are the medulla, pons, and the cerebellum.

Next, remember that the brain's **cerebrum** and **cerebral cortex** are divided into two hemispheres (left and right) with four different lobes: **frontal, parietal, occipital, and temporal**. The frontal lobe houses the primary motor cortex, Broca's area, and most importantly, the prefrontal cortex (which controls executive functioning). The parietal lobe's primary structure includes the somatosensory cortex. The occipital lobe is important for its control of our visual processing. The temporal lobe's important structures are the primary auditory cortex and Wernicke's area.

Third, it's important to understand how the areas of our brain connect. The information from the various structures is conveyed through our neurons, which are made up of dendrites, the cell body, and the axon. After all this information, if you can, you should try to understand the primary function of the various neurotransmitters listed above as well as the different cell types in the brain.

I know this may seem a lot of information. Take a deep breath; it's going to be okay. The reason why there is so much to know is that understanding the brain is vital to understand psychology as a subject, not just for the **AP Psychology** exam. The sections about the biological aspect of psychology (including the brain) is 8-10% of the exam as a whole, which is one of the few highest percentages that will show up. If you're still unsure by the end of this, go through it again and see if re-reading will help. If there is any subtopic about the brain that you want us to go into more detail about, tell us!

Do you have another topic that you want an **Ultimate Guide** to? Then let us know.

And good luck!



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