



Welcome to A Level Psychology at Hurtwood!

For most of you Psychology will be a new subject at A Level. You may have a pretty good idea of what the subject does (and does not) involve, but this booklet has been designed to give you an idea of what to expect.

Psychology is a subject that investigates us as human beings. It is a subject that requires a broad range of skills from scientific planning and investigation to reading and critically evaluating / debating to statistical analysis of data. These activities are designed to show you each aspect of Psychology to prepare you for the A Level.

If you have any questions, then please get in touch – our email addresses are below. We look forward to welcoming you in September.



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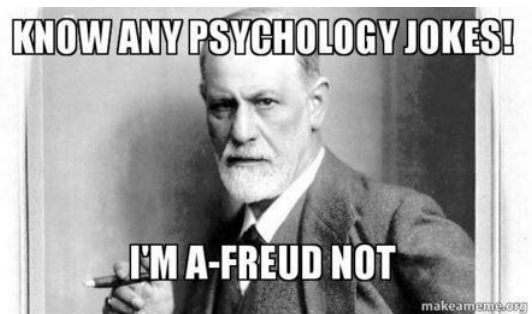


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Contents:

1. Psychology true/false – Pg 2
2. Suggested viewing – Pg 3
3. Suggested reading – Pg 4
4. 100 Humans tasks (Netflix required) Pg 7
5. Mathematical requirements Pg 11
6. Other activity suggestions Pg 15
7. Extension: Open university course “Starting With Psychology” (approximately 5 hours)



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PSYCHOLOGY??

CIRCLE THE ANSWERS YOU THINK ARE RIGHT

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. Psychology is an academic subject about 50 years old. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. We are all amateur psychologists because we have to be able to interpret the behaviour of others to get on in society. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. When I've finished my psychology course, I will be able to tell what people are thinking. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. Studying how memory works will help me revise for my exams. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. People are easy to study. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. All studies of human behaviour have strict guidelines on how participants should be treated. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. People are the same, whatever society or culture they live in. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Psychology has given us such insights that we now completely understand how the brain works. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 9. We can learn a lot by studying the behaviour of animals. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 10. All psychologists agree on how people work. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 11. Once something has been shown in a study, the findings become accepted as fact. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 12. We are born the way we are. Experience does nothing to change the way we behave. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 13. The experts on Big Brother give a good example of the sort of work psychologists do. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 14. Psychologists are employed by companies to help them advertise their products. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 15. Psychology is useful for any job where you have to deal with people. | TRUE | FALSE |

SUGGESTED VIEWING

Netflix

- Babies (Attachment)
- 100 Humans – (general Psychology)
- The Mind Explained – (short episodes on different topics: memory, sleep, anxiety etc)
- The Creative Brain – (neuroscience of creativity)
- Inside the Criminal Mind – (series, linked more to crime.)
- Mindhunter – (profiling in forensics)
- Making a Murderer (eye-witness testimony, forensics – offender profiling)

Amazon Prime

- The 'Up' Series – A very famous longitudinal documentary following children every seven years ('7 Up', '14 Up', '21 Up' etc). Good for research methods, issues and debates and attachment. The most recent series was last year when the participants were 63 years old. Most episodes also available on YouTube.

Other

- The brain: a secret history (Biopsychology)
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6cifd2>
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6cifd6>
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xugnxx>
- Stacey Dooley On The Psych Ward - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/.../p08.../stacey-dooley-on-the-psych-ward>
- The Dark Matter of Love - (Attachment/Institutionalisation) - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x191s88>
- From Romania with Love (Attachment/Romanian Orphans) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU7vC3wUtMo>
- A Monster in my mind (OCD) - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4c3gve>
- Eyewitness / Cognitive Interview - <https://www.open.edu/ope.../body-mind/ou-on-the-bbc-eyewitness>
- Louis Theroux- Transgender Kids (Gender) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05qkzt2>
- Secret Life of 4/5/6 year olds – Gender– Channel 4
- Child of our Time turns 20 is on BBC currently so on iPlayer <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000g8tr/child-of-our-time-turning-20>

SUGGESTED READING

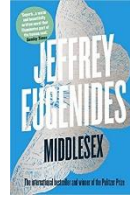
FICTION

- **Eugenides, J. (2013). *Middlesex*. Fourth Estate.**

Fiction. A novel about an intersex child growing up.

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Middlesex-Jeffrey-](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Middlesex-Jeffrey-Eugenides/dp/0007528647/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802368&sr=1-1&keywords=Middlesex)

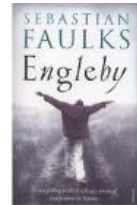
[Eugenides/dp/0007528647/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802368&sr=1-1&keywords=Middlesex](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Middlesex-Jeffrey-Eugenides/dp/0007528647/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802368&sr=1-1&keywords=Middlesex)



- **Faulks, S. (2008). *Engleby*. Vintage.**

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Engleby-Sebastian-](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Engleby-Sebastian-Faulks/dp/0099458276/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802507&sr=1-1&keywords=Engleby)

[Faulks/dp/0099458276/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802507&sr=1-1&keywords=Engleby](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Engleby-Sebastian-Faulks/dp/0099458276/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802507&sr=1-1&keywords=Engleby)

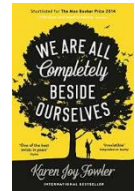


Fiction. Difficult to describe in too much depth without giving away the plot, but relates nicely to the course and written by a well-respected author.

- **Fowler, K. J. (2014). *We are all completely beside ourselves*. Serpents Tail.**

Fiction. Stick with this one – there is a big twist. Good for family dynamics.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/184668966X?encoding=UTF8&isInIframe=0&n=266239&ref=dp_proddesc_0&s=books&showDetailProductDesc=1#product-description_feature_div

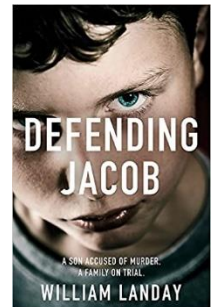


- **Landay, W. (2013). *Defending Jacob*. Orion.**

Fiction. Can Jacob's father use a criminal gene to acquit his son?

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Defending-Jacob-William-](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Defending-Jacob-William-Landay/dp/1780222181/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1588162410&sr=8-1)

[Landay/dp/1780222181/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1588162410&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Defending-Jacob-William-Landay/dp/1780222181/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=1588162410&sr=8-1)

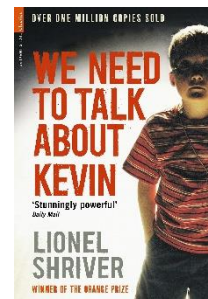


- **Shriver, L. (2010). *We need to talk about Kevin*. Serpent's Tail.**

Fiction. Terrifying analysis of attachment gone wrong, but is it nature or nurture? Slow going for the first 100 pages or so but entirely worth it!

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Need-About-Kevin-Serpents-](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Need-About-Kevin-Serpents-Classics/dp/1846687349/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802722&sr=1-1&keywords=we+need+to+talk+about+kevin)

[Classics/dp/1846687349/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802722&sr=1-1&keywords=we+need+to+talk+about+kevin](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Need-About-Kevin-Serpents-Classics/dp/1846687349/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528802722&sr=1-1&keywords=we+need+to+talk+about+kevin)



NON-FICTION

- **Chalmers, A.F. (1999). *What is this thing called science? (3rd Ed.)*. Open University Press**

Non-fiction. A very readable introduction to the philosophy of science.

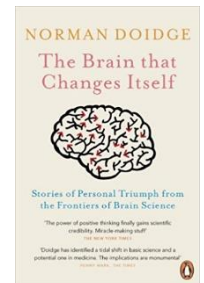
https://www.amazon.co.uk/What-Thing-Called-Science-Third/dp/0335201091/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528800806&sr=1-2&keywords=what+is+this+thing+called+science



- **Doidge, N. (2008). *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science*. Penguin.**

Non-fiction. Read about how we now know the brain can change throughout the lifetime. This 'neuroplasticity' was once thought to be possible only in early childhood, but that is not the case.

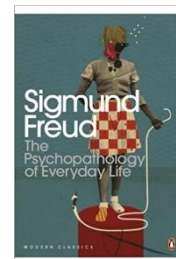
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Brain-That-Changes-Itself-Frontiers/dp/014103887X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528821537&sr=1-1&keywords=the+brain+that+changes+itself



- **Freud, S. (2002). *The psychopathology of everyday life*. Penguin**

Non-fiction. Love him or loathe him, Freud's influence on Psychology is undeniable and this is, perhaps, the best known of his works.

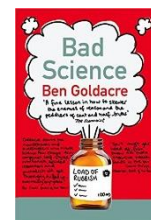
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Psychopathology-Everyday-Penguin-Modern-Classics/dp/0141184035/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1528821016&sr=8-2&keywords=psychopathology+of+everyday+life



- **Goldacre, B. (2009). *Bad science*. Fourth Estate.**

Non-fiction. Learn to pick apart over enthusiastic health headlines and explain just how homeopathy is unscientific, the difference between a 'nutritionist' and a 'dietician' and how a little science in the wrong hands can be a dangerous thing. Essential reading for anyone considering a BSc or Psychology in any form at university.

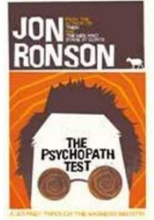
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Bad-Science-Ben-Goldacre/dp/000728487X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528799331&sr=1-1&keywords=bad+science



- **Ronson, J. (2012) . *The psychopath test*. Picador.**

Non-fiction. Easy to read. What makes a psychopath? Are they as exciting/dangerous as commonly portrayed in media?

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Psychopath-Test-Jon-Ronson/dp/0330492276/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528799162&sr=1-1&keywords=the+psychopath+test



- **Sacks, O. (2011) *The man who mistook his wife for a hat*. Picado.**

Non-fiction. A very readable classic from clinical neuropsychology. Find out what happened to The Lost Mariner, autistic savant twins, and of course, the title character.

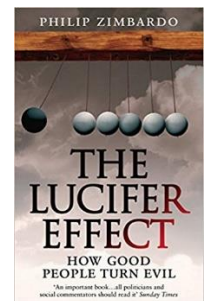
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Man-Mistook-Wife-Picador-Classic/dp/0330523627/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1528820720&sr=8-1&keywords=the+man+who+mistook+his+wife+for+a+hat



- **Zimbardo, P. (2008) *The Lucifer effect*. Rider.**

Non-fiction. Zimbardo's own account of the infamous Stanford Prison Experiment and his contribution to the defence of soldiers involved in the abuse at Abu Ghraib. The definitive account of why good people do evil things. A long read, but excellent for Social Psychology.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lucifer-Effect-Good-People-Turn/dp/1846041031/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528803290&sr=1-1&keywords=the+lucifer+effect



These are just a handful of books. Have a suggestion? Then let us know.

100 HUMANS



The following questions refer to the Netflix programme '100 Humans'. There are eight episodes in total, each examining a different element of human behaviour by subjecting 100 volunteers to a range of studies. Although some of the studies have interesting findings, many do not find evidence for their original hypotheses (predictions). However, the studies do show some good examples of things we need to consider when we conduct studies on people. Below are some questions relating to three of the episodes followed by a task to design a study, but you could also explore the other five.

EPISODE 1: Relationships



A- UNIFORM STUDY

In the uniform study, why did they use the same actors with the same script in uniform and out of uniform?

Does it matter that the attractiveness of the actors in uniform and out of uniform was rated by different people? Why/Why not?

B- CRIMINAL SENTENCING & ATTRACTIVENESS STUDY (HALO EFFECT)

In the crime sentencing study, why do you think the researchers did not tell the 100 humans that the study was actually to see whether the attractiveness of the offender affected their sentence?

Why did they use exactly the same words to describe the offender and their crime for attractive Dan and less attractive Dan?

,

C- DESIGN A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER PEOPLE WHO ARE CONSIDERED MORE ATTRACTIVE ALSO HAVE MORE C- ATTRACTIVE PARTNERS (THE MATCHING HYPOTHESIS)

EPISODE 4: Bias**A- ACCENTS**

In the study investigating how accents affect the way we perceive people, the version of 'Kathy' from England was perceived as more knowledgeable and a better presenter than the same 'Kathy' from Mississippi. The audience in these cases were American. Do you think the findings of the study would be the same if the study was replicated with a British audience? Why / Why not?

B- DESIGN A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN ANY FORM YOU LIKE



EPISODE 7 – Senses

***Bonus task: spot the spelling mistake in one of the captions in this episode! ***

A- OLD AGE SMELL STUDY

Why do you think they asked half of the 100 humans to smell the old people first and the young people second and the other half to smell the young people first and the old people second?

B- TELEVISION IMAGE AFFECTING MASS ESTIMATE

In the study into how the image on the TV affected people's estimates of its mass, the 100 humans were divided into three groups using a random number generator. Why do you think they used this method of allocating people into groups?

In this study, the control group saw no image, the other two groups saw bricks and clouds. What was the purpose of the control group in this study? (and why do we use control groups generally in science?)

C- DESIGN A STUDY TO INVESTIGATE WHETHER THE APPEARANCE OF FOOD OR DRINK AFFECTS HOW WE PERCEIVE ITS TASTE

MATHEMATICAL CONTENT

In Psychology about 10% of the marks available are maths skills – in terms of overall marks this equates to about a grade. The Maths skills are an equivalent level to that of Higher GCSE Maths/Stats, so most things you will already have covered. Here are some basic past questions. You don't need to know any psychology to answer them, but you might be interested in the topics.

1)

Sample Question

Look at the pie chart below What fraction of divorced adults had a type B attachment?

A pie chart to show the distribution of infant attachment types of divorced adults



- A. $\frac{1}{5}$
- B. $\frac{3}{10}$
- C. $\frac{2}{5}$
- D. $\frac{1}{2}$

2)

Sample question

The findings from the study are presented below:

A table to show the number of participants who perceived the ambiguous image as a monkey or as a teapot from both conditions: image presented with animals and image presented with kitchen items.

	Perceived as a monkey	Perceived as a teapot
Presented with animals	15	10
Presented with kitchen items	5	12

- a) Identify and simplify the ratio of the number of participants who perceived a monkey in the first condition and the number who perceived a monkey in the second condition.
- b) Identify and simplify the ratio of the number of participants who perceived a teapot in the first condition and the number who perceived a teapot in the second condition.

3)

Sample question

A Psychologist investigated whether recall was affected by the way the material was presented. One group was given pictures to recall, the other group were given words.

Number of Pictures Recalled	Number of Words Recalled
7	4
5	6
10	7
8	5
7	6
5	5
7	9
9	3

Calculate the measures of central tendency for the following set of raw data.

Condition 1 (Numbers of pictures recalled)

a) Mode =

b) Median =

c) Mean =

Condition 2 (Number of words recalled)

d) Mode =

e) Median =

f) Mean =

Graphical display of data

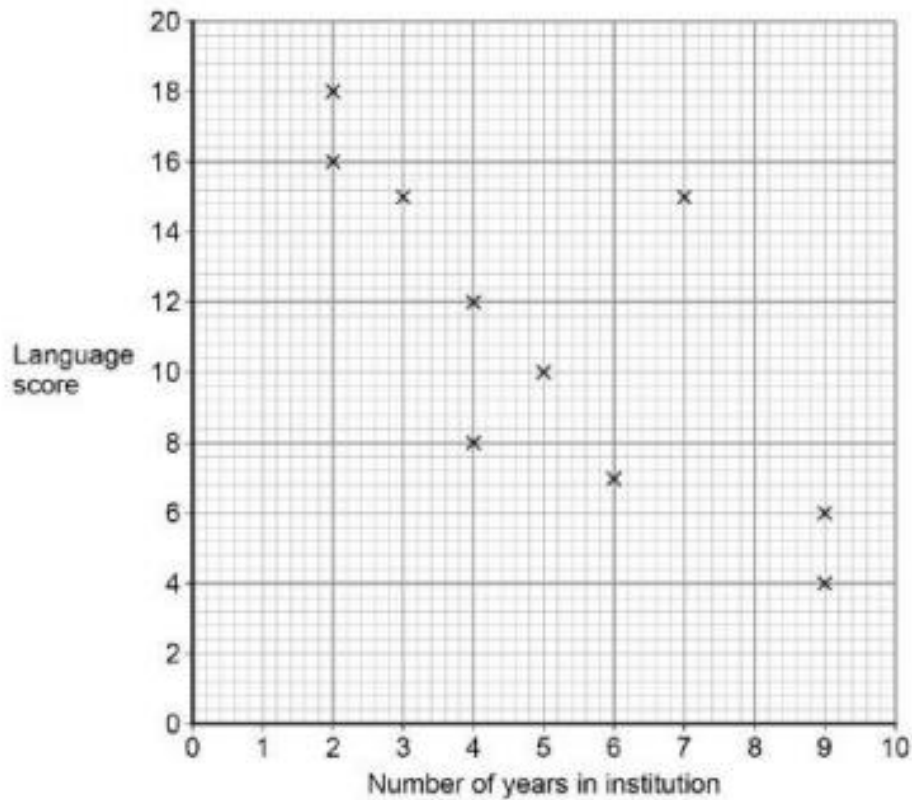
Graphs, charts and tables are all used to describe data and make it easier for the data to be understood. There are a number of graphs and charts that you need to be able to draw and interpret, they include:

- Tally chart (frequency table)
- Line graph
- Pie chart
- Bar chart
- Histogram
- Scatter diagram

4) Sample question

A psychologist thinks that there may be a link between language ability and institutionalisation. She tests the language skills of 8-year-old institutionalised children. A high score on the test indicates good language ability and a low score on the test indicates poor language ability. She also records the number of years that each child has been institutionalised. The findings are shown in the figure below.

The relationship between time spent in institution and language score



(c) Identify the type of graphical display in the figure.

- A Histogram
- B Bar graph
- C Line graph
- D Scattergram

(1)

(d) How many children took part in the study?

(1)

(e) What does the pattern of data in the figure suggest about language ability and institutionalisation?

(2)

ANSWERS**1) Pie chart sample question**

A-1/5

2) Ratios

Sample Question: a) 3 : 1 (simplified from 15 : 5) b) 5 : 6 (simplified from 10 :12)

3) Mean, Median and Mode

Sample question: Condition 1 a) 7 b) 7 c) 7.25 Condition 2: a) 5 , 6 b) 5.5 c) 5.625

4) Graphical display of data

c) Scattergram d) 10 children e) Negative correlation The more years spent in an institution the lower their language ability or opposite argument.

Other Activity suggestions

Psychology is a subject that relates to 'real-life'.

Activity 1: Keep a scrapbook (digital or paper) of articles in the news that are linked to how people behave, how they think, what motivates them etc. Annotate each article with a summary of the main points and create a glossary of terms that are new to you. You should find at least one article per week.

Use the following sources:

www.bbc.co.uk

www.theguardian.com

www.thetimes.co.uk

www.independent.co.uk

Searches in the science, health, family and business sections may be useful or use the search box and enter 'psychology'. I recently found an article on 'The Psychology of Panic Buying'!

Psychology involves studying our amazing brain.

Activity 2: a. Research and make a table of notes on the following ways of studying the brain: MRI scan, fMRI scan, EEG and Post-Mortem. You will need to find out what these abbreviations mean first! Make sure you include strengths and weaknesses of each method.

b. Create a drawing/picture of the brain. It can be a scientific drawing in cross section or even an artistic representation using any medium, digital or otherwise. Spend some time learning about the different parts of the brain and their function ; it will really help you in your A level.

c. Visit the website www.livescience.com and read '10 things we learned about the brain in 2019'. Choose your three favourite and write a summary of each finding.

Psychology involves critically analysing evidence for different explanations of behaviour.

Activity 3: Investigate the question: 'are criminals born or made?' Make some notes considering this question and weighing up the arguments and the evidence. The 'born' side of the argument (nature) suggests criminal behaviour is influenced by genetics or the brain, or nervous system malfunctions. The 'made' side of the argument (nurture) suggests that criminal behaviour is influenced by personality, dysfunctional thinking (cognition) or learning and environment. What will your conclusion be? In Psychology you have to give a measured conclusion based on the weight of the evidence for each side and not on personal opinion. You might like to research a case study of a serial killer or other famous criminal, as an example.

A good source of explanations is www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-forensic.html

Still want more?

If you'd like to investigate a bit more about psychology (including the answers to the true/false quiz on page 2), then email me on bethan.greenhalgh@hurtwood.net for some resources to help you complete the free Open University course 'Starting with psychology'.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/health-sports-psychology/psychology/starting-psychology/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab>