

RIVERS TRANSITION CHALLENGE 2025

SUBJECT: Psychology

Course details: AQA exam board.

Qualification: A level

Minimum entry requirement is: Grade 5 in a Science and English

Teacher for Psychology: Mr Chapman

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YOUR CHALLENGES:

**Challenge 1: Where did Psychology come from?**

**Research and create a document about each of the steps leading up to the development of psychology as an independent science. Include information about- their assumptions about the human mind, what evidence they used to justify their theories, how their ideas about the human mind were applied, strengths of their approach and limitations of their approach.**

**Philosophical Origins- Ancient Greeks, Rene Descartes, and Emmanuel Kant**

**Phrenology- Franz Gall**

**Psychophysics- Ernst Weber and Gustav Fechner**

**The First Psychologists- Wilhelm Wundt and William James**

**How this links to the specification: Our first topic in A-Level Psychology is about approaches, as there is no single way all Psychologists agree on how the human mind functions. These topics give a good background on where Psychology came from and how it eventually developed into one of the newest sciences.**

**Time guide: 3 hrs**

**Assignment deadline: First Lesson in September**

**EXEMPLARS: GRADES A\*-E: See grade descriptors after the two challenges**

**SUPPORT:**

**You’ll be able to find ample information online but here are some links to get you started-**

[**https://samplius.com/free-essay-examples/the-history-of-mental-health-researches/**](https://samplius.com/free-essay-examples/the-history-of-mental-health-researches/)

[**https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-mind/**](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-mind/)

<https://www.brainybehavior.com/blog/2008/01/descartes-and-modern-psychology/>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/phrenology>

<https://www.britannica.com/science/psychophysics>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/wundt.html>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/william-james.html>

**Challenge 2: Cognitive Dissonance**

1. **Research what Cognitive Dissonance is and write a definition of this interesting aspect of human behaviour.**
2. **Look up the Cognitive Dissonance Experiment by Leon Festinger and James Carlsmith in 1957 at Standford University (when talking about this study you would simply say Festinger and Carlsmith, 1957). What were the aims of the experiment, what was their procedure, what were the results, and what do these results tell us?**
3. **Now that you know what Cognitive Dissonance is, find an example of this in normal life and explain how the process worked in a real setting.**
4. **Find evidence that either supports or opposes this theory. You’ll want to find other experiments which might have confirmed or contradicted these results or talk about what is or isn’t reliable in the original study.**

**How this links to the specification: In A-Level Psychology we look at theories and ideas in three main categories for assessment. AO1- Knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures. AO2- Application of Psychological ideas to real world or theoretical settings. AO3- Analysis and evaluation. This challenge will show you how we do all three.**

**Time guide: 2 hrs**

**Assignment deadline: First Lesson in September**

**EXEMPLARS: GRADES A\*-E: See grade descriptors after the two challenges**

**SUPPORT:**

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/cognitive-dissonance.html>

**EXEMPLARS:**

**Grade descriptors**

**A\*- Securely meet all the requirements of grade A with a stronger performance in all of them.**

**A- Accurate and detailed knowledge of a range of relevant scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures with a information clearly presented and proper terminology used. Explicit and effective application of knowledge to real world and hypothetical scenarios.** **Analyse, interpret, and evaluate scientific information with the ability form strong judgements.**

**B- Same as A grade except less consistent with quality of answers and some inaccuracies and misunderstandings shown.**

**C- Reasonably accurate and detailed knowledge of some scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures. Mostly clearly presented and some proper terminology used. Application of relevant knowledge to real world or hypothetical scenarios. Analyse, interpret, and evaluate some scientific information with a judgement formed.**

**D- Securely meeting all requirements for grade E with stronger performance in each area but not enough to reach grade C.**

**E- Some basic knowledge of relevant scientific ideas, processes, techniques, and procedures presented with basic psychological terminology. An attempt to apply some psychological knowledge to real world or hypothetical scenarios. An attempt to analyse, interpret, and evaluate some relevant scientific information with basic judgements formed.**

HOW DO I HAND IN:

Your work must be handed in as paper copies on the first class in September.

HOW AM I MARKED?

You are graded using A\*-E grades based on AQA Psychology mark scheme levels. These are outlined in brief here but can be found in more detail from either the AQA website or from the JCQ definitions. You’ll start the year on the lower end but this is nothing to panic about- this a new subject and a big jump in difficulty from KS4. As you learn the subject and get used to the style of Psychology writing your grades will reflect your progress.

WHAT IF I GET STUCK?

Email me! I’ll get back to you as soon as I can and frankly I love to talk Psychology anyway.

WHAT IF I MISS A DEADLINE OR DON’T HAVE I.T?

This will be a new subject for the vast majority of you and so this work is essential for familiarising yourself with the subject. If you have a reason then make sure you communicate it but ensure the work is completed or it will seriously affect your ability to take this subject.

WIDER READING/ACTIVITIES TO KEEP YOU BUSY IN THE SUMMER

For research you can use the links I have provided above. In general, SimplyPsychology is a great website and is ideal for A-Level Psychology.

**Books:**

AQA PSYCHOLOGY FOR A LEVEL YEAR 1 & AS STUDENT BOOK – 2ND EDITION (the green hair book)

Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman

Self Comes to Mind by Antonio Damasio

Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are by Joseph LeDoux

**Film/TV:**

Freud (Netflix)

Hitler’s Circle of Evil (Netflix)

Lost Angels: Skid Row is My Home (Prime)

Memento (Netflix)

Mindhunters (Netflix)

Neurons to Nirvana (Netflix)

OC87: The Obsessive Compulsive, Major Depression, Bipolar, Asperger’s Movie (Prime)

Of Two Minds (Prime)

Shutter Island (Netflix)

Take your pills (Netflix)

The Anonymous People (Prime)

The Mind, Explained (Netflix)

The Social Dilemma (Netflix)

**National Governing Body:**

British Psychological Society: https://www.bps.org.uk/