

## Psychology Summer Project

Dear student,

According to our records, you are planning to study Psychology A-Level at Poynton High School. The psychology team are dedicated to securing the best grades and in order to achieve this, we prepare our students for the demands of the course in advance with this piece of project work. This is particularly relevant for aspiring psychologists as it is a subject frequently chosen by students with little prior experience or subject knowledge. The summer project addresses the “How Science Works” assessment objective and must be submitted **in hard copy** on arrival to your first Psychology lesson at PHS sixth form. This will give you the opportunity not only to investigate an active area of research in the discipline but also demonstrate your commitment.

The project is in two parts:

- 1) **Researching an “Approach to Psychology”**
- 2) **An Investigation into the role of either Context or State on Memory**

### Researching an” Approach to Psychology” (approx. 400 words)

There are several different ways in which psychologists attempt to explain the workings of brain and mind. You are expected to research any **one** of the following approaches to psychology and to summarise it in **less than 100** words. You are also asked to provide detail on a study which utilises this approach.

<u>Approach</u>	<u>Potential studies</u>
Biological	Any genetic study of OCD (such as Lewis 1936)
Cognitive	Research to support Beck’s Theory of Depression (e.g. Grazioli 2000)
Behaviourist	Pavlov’s dogs or the Skinner box
Psychodynamic (Freud)	“Little Hans” - a bit odd and not for the faint hearted!

For the study you are expected to include the following sections, APFCC -

Aim	What were they hoping to discover?
Procedures	How did they do it? Who did they use?
Findings	What were the results of the study?
Conclusions	What do the findings tell us?
Criticisms	Can we trust the study? Was there a fundamental flaw in how the research was conducted? Were the results valid or reliable?

The study should cover approximately one side of A4. Your research will provide the basis of your first psychology lesson and it is therefore imperative that you bring a **hard copy** with you to the lesson. The internet will provide most of the resources you need and you may find <http://www.psychology4a.com/approaches.html> particularly useful.

## **Part 2 - An Investigation into the role of either Context or State on Memory (Max. 1000 words)**

### **Introduction**

In your introduction, you must explain what is meant by either Context- or State-Dependent Memory and what research exists in this area. Start by using any A-Level Psychology textbooks, and if you use the internet, consider the reliability of the sources you use.

### **Design**

Next, it is down to you to devise a piece of research to test either Context- or State-Dependent Memory and for this you will need to address the following:

- What participants will you use and how will you select them?
- What will you change? (Independent Variable)
- What will you measure? (Dependent Variable)
- What will you control? (Extraneous Variables)
- How will you ensure reliability?
- How will you ensure validity?

Organise your writing under these headings – you'll find the design much easier to write this way. This task will require research so that you fully understand the meaning of these scientific words and use them with confidence in the report. A final, concluding paragraph should also evaluate your design. Consider ways in which the investigation might be biased inaccurate, unreliable or invalid.

This project reflects the nature of sixth form study and provides the teacher with an indication of the independent work ethic of each student. For homework, **students are expected to research and makes notes on a variety of studies throughout the year**. Psychology is a very useful A-level in this regard as it nurtures independent study skills and prepares students for the rigours of university study.

I look forward to your submission in September. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the department here at school.

Yours sincerely,

G Kenyon  
Psychology co-ordinator  
[GKenyon@PHS.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:GKenyon@PHS.cheshire.sch.uk)