



**Heston**

COMMUNITY  
SCHOOL



**A-Level Psychology**  
**Transition Tasks**  
**Year 11 → Year 12**

<b>Compulsory tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These must be completed before you start your course in September.</li> <li>• Work preferably to be hand written but typed work is also acceptable (this includes task 1 as some students will not have access to a printer).</li> <li>• <b>KS5 Preparation: AO1 is for me:</b> In Sixth Form you are expected to arrive at your lessons having already learnt the key facts in advance. This will involve completing reading before the lesson and the completing a task or taking notes on it.</li> </ul>	Minimum time needed to fully complete	Date
<p><b>1. Using the link below, create a full set of notes on Research Methods (in any style e.g. bullet points, paragraphs, mindmaps) and definitions for all of the concepts.</b>  <a href="https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-research-methods.html">https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-research-methods.html</a></p>	8 hours	
<p><b>2. Watch each TED talk below and write 50- 100 words summarizing the key points made.</b>  This task will provide you with an insight into the different units you will study in year 1.  Videos can be found by typing each title into YouTube.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resisting conformity: juggling social expectations &amp; cultural foundations.</li> <li>• The psychology of evil.</li> <li>• How reliable is your memory.</li> <li>• How did your parents mess up?</li> <li>• How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime.</li> <li>• What they don't tell you about mental illness.</li> <li>• Testosterone: the hidden key.</li> <li>• Who are you really? The puzzle of personality.</li> </ul>	10 hours	
<p><b>3. Create mini summaries (1-2 paragraphs) of a mix of 5 articles from the links below. Each article must be about a different topic/ area of Psychology</b>  <a href="https://digest.bps.org.uk/">https://digest.bps.org.uk/</a>  <a href="https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/psychology/">https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/psychology/</a></p>	6 hours	
<p><b>4. Listen to the following BBC podcast and write a short summary of the main arguments.</b>  All in the mind. <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b03hvx74">https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b03hvx74</a></p>	1 hour	
<p><b>5. Tasks 1- 10 below.</b></p>	15 hours	

<p>Optional challenge tasks</p> <p><i>These will help you to develop your understanding more quickly and look impressive on your UCAS Personal Statements.</i></p>	Date
<p><b>1. Suggested reading</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Dictionary of Psychology (Oxford Quick Reference).</li> <li>• The Little Book of Psychology by Emily Ralls and Caroline Riggs.</li> <li>• Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman.</li> <li>• The Lucifer Effect; How Good People Turn Evil by Philip Zimbardo.</li> <li>• Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole: Extraordinary Journeys into the Human Brain by Dr Allan Ropper and Brian David Burrell.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Suggested videos/ lectures/ films</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An introduction to the discipline of Psychology. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3nlGWeIVj8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3nlGWeIVj8</a></li> <li>• Intro to Psychology. Crash Course Psychology #1. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vo4pMVbOR6M">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vo4pMVbOR6M</a></li> <li>• Black Swan (2010).</li> <li>• Shutter Island (2010).</li> <li>• The Butterfly Effect (2004).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Suggested online courses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive Psychology, Future learn. <a href="https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/an-introduction-to-cognitive-psychology-as-an-experimental-science">https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/an-introduction-to-cognitive-psychology-as-an-experimental-science</a></li> <li>• Basic First Aid, Future Learn. <a href="https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/basic-first-aid">https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/basic-first-aid</a></li> <li>• Origins of the Human Mind, Edx MOOC. <a href="https://www.edx.org/course/origins-of-the-human-mind">https://www.edx.org/course/origins-of-the-human-mind</a></li> </ul>	

Psychology is the scientific study of human and animal behaviour. Psychologists are always trying to discover why people do the things they do, whether those things are normal or abnormal. Psychologists are also interested in differences between various groups such as males & females, cultural & subcultural (e.g. Welsh & English) groups, and so on. Sometimes we have to look at animal behaviour in order to get a better understanding of our own behaviour and to answer questions like

- How do we learn?
- Why do I behave like this?
- Why do I feel like this?
- Why do I think like this?

These questions are explored through a series of activities including learning research studies and practical work. The course aims to develop both your psychological skills as well as your psychological knowledge.

In preparation for the course you will need to complete the following tasks:

In psychology A-level it is important that you fully understand the difference between a **THEORY** a **RESEARCH METHOD** and a **STUDY**

**Task 1:**

**Write your own definitions for a theory, research method and study**

**Theory** – a theory is a point of view or idea that one or more psychologists proposes in order to explain an aspect of behaviour. For example, there are many theories of memory such as Levels of Processing and Multi Store Model. Theories can be backed up by research evidence from **STUDIES**. Sometimes these studies may be conducted by the same or similar psychologists to those who proposed the **THEORY**. This is often because they have conducted research to support their theory or have based the theory on findings from research.

**Research Method** – this refers to the way in which a study was carried out. There are many different research methods which psychologists can use and the one they choose will depend on what type of psychologist they are and what type of information they are trying to find out. For example, if we want to find out how many people think they would blindly obey an authority figure we might carry out a survey and ask as many people as possible. However, if we want to find out if people actually **do** obey authority figures we might construct an experiment involving an authority figure to find this out.

**Study** – a study is a specific investigation into aspects of behaviour. Studies can be conducted using many different research **METHODS**. Normally a study will have an **aim, method, results and conclusion** and is written as a step by step account of what the psychologist expected to find, what they did during the investigation, what they found and the conclusions drawn from the findings.

## Task 2:

Read the following account and then write down

1. What the theory is
2. What the research methods were
3. What the study was

### Attachment

Bowlby suggested that there was a critical period for the development of attachments between infant and care giver. According to Bowlby infants display an innate tendency to become attached to one particular individual. He called this monotropy. He suggested this tendency was qualitatively different from any subsequent attachment a child might form. However, he did not suggest monotropy was absolute but that the child has a hierarchy of attachments.

Bowlby thought that if a child was deprived of their mother between 6 months and five years of age then this would lead to difficulties in later life. They would be unable to form attachments with others and would be likely to turn to crime. He termed this as his maternal deprivation hypothesis. Bowlby suggested that separation experiences in early childhood caused affectionless psychopathy. This is the inability to have deep feelings for other people and, therefore, the lack of meaningful personal relationships.

During the 1970's, researcher Mary Ainsworth further expanded upon Bowlby's groundbreaking work in her now-famous "Strange Situation" study. The study involved observing children between the ages of 12 to 18 months responding to a situation in which they were briefly left alone and then reunited with their mother (Ainsworth, 1978). During the procedure the children were observed through a one-way mirror as they encountered a series of situations in which their mother and a stranger entered and left the room at various times. The researchers (on the other side of the one way mirror) recorded the child's behaviours in the various situations. 66% of the children were described as being securely attached, 22% of infants were classified as avoidant (not concerned by the mothers absence and not interested when she returned) and 12% of the children were classified as resistant (showed intense distress when their mother was absent and rejected her when she returned)

Read the following account of a key study in psychology.



Elizabeth Loftus is a leading figure in the field of eyewitness testimony research. She has demonstrated through the use of leading questions how it is possible to distort a person's memory of an event.

A leading question is a question that suggests what answer is desired or leads to the desired answer.

The aim of this study was to investigate how information supplied after an event, influences a witness's memory for that event.

The participants were 45 students of the University of Washington. They were each shown seven film-clips of traffic accidents. The clips were short excerpts from safety films made for driver education. The clips ranged from 5 to 30 seconds long.

Following each clip, the students were asked to write an account of the accident they had just seen. They were also asked to answer some specific questions but the critical question was to do with the speed of the vehicles involved in the collision.

Condition 1: 'About how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?' Condition 2: 'About how fast were the cars going when they collided into each other?' Condition 3: 'About how fast were the cars going when they bumped into each other?' Condition 4: 'About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?' Condition 5: 'About how fast were the cars going when they contacted each other?'

The basic question was therefore 'About how fast were the cars going when they \*\*\*\*\* each other?'. In each condition, a different word or phrase was used to fill in the blank. These words were; *smashed, collided, bumped, hit, contacted*.

The entire experiment lasted about an hour and a half and a different ordering of the films was presented to each group of participants.

**Task 3:**

- 1. In your own words describe the study**
- 2. Explain what the implications of this study are**
- 3. Research your own study and describe it**
- 4. Explain what the implications of this study are**

When evaluating something in psychology, it is important to **use** and **explain** psychological terminology.

Before we look at the specific evaluation points you need to know some key psychological terminology.

**Reliability** – This refers to Studies

This refers to whether the results found are likely to be found again in the future. If a study is carried out in a very scientific way and can be repeated exactly at another time we can say that it is reliable

**Validity** – This refers to studies

This refers to whether a study actually tested what it set out to test. Sometimes even though we intend to test a particular behaviour or characteristic it is possible that what was recorded actually refers to a different behaviour or characteristic entirely.

**Ecological Validity** – This refers to studies

This relates to the extent to which the findings from a study can be generalised beyond the context of the investigation. For example if research is carried out in a lab, would the participants be expected to respond in a similar way in an environment where the behaviour is **normally** carried out? If so, it can be said to be ecologically valid.

**Determinism** – This refers to theories.

This is where a theory explains behaviour in such a way that it implies that the individual has free will. For example if we say that intelligence is caused by our genes then this implies that we have no ability to change how clever we are

**Reductionism** – This refers to theories

This is where a theory explains behaviours by looking at one factor only. In other words the behaviour is **reduced** to one type of explanation. For example a genetic explanation is reductionist as it implies that our behaviour is caused **only** by our genes.

**Demand Characteristics** – This refers to studies

This is where a participant in a study may change their behaviour according to how they think they are expected or predicted to act. This is particularly problematic if it is easy for the participant to guess the aim of the study. In studies where they cannot guess (for example if they don't know they are in a study) it is impossible for demand characteristics to occur.

**Task 4: Use these terms to evaluate the Loftus and Palmer Study we looked at earlier. You should use the key terms to try to think of both strengths and weaknesses of the study.**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>



## Ethics

As psychologists conduct their experiments on people most of the time, it is important that there are strict guidelines for them to follow to make sure that are not mistreated. The following ethical guidelines are put forward by the British Psychological Society.

### Task 5: Make a list of all the guidelines below and put into your own words

1. **Consent.** When someone consents to participate in your research, his or her consent must be *informed*. Before obtaining consent, the objectives of your research should be made clear. In addition, anything that may influence their willingness to participate must be disclosed. When consent is obtained, this should be written. You should prepare a sheet of paper for each participant, which they sign and date to indicate their consent. Where the research involves children under the age of 16 years, then (a) consent must be obtained from parents or those acting as guardians of the child, and (b) the research procedure must be approved by the unit leader for the Dissertation option. If working with Deaf people, then the information for consent should be presented clearly in BSL.
2. **Deception.** Information must not be withheld from participants, nor should they be misled, if they are likely to object when debriefed at the end of the procedure (see *Debriefing* below). If you are in any doubt, then you should consult with an independent person with the appropriate socio-cultural knowledge. If you feel that your research requires withholding information from participants until after the procedure, then you must demonstrate that alternative procedures that do not require withholding consent are not appropriate for your research. Where they are appropriate, such procedures should be used instead.
3. **Debriefing.** Following an investigation, participants should be fully informed about the nature of the research. The participants' experiences of the research should also be discussed. Debriefing following an investigation does not justify the use of an unethical procedure.
4. **Withdrawal from investigation.** Your participants have the right to withdraw at any time, regardless of whether or not they were paid for their participation. They should be informed of this prior to commencement of the study. When conducting research with children, discomfort or avoidance of the research situation should be taken as indicative of the desire to withdraw. Participants can also withdraw at a later stage, after the study has been conducted. In this case, you are required to destroy and data or information collected from those who have elected to withdraw.
5. **Confidentiality.** Participants have the right to confidentiality. Indeed, unless agreed in advance, confidentiality is assumed. If confidentiality cannot be assured, then this must be disclosed to participants before they consent to participate in the research. The Data Protection Act requires you to maintain the confidentiality of those people about whom you have collected information. If someone exerts pressure upon you to break confidentiality, then you should inform him or her of this. If you are unsure what to do in this situation, you should consult with your supervisor or the Unit leader.
6. **Protection of participants.** You have a responsibility for protecting your participants from physical or mental harm, including undue stress. The risk of harm to a participant must not be greater than that to which they are exposed in everyday life. Contact information should be provided to participants, so that they can contact you if problems arise at a later stage. Great care must be taken when discussing with parents or teachers the results of research involving children. Any evaluative statements you make may carry more weight than you intended.
7. **Observational research.** Observational studies must protect the privacy and psychological well-being of those observed. Where consent for observation has not been obtained, privacy is an important issue. Participants should not be observed in situations where they would not normally expect others to observe their behaviour. Particular care should be taken not to violate cultural values.
8. **Giving advice.** Sometimes during the course of research (a) physical or psychological problems are identified by the researcher, and/or (b) participants solicit advice from the research. Great care must be taken in these situations. Where the problem may be serious, and you are unqualified to advise or help, then an appropriate source of professional advice should be suggested. If you are unsure about what such a source may be, then you should say so and not be tempted to offer any advice yourself.

Look at the following brief description of studies. Half of these are 'made up' and half of them are real.

**Task 6:**

1. In the first column tick the studies that you think were real and cross those you think were made up.
2. In the second column suggest which ethical guidelines may be broken by this research.

Example	Tick / Cross	Which guideline broken?
<p>In a busy subway, a person collapses bleeding from the mouth. The person is a confederate of the experiment (they are acting), and the event is staged. Bystanders are covertly (secretly) observed to see if they help, and how long they take to help. This was an investigation into bystander responses to emergency situations.</p>		
<p>An experiment in a pick up truck, with a rifle visible in the back, and a sticker on the bumper saying 'VENGEANCE', stops at red lights. The experimenter does not move when the lights turn green, thus blocking the traffic. This was studying the impact of aggressive stimuli on 'horn-honking' behaviour.</p>		
<p>Participants were presented with 2,000 sheets of random numbers. They were asked to add up 224 pairs of numbers from each sheet, then tear the sheet into 32 pieces, before going on to the next. After five hours, some of the participants had to be stopped by the experimenter. This was an investigation into the power of the psychology experiment.</p>		
<p>Ammonia was used to punish a deaf-blind five year old boy who was engaging in self-mutilation. This was studying the effects of punishment.</p>		
<p>A hidden observer in a men's toilet records the time taken before subjects began to urinate and the time they take urinating. A confederate of the experimenter stands in the next stall to the participant, or one stall away. This was an investigation into the effects of privacy on arousal.</p>		
<p>Participants were instructed to give real electric shocks to puppies. This was to study whether people would be obedient and follow instructions.</p>		

**Task 7: Write an essay that is at least 1 side of A4 long titled: “Why do Psychologists have to follow ethical guidelines?”**

**Task 8: Find two examples of animal research studies in Psychology and design a storyboard for each to explain what happened in the studies.**

Focus on the procedure (how it was carried out) and findings (what the psychologists found out). Each storyboard must be done on a separate piece of paper and include pictures/ illustrations. Examples are Harlow and Harlow, Pavlov, Skinner...

**Task 9: “Psychology can be considered to be a scientific subject”.**

Do some research using books and the internet to find lots of ideas on this topic and then write a 1-2 paragraph account of your opinion (whether you agree or disagree). You must support your answer with evidence.

### Psychology and Maths

A key part of the course is being confident with your mathematical ability.

**Task 10 is to complete the checklist below and write down an example that demonstrates that you can do each skills.**

Mathematical skills	Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A-level Psychology	Could I do this?
<b>Arithmetic and numerical computation</b>		
Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form.	For example, converting data in standard form from a results table into decimal form in order to construct a pie chart.	
Use ratios, fractions and percentages.	For example, calculating the percentages of cases that fall into different categories in an observation study.	
Estimate results.	For example, commenting on the spread of scores for a set of data, which would require estimating the range.	
<b>Handling data</b>		
Use an appropriate number of significant figures.	For example, expressing a correlation coefficient to two or three significant figures.	
Find arithmetic means.	For example, calculating the means for two conditions using raw data from a class experiment.	
Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms.	For example, selecting and sketching an appropriate form of data display for a given set of data.	

Mathematical skills	Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A-level Psychology	Could I do this?
Understand simple probability.	For example, explaining the difference between the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance.	
Understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.	For example, explaining how a random or stratified sample could be obtained from a target population.	
Understand the terms mean, median and mode.	For example, explaining the differences between the mean, median and mode and selecting which measure of central tendency is most appropriate for a given set of data. Calculate standard deviation.	
Use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables.	For example, plotting two variables from an investigation on a scatter diagram and identifying the pattern as a positive correlation, a negative correlation or no correlation.	
Use a statistical test.	For example, calculating a non-parametric test of differences using data from a given experiment.	
Make order of magnitude calculations.	For example, estimating the mean test score for a large number of participants on the basis of the total overall score.	
Distinguish between levels of measurement.	For example, stating the level of measurement (nominal, ordinal or interval) that has been used in a study.	
Know the characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.	For example, being presented with a set of scores from an experiment and being asked to indicate the position of the mean (or median, or mode).	
Select an appropriate statistical test.	For example, selecting a suitable inferential test for a given practical investigation and explaining why the chosen test is appropriate.	
Use statistical tables to determine significance.	For example, using an extract from statistical tables to say whether or not a given observed value is significant at the 0.05 level of significance for a one-tailed test.	
Understand measures of dispersion, including standard deviation and range.	For example, explaining why the standard deviation might be a more useful measure of dispersion for a given set of scores, eg where there is an outlying score.	
Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data.	For example, explaining how a given qualitative measure (for example, an interview transcript) might be converted into quantitative data.	

Mathematical skills	Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of A-level Psychology	Could I do this?
Understand the difference between primary and secondary data.	For example, stating whether data collected by a researcher dealing directly with participants is primary or secondary data.	
<b>Algebra</b>		
Understand and use the symbols: =, <, <<, >>, >, $\alpha$ , $\sim$ .	For example, expressing the outcome of an inferential test in the conventional form by stating the level of significance at the 0.05 level or 0.01 level by using symbols appropriately.	
Substitute numerical values into algebraic equations using appropriate units for physical quantities.	For example, inserting the appropriate values from a given set of data into the formula for a statistical test, eg inserting the N value (for the number of scores) into the Chi Square formula.	
Solve simple algebraic equations.	For example, calculating the degrees of freedom for a Chi Square test.	
<b>Graphs</b>		
Translate information between graphical, numerical and algebraic forms.	For example, using a set of numerical data (a set of scores) from a record sheet to construct a bar graph.	
Plot two variables from experimental or other data.	For example, sketching a scatter diagram using two sets of data from a correlational investigation.	

### **Important notes**

Please also have a look at these external links to support your understanding of Psychology:

- Textbooks:
  - The Complete Companions for AQA A Level Psychology 5th Edition Year 1
  - The Complete Companions for AQA A Level Psychology 5th Edition Year 2
- <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/assessment-resources>
- <https://digest.bps.org.uk/>