

Psychology Summer Work

To get ahead on some of the most important theories of learning via the environment you can complete this free course: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychology-of-learning>

You can also look out for documentaries about anything Psychology related and follow some Psychology feeds on twitter such as @PsychToday @PsychCentral @ResearchDigest @AboutPsychology

In psychology we rely on research to investigate our human, and sometimes animal, participants. We need to develop accurate theories so that we can further our understanding and develop treatments for abnormal behaviours (e.g. therapy for depressed people) or develop ways of making humans better in some way by improving thought processes (e.g. one day psychologists might discover a way that we can all improve our memory – imagine how easy exams would become!). If we don't know how accurate our theories are then they become useless!

Because we use human participants, carrying out research can be very difficult as we can't/shouldn't control and manipulate people in the same way as a chemist can manipulate chemicals in a chemistry experiment. Humans also have lots of influences on their behaviour all the time, so it can become challenging when you are trying to find out what the most important influence is and therefore what the cause of behaviour might be! This means that there is no such thing as the perfect psychology experiment and so nothing is ever a proven fact – the field of psychology is always changing and developing.

Very early on in your studies of psychology you will need to learn about how to conduct research in psychology. This will help you carry out your own research, but it will also allow you to see the strengths and weaknesses in other people's research. One of the hardest things is that you have to learn new terminology and be able to use it well in the exam. The rule in psychology is to use the key terminology and also explain what it means to get full marks. To give you a head start on next year I would like you to use the internet to write a definition of the following key terms in research methods, and then try to learn them before the start of Year 12.

A good tip when searching on the internet is to type: 'definition of *[insert term]* in psychology research'

Key Term	Definition
Nomothetic research	
Idiographic research	
Subjective	
Objective	
Hypothesis	
Operationalised	

Independent Variable	
Dependent Variable	
Extraneous Variable	
Confounding Variable	
Conditions	
Demand characteristics	
Social Desirability Bias	
Participant variables	
Internal Validity	
Mundane Realism	
Ecological Validity	
Population Validity	
Reliability	
Retrospective data	
Empirical	
Generalisable	