

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Psychology Course Overview

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the psychologists and studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with such topics as the biological bases of behavior, sensation and perception, learning and cognition, motivation, developmental psychology, testing and individual differences, treatment of abnormal behavior, and social psychology. Throughout the course, students employ psychological research methods, including ethical considerations, as they use the scientific method, evaluate claims and evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for AP Psychology. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

AP Psychology Course Content

The AP Psychology course includes the systematic and scientific study of behavior and mental processes represented by the following topics:

- History and Approaches
- Research Methods
- Biological Bases of Behavior
- Sensation and Perception
- States of Consciousness
- Learning
- Cognition
- Motivation and Emotion
- Developmental Psychology
- Personality
- Testing and Individual Differences
- Abnormal Behavior
- Treatment of Abnormal Behavior
- Social Psychology

AP Psychology Exam Structure

AP PSYCHOLOGY EXAM: 2 HOURS

Assessment Overview

The AP Psychology Exam measures students' knowledge of the 14 key topics and fields of study in psychology and tests their ability to define, compare, and apply concepts and research findings. Questions are based on key terminology, scientific methodology, and theories associated with each subfield.

Free-response questions may require students to interrelate different content areas and to analyze and evaluate psychological constructs and, more generally, theoretical perspectives.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple Choice | 100 Questions | 1 Hour, 10 Minutes | 66.6% of Exam Score

- Define and explain content from a range of course topics
- Apply skills of comparison and interpretation to course concepts, theories, and scientific methods

Section II: Free Response | 2 Questions | 50 Minutes | 33.3% of Exam Score

Topics/themes addressed by these questions may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Analyze a unique scenario using concepts from different theoretical frameworks or subdomains in the field
- Design, analyze, or critique a research study

AP PSYCHOLOGY SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Which of the following scenarios is the best example of the mere-exposure effect?

- (A) After tasting a soft drink for the first time, Frank immediately decides it is his favorite drink.
- (B) A year after beginning her exercise program, Georgina wants to expand her regimen.
- (C) Hal begins to like a certain sports car after seeing it frequently on the road, even though he did not like the car at first.
- (D) Kristy initially thinks her new neighbor is attractive, but once she becomes better acquainted with him, she finds him less appealing.
- (E) After going away to college, Joy finds she is less and less interested in spending time with her old friends from high school.

Answer: C

Sample Free-Response Question

To demonstrate an understanding of psychological concepts, perspectives, and research methodology, students must answer the questions clearly, in complete sentences, and within the context of the prompt. Outlines and lists alone are not acceptable responses. Providing definitions of the psychological terms alone may not score points but may help students better apply the concepts. Responses that contradict themselves, involve circular definitions, or simply restate the question are unacceptable.

ABSTRACT

1. We conducted a variation of Asch's (1951) conformity study in which participants made judgments about the length of lines. We randomly assigned participants to one of two conditions and told them that the study involved perceptual abilities. In the first condition, participants estimated the length of lines after hearing five people pretending to be participants (confederates) give inaccurate estimates. In the second condition, participants estimated the length of lines without hearing estimates of confederates. As we expected, participants in the first condition were less accurate in their estimates of line length, demonstrating the tendency to conform to majority influence.
 - A) How would each element below be related to the specific content of the experiment reported in the abstract?
 - Control group
 - Deception
 - Operational definition of the dependent variable
 - Hypothesis
 - Debriefing
 - B) How might participants' estimates of line length in the study be related to the following?
 - Cognitive dissonance
 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs