
Syllabus Development Guide: AP Psychology

The guide contains the following sections and information:

Curricular Requirements	The curricular requirements are the core elements of the course. Your syllabus must provide clear evidence that each requirement is fully addressed in your course.
Scoring Components	Some curricular requirements consist of complex, multi-part statements. These particular requirements are broken down into their component parts and restated as “scoring components.” Reviewers will look for evidence that each scoring component is included in your course.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	These are the guidelines used by reviewers to evaluate the evidence in your syllabus. Use these guidelines to determine the level of detail reviewers require to demonstrate how the curricular requirements are met in your course.
Key Term(s)	To ensure the clarity of certain terms or expressions that may have multiple meanings, each of these terms is clearly defined.
Samples of Evidence For each scoring component, three separate samples of evidence are provided. These statements provide clear descriptions of what acceptable evidence should look like.	

Table of Contents	Page
Scoring Component 1	3
Scoring Component 2	4
Scoring Component 3	5
Scoring Component 4	6
Scoring Component 5	7
Scoring Component 6	8
Scoring Component 7	9
Scoring Component 8	10
Scoring Component 9	11
Scoring Component 10	12
Scoring Component 11	13
Scoring Component 12	14
Scoring Component 13	15
Scoring Component 14	16
Scoring Component 15	17
Scoring Component 16	18
Scoring Component 17	19

Curricular Requirement	<p>The course provides instruction in each of the following 14 content areas outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Psychology • Treatment of Psychological Disorders • Social Psychology
Scoring Component 1	The course provides instruction in history and approaches.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “History and Approaches” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	Approaches: the different theoretical perspectives that underlie explanations of behavior including behavioral, biological, cognitive, humanistic, psychodynamic, evolutionary/psychobiological, and socio-cultural. Both historical approaches (e.g. structuralism, functionalism, Gestalt psychology, behaviorism, psychoanalysis) and contemporary approaches (e.g. cognitive, physiological) are part of the course.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The syllabus addresses history and approaches by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students conduct discussions on the connection between different historical “schools” and different subfields of psychology. • Students contrast different approaches in terms of how they define the nature of psychology. • Students study Behaviorism in terms of its impact in changing the nature of psychology in the 1930’s, it’s impact on clinical psychology in the 1950’s, and it’s contribution to the study of learning. The syllabus addresses history and approaches in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. The syllabus mentions the history and approaches in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

Curricular Requirement	The course teaches ethics and research methods used in psychological science and practice.
Scoring Component 2	The course provides instruction in research methods used in psychological science, practice and ethics.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Psychological Science, Practice and Ethics” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	Psychological practice: provides instruction in the applied nature of Psychology including clinical/counseling/therapy areas.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The syllabus addresses research methods used in psychological science, practice and ethics by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read research using different techniques and discuss what can and cannot be concluded based on the methodology. Students conduct a data collection project and apply basic statistical techniques. Students fill out an IRB application for a project specified by the teacher and then function as an IRB to evaluate an application to conduct research. The syllabus addresses psychological science, practice and ethics in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. The syllabus mentions the psychological science, practice and ethics in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 3	The course provides instruction in biological bases of behavior.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Biological Bases of Behavior” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses biological bases of behavior by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students complete a class project in which they produce a model of the brain. • A speaker gives a presentation on the function and usefulness of various scanning techniques to diagnose problems of the nervous system. • Students complete a lab in which they dissect brains. 2. The syllabus addresses the biological bases of behavior in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions in biological bases of behavior in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 4	The course provides instruction in sensation.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Sensation and Perception” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses sensation by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students examine the structure of the auditory system and consider how damage may impair hearing. • Students examine the structure of the eye and consider how various components produce distortion in a visual image. (e.g., blind spot created a hole in the image.) • The syllabus cites a number of videos used during class lecture to illustrate the functioning of sensory systems. 2. The syllabus addresses sensation in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course 3. The syllabus mentions in sensation in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 5	The course provides instruction in perception.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Sensation and Perception” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses perception by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students consider how artists use various perspective cues to allow us to create the experience of depth. • As part of class lecture and discussion, the instructor demonstrates illusions and perceptual constancies. • Students explore how perceptual phenomena are used in movies, special effects, and gaming. 2. The syllabus addresses perception in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions perception in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 6	The course provides instruction in states of consciousness.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “States of Consciousness” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	States of consciousness: the study of variations in consciousness frequently includes an examination of hypnosis, meditation, and daydreaming, as well as a discussion of the effects on consciousness of such drugs as narcotics, depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The syllabus addresses states of consciousness by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students keep a dream journal and record their dreams throughout the course. A drug counselor gives a presentation to the class on the effects of various drugs on behavior. The instructor gives a demonstration of meditation techniques as a way to change the level of consciousness. The syllabus addresses states of consciousness in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. The syllabus mentions states of consciousness in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 7	The course provides instruction in learning.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Learning” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	Learning: instructors can provide instruction in learning by addressing basic types of learning for example, operant and classical conditioning and related issues (such as terminology). This also includes instruction in biological factors in learning.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses learning by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students design a “behavior modification” program to deal with a specific behavioral problem. • Students create programmed instructions to teach a topic in psychology. • The instructor lectures on learning with a demonstration of classical and operant conditioning. 2. The syllabus addresses learning in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions learning in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 8	The course provides instruction in cognition.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Cognition” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	Cognition: basic concepts such as declarative vs. procedural memory and episodic vs. semantic memory. Additional topics include language, creativity, and problem solving.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses cognition by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The syllabus states that students practice various mnemonic strategies as techniques for improving memory as part of the unit on cognition. • Students conduct an experiment to compare the effectiveness of a mnemonic strategy to a control (“use your normal learning strategy”) condition in learning a list of words. • Students assess the effectiveness of various strategies (e.g., SQ3R) in light of what is known about the functioning of memory. 2. The syllabus addresses cognition in psychology by listing all the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions cognition in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 9	The course provides instruction in motivation.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Motivation and Emotion” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses motivation by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students compare differences in the use of the term “drive” across various theories. • Students change the color of food using food coloring to explore the influence of appearance of food on its attractiveness. • Students discuss the motives that influence their every day behavior such as completing homework and dating. 2. The syllabus addresses motivation in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions motivation in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 10	The course provides instruction in emotion.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Motivation and Emotion” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses emotion by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students make judgments of the emotion being expressed in photographs of various faces. Comparing their judgments to the judgments of their classmates allow students to draw conclusions about the universality of emotional expression. • Students discuss the presence of different emotions in different cultures. • The teacher demonstrates the effect of smiling on mood. 2. The syllabus addresses emotion in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions emotion in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 11	The course provides instruction in developmental psychology.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Developmental Psychology” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses developmental psychology by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students design an instructional program in mathematics appropriate for a person at a particular stage of cognitive development. • Students write essay based on a number of prompts, including, “Compare and contrast Freud’s theory and Erikson’s theory” and “Compare and contrast Piaget’s theory and Vygotsky’s theory.” • Students take a field trip to the neighboring elementary school to visit and observe a 1st grade class after learning about developmental stages. 2. The syllabus addresses developmental psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions developmental psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 12	The course provides instruction in personality.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Personality” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses personality by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students take personality inventories and discuss them in small groups. • Based on class readings or personal experience students develop their own theory on personality or revise a current theory studied in this unit. • Students evaluate personality theories based on criteria for a good scientific theory. 2. The syllabus addresses personality in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions personality in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 13	The course provides instruction in testing and individual differences.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Testing and Individual Differences” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	<p>Testing: assessment of differences in aptitudes, intelligence, interests, and personality. Addresses ways of measuring the reliability and validity of tests and explains the establishment and use of norms.</p> <p>Individual differences: trait and type theories of personality, general and specific-factor views of intellect, development of intelligence.</p>
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses testing and individual differences by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students examine appropriate references (e.g., Tests in Print) to learn about the variety of standardized tests available. • Students read 3 reviews of standardized tests to determine strengths and weaknesses of testing and prepare to discuss the readings in class. • Students develop a standardized test to assess a selected psychological construct. 2. The syllabus addresses testing and individual differences in psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions testing and individual differences in psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 14	The course provides instruction in abnormal psychology.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resources materials and all subtopics under “Abnormal Psychology” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses abnormal psychology by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work in small groups to construct a definition of abnormality by looking for common features in a list of agreed upon abnormal behaviors. • Students trace the history of changes in the DSM. • Students write a case study of a fictional person diagnosed with a psychological disorder. 2. The syllabus addresses abnormal psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions abnormal psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 15	The course provides instruction in treatment of psychological disorders and ethics used in psychological practice.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Treatment of Psychological Disorders” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
<p>Samples of Evidence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses treatment of psychological disorders and ethics used in psychological practice by outlining topics, complemented by readings/ assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students present to the class a description of therapy for a specific problem prescribed by a specific theoretical perspective. A connection to concepts in the theory will be made. • A clinical psychologist is invited to class to present and discuss the nature of his/her work. • Examples of ethical dilemmas in therapy are analyzed by students. 2. The syllabus addresses the treatment of psychological disorders and ethics used in psychological practice by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly cites the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions treatment of psychological disorders and ethics used in psychological practice and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

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Scoring Component 16	The course provides instruction in social psychology.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, it must also include supplementary resource materials and all subtopics under “Social Psychology” from the AP Course Description.
Key Term(s)	None at this time.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus addresses social psychology by outlining topics, complemented by readings/assignments, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students work in groups and function as an IRB to consider the ethics of conducting a classic study in social psychology. • Students examine various sales tactics and their relationship to principles of social psychology. • Students conduct simulated studies based on classic research in areas such as conformity and helping behavior. 2. The syllabus addresses social psychology by listing all of the major topics outlined in the <i>AP Psychology Course Description</i> and properly citing the resource materials used to teach the course. 3. The syllabus mentions social psychology and cites the relevant chapters from the resources used to teach the course. 	

Curricular Requirement	As relevant to each content area, the course provides instruction in empirically supported psychological facts, research findings, terminology, associated phenomena, major figures, perspectives, and psychological experiments.
Scoring Component 17	As relevant to each content area, the course provides instruction in empirically supported psychological facts, research findings, terminology, and associated phenomena, perspectives, and major figures.
Evaluation Guideline(s)	<p>If the syllabus includes a high school-level textbook as the primary text, then it must also include supplementary resource materials.</p> <p>Evidence of all theories, schools of thought, figures, experiments, etc. does not need to be shown for ALL of the 14 major topics of the course. Any evidence in any of the units that reference schools, theories, experiments, figures, etc. is sufficient.</p>
Key Term(s)	Empirically supported psychological facts: research findings based on investigation, not casual observation.
Samples of Evidence <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The syllabus provides a statement of teaching philosophy addressing how the material in the course will be presented with reference to scientific and empirical approaches. 2. Throughout the course the syllabus mentions some relevant figures, experiments and schools of thought and how they relate to the major topics of the course. 3. The syllabus provides a variety of activities such as lab exercises, critical thinking assignments, readings of original research and demonstrations pertaining to empirically supported psychological facts, research findings, terminology, and associated phenomena, perspectives, and major figures. 	