

Transition Pack for A Level Psychology

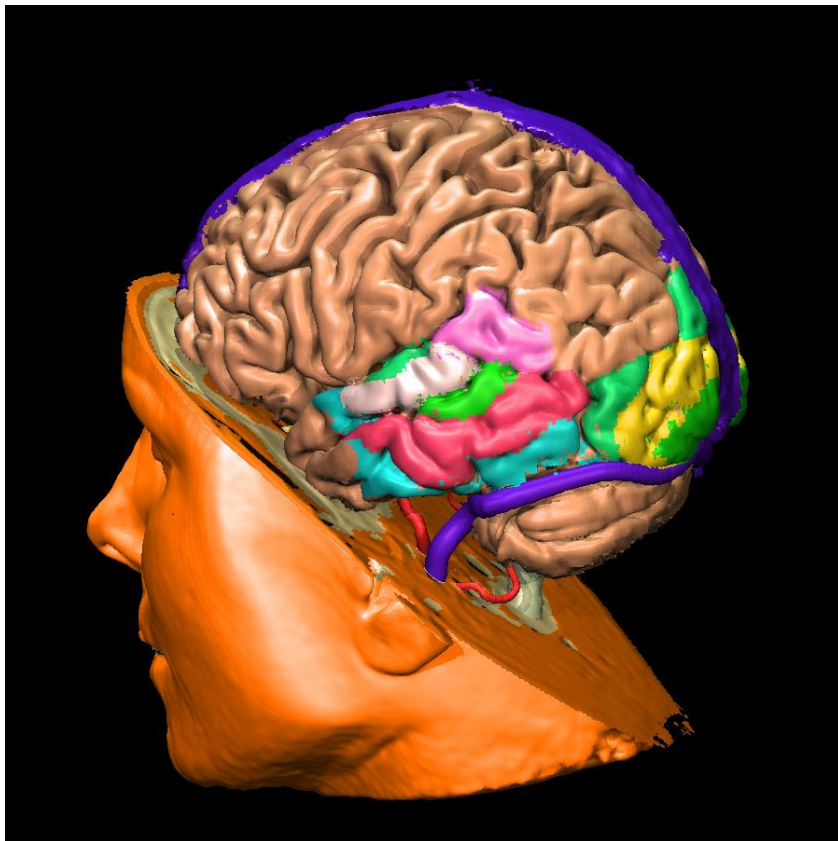
Get ready for A-level!

A guide to help you get ready for A-level Psychology, including everything from topic guides to days out and online learning courses.



So you are considering A level Psychology?

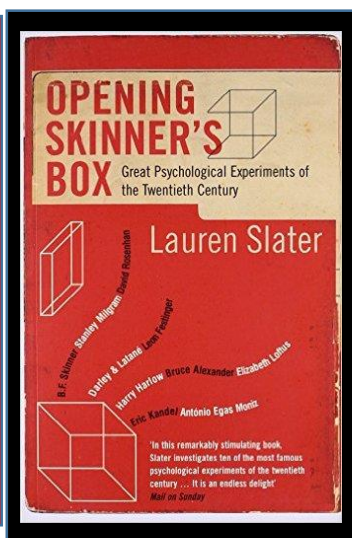
This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A level in Psychology in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSE throughout the remainder of the Summer term and over the Summer Holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course in September.



Book Recommendations

Kick back this summer with a good read. The books below are all popular books about Psychology, and great for extending your knowledge and understanding.

Your Key Reading!

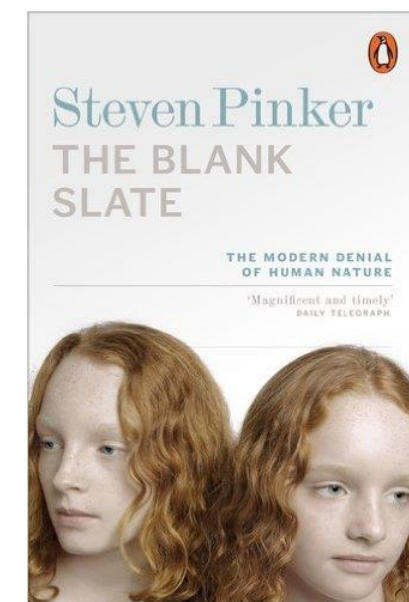


Opening Skinner's Box

A century can be understood in many ways - in terms of its inventions, its crimes or its art. In *Opening Skinner's Box*, Lauren Slater sets out to investigate the twentieth century through a series of ten fascinating, witty and sometimes shocking accounts of its key psychological experiments. Starting with the founder of modern scientific experimentation, B.F. Skinner, Slater traces the evolution of the last hundred years' most pressing concerns - free will, authoritarianism, violence, conformity and morality.

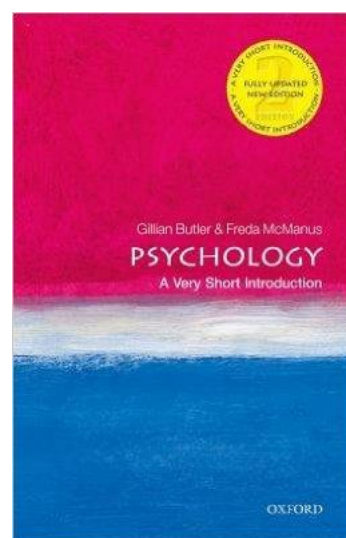
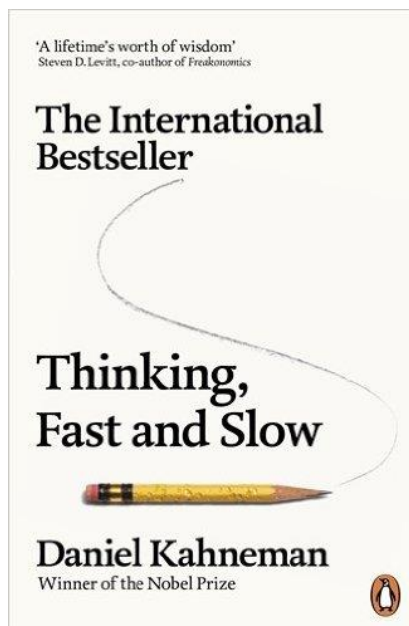
Thinking, Fast and Slow

The phenomenal *New York Times* Bestseller by Nobel Prize-winner Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* offers a whole new look at the way our minds work, and how we make decisions. Why is there more chance we'll believe something if it's in a bold type face? Why are judges more likely to deny parole before lunch? Why do we assume a good-looking person will be more competent? The answer lies in the two ways we make choices: fast, intuitive thinking, and slow, rational thinking.



The Blank Slate

Recently many people have assumed that we are shaped by our environment: a blank slate waiting to be inscribed by upbringing and culture, with innate abilities playing little part. *The Blank Slate* shows that this view denies the heart of our being: human nature. Violence is not just a product of society; male and female minds are different; the genes we give our children shape the more than our parenting practices.



Psychology, a very short introduction

An easy read.. A whistle-stop tour of the main concepts in Psychology – a great introduction to the A Level course!



Placebo

A lucid and stimulating explanation of how the body's natural healing mechanisms work – and how they can be triggered in non-chemical ways via the 'placebo effect'. Can we cure ourselves of disease by the power of thought alone? Faith healers and alternative therapists are convinced that we can, but what does science say?

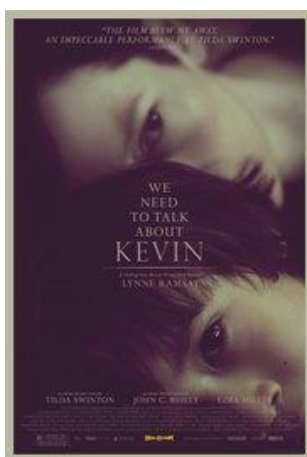
Movie Recommendations

Everyone loves a good story and everyone loves some great Psychology. You won't find any thrillers on this list, but we've looked back over the last 50 years to give you our top Psychological films you might not have seen before. Great watching for a rainy day.



We need to talk about Kevin (2011)

Kevin's mother struggles to love her strange child, despite the increasingly vicious things he says and does as he grows up. But Kevin is just getting started, and his final act will be beyond anything anyone imagined.

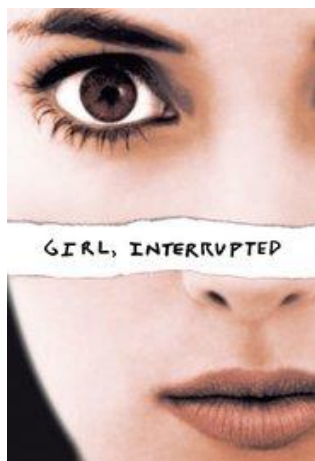


One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)

A criminal pleads insanity after getting into trouble again and once in the mental institution rebels against the oppressive nurse and rallies up the scared patients.

The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015)

Twenty-four male students out of seventy-five were selected to take on randomly assigned roles of prisoners and guards in a mock prison situated in the basement of the Stanford psychology building.



Girl, Interrupted (1999)

Based on a true story. Based on writer Susanna Kaysen's account of her 18-month stay at a mental hospital in the 1960s. This film questions what it means to be sane.



As good as it gets (1997)

A single mother/waitress, a misanthropic author, and a gay artist form an unlikely friendship after the artist is assaulted in a robbery. Looks at what life is like when you live with OCD.

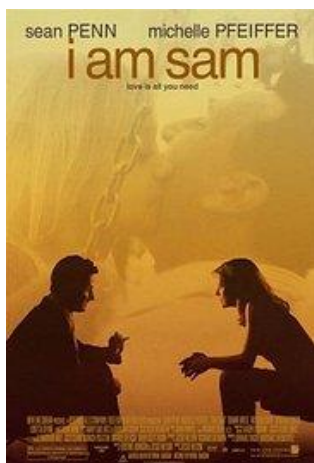
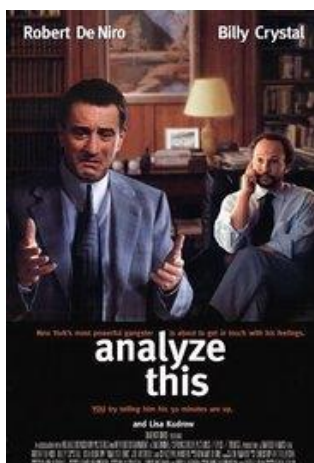
There are some great TV series and box sets available too, you might want to check out: Blue Planet, Planet Earth, The Ascent of Man, Catastrophe, Frozen Planet, Life Story, The Hunt and Monsoon.

More Movie Recommendations!



Analyze This (1999)

A comedy about a psychiatrist whose number one-patient is an insecure mafia boss, played by a hilarious Robert De Niro.



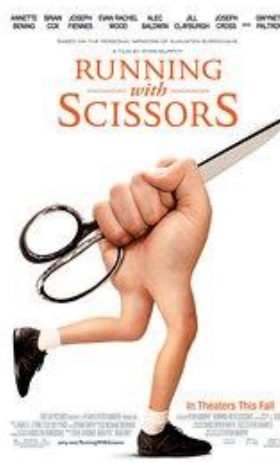
I am Sam (2001)

A mentally handicapped man fights for custody of his 7-year-old daughter, and in the process teaches his cold hearted lawyer the value of love and family.



12 Angry Men (1957)

A jury member holds out in his attempt to prevent a miscarriage of justice by forcing his colleagues to reconsider the evidence. Demonstrates the qualities necessary for persuasion and influence.



Running with Scissors (2006)

Young Augusten Burroughs absorbs experiences that could make for a shocking memoir: the son of an alcoholic father and an unstable mother, he's handed off to his mother's therapist, Dr. Finch, and spends his adolescent years as a member of Finch's bizarre extended family.

Good Will Hunting (1997)

Will Hunting, a janitor at M.I.T., has a gift for mathematics, but needs help from a psychologist to find direction in his life.



Cool Hand Luke (1967)

A man refuses to conform to life in a rural prison. This was recently produced as a West-End hit play, and teaches us a lot about prison life and the nature of conformity.



Memento (2000)

A man with total memory loss creates a strange system to help him remember things; so he can hunt for the murderer of his wife without his short-term memory loss being an obstacle.

TED Talk Recommendations

If you have 30 minutes to spare, here are some great presentations (and free!) from world leading scientists and researchers on a variety of topics. They provide some interesting answers and ask some thought-provoking questions.

10 myths about Psychology, debunked.

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_ambridge_10_myths_about_psychology_debunked?language=en#t-80890

How much of what you think about your brain is actually wrong? In this whistlestop tour of dis-proved science, Ben Ambridge walks through 10 popular ideas about psychology that have been proven wrong — and uncovers a few surprising truths about how our brains really work.



Jon Ronson: Strange answers to the psychopath test

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/talks/jon_ronson_strange_answers_to_the_psychopath_test?language=en#t-129957

Is there a definitive line that divides crazy from sane? With a hair-raising delivery, Jon Ronson, author of *The Psychopath Test*, illuminates the gray areas between the two.

Martin Seligman: A new era of positive psychology

Available at :

http://www.ted.com/talks/martin_seligman_on_the_state_of_psychology

As the founder of the newest modern emerging branch of Psychology, Martin Seligman utilizes this TED talk to discuss how positive psychology is revolutionizing the field by moving beyond a focus on mental illness and shifting towards examining human healthy states, including happiness and optimism.



Ben Goldacre: Battling Bad Science

Available at :

http://www.ted.com/talks/ben_goldacre_battling_bad_science?language=en#t-89077

Every day there are news reports of new health advice, but how can you know if they're right? Doctor and epidemiologist Ben Goldacre shows us, at high speed, the ways evidence can be distorted, from the blindingly obvious nutrition claims to the very subtle tricks of the pharmaceutical industry.

More TED Talk Recommendations!

Brain Magic

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/talks/keith_barry_does_brain_magic?language=en#t-99868

First, Keith Barry shows us how our brains can fool our bodies — in a trick that works via podcast too. Then he involves the audience in some jaw-dropping (and even a bit dangerous) feats of brain magic.



The Surprising Science of Happiness

Available at: https://www.ted.com/playlists/4/what_makes_you_happy

Dan Gilbert, author of "Stumbling on Happiness," challenges the idea that we'll be miserable if we don't get what we want. Our "psychological immune system" lets us feel truly happy even when things don't go as planned.



Carol Dweck: The power of believing that you can improve

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve#t-30982

Carol Dweck researches "growth mindset" — the idea that we can grow our brain's capacity to learn and to solve problems. In this talk, she describes two ways to think about a problem that's slightly too hard for you to solve. Are you not smart enough to solve it ... or have you just not solved it yet? A great introduction to this influential field.

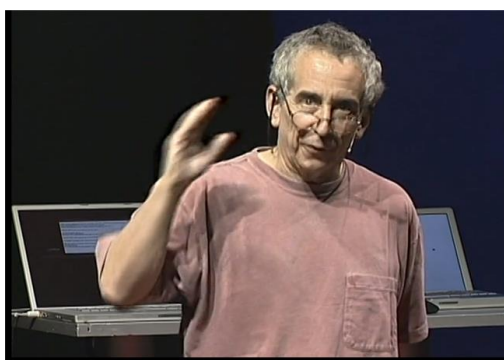


The Paradox of Choice

Available at :

https://www.ted.com/playlists/164/how_we_make_choices

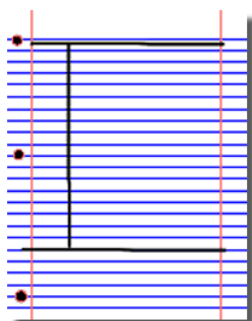
Psychologist Barry Schwartz takes aim at a central tenet of western societies: freedom of choice. In Schwartz's estimation, choice has made us not freer but more paralyzed, not happier but more dissatisfied.



Research activities

Research, reading and note making are essential skills for A level Psychology. You are going to practice producing 'Cornell Notes' to summarise some of the TED talks you have listened to. Choose two of the talks, and complete notes in the following format for them:

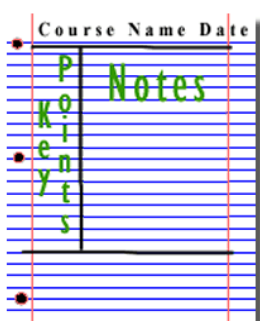
1. Divide your page into three sections like this



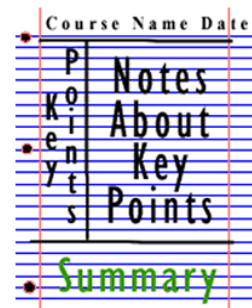
2. Write the name, date and topic at the top of the page



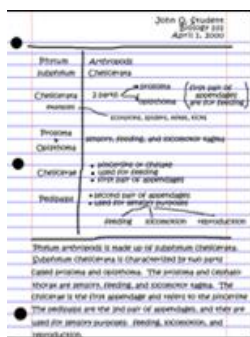
3. Use the large box to make notes. Leave a space between separate idea. Abbreviate where possible.



4. Review and identify the key points in the left hand box



5. Write a summary of the **main ideas** in the bottom space



Images taken from <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>

Pre-Knowledge Topics

A level Psychology will require a huge amount of new knowledge – most of the topics you cover in this course will be entirely new to you. Complete the following tasks to make sure your knowledge is up to date and you are ready to start studying:

Social Influences

Humans behave very differently in groups than when they are alone; the psychology of social influence tries to unravel the processes which cause this to occur. Why do people conform? Why do they obey orders from others, even if they disagree or do not wish to comply? How do some individuals have an impact on others even if their views are not the views of the majority? How does social change occur? These are all questions which Psychologists have tried to answer.

Read the information on this website (you could make more Cornell notes if you wish):

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_influence

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao5JTMc5GUM>

https://www.ted.com/talks/morgana_bailey_the_danger_of_hiding_who_you_are?language=en

Memory

We all remember things all the time – but do you know how you do it? Becoming aware of memory processes can help us to make our memories better, and might even be able to help you revise more effectively! This topic includes the study of eyewitness testimony and the processes which police use to extract the best evidence possible from their witnesses.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/topics/memory>

https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/memory/

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzpgyIKBS40>

https://www.ted.com/playlists/196/the_complexity_of_memory

Pre-Knowledge Topics

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Psychopathology

What is meant by mental illness? To answer that we first need to answer a more difficult question – what is meant by mental health? In the broad field of human behaviours, which behaviours should be classified as ‘sane’ or ‘insane’, and which should be medicated or otherwise treated? Perhaps we shouldn’t treat any mental illness and embrace the diversity of human experience? This topic attempts to answer some of these questions, defining ‘abnormal’ mental experience and looking at different ways of approaching psychopathology.

Unsurprisingly, there are hundreds of resources around this topic, so these are just some ideas to start you off!

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/mental-health>

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/pages/newsarticles.aspx?TopicId=Mental+health>

And take a look at these videos:

<https://www.ted.com/topics/mental+health>

https://www.ted.com/talks/ruby_wax_what_s_so_funny_about_mental_illness?language=en

https://www.ted.com/talks/vikram_patel_mental_health_for_all_by_involving_all?language=en

https://www.ted.com/playlists/175/the_struggle_of_mental_health

Attachment

This topic takes a look at our earliest and perhaps most influential relationship – that with our mother. How does this bond form, and why is it so influential later in life? What happens if that bond is weak or broken, or if a mother simply cannot care for her infant? Can we overcome these early setbacks to go on to live a life full of love? Can this field of study tell us why some people appear better-prepared than others for adult romantic relationships?

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships/attachment-and-adult-relationships.htm>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2724160/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-26667036>

And take a look at these videos:

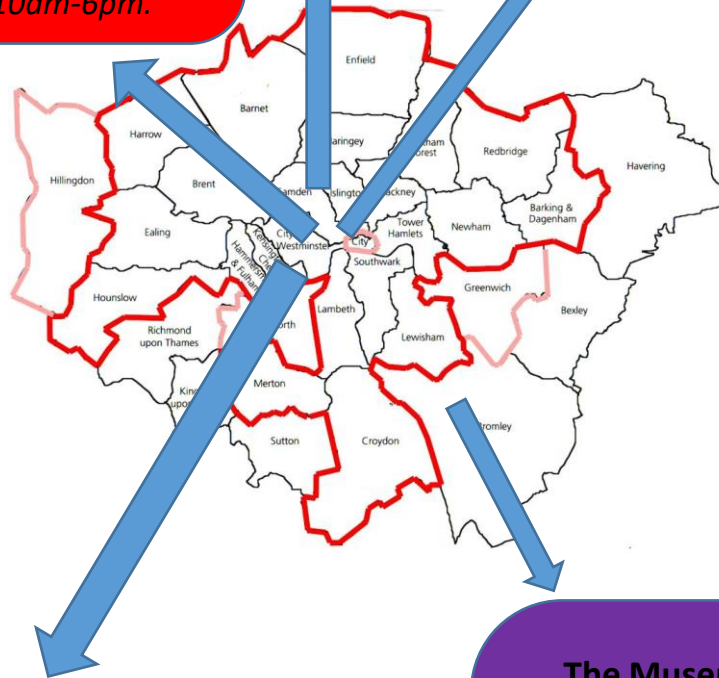
<http://ed.ted.com/on/3Pg4lwwN>

https://www.ted.com/talks/helen_fisher_tells_us_why_we_love_cheat?language=en

The Freud Museum.
Step into the world of Sigmund Freud, and see his iconic couch. *20 Maresfield Gardens, NW3 5SX, Wed-Sun 12-5pm.*

The Wellcome Collection.
Explores the connections between medicine, life and art in the past, present and future. *183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE, Tues-Sat 10am-6pm, Sunday 11am-6pm.*

The Science Museum
London museum and library of science. Exhibitions cover all areas of science and technology. Includes online exhibits and a learning area. *Exhibition Rd, SW7 2DD, Mon-Sun 10am-6pm.*



The Natural History Museum
London museum and library of natural history. Exhibitions cover many areas, including an exhibit on human and animal evolution. *Exhibition Rd, SW7 2DD, Mon-Sun 10am-6pm.*

The Museum of the Mind
The Bethlem Museum of the Mind records the lives and experience and celebrates the achievements of people with mental health problems. *Bethlem Royal Hospital, Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 3BX. Weds-Fri 10am-5pm.*

Psychologists on Twitter!

Online communication is essential in the modern world and all of the major researchers working today have their own social media accounts. Here are some of our top tips on who to follow to keep up to date with developing news or interesting stories:

David Buss – Prolific Evolutionary Psychologist.

@ProfDavidBuss

Ben Goldacre – GP, and campaigner for better media communication of science, and popular scientific communicator.

@bangoldacre

Richard Wiseman – Magician turned Psychologist!

@RichardWiseman

Elizabeth Loftus – Memory researcher and founder of ‘false memory’ theory.

@eloftus1

Philip Zimbardo – Conducted the Stanford Prison Experiment.

@PhilZimbardo

The Beck Institute – Centre for developing cognitive therapies.

@BeckInstitute

Freud Museum – Follow this to see upcoming events you might be interested in.

@FreudMuseum and @FreudMusLondon

David Eagleman – Neuroscientist who recently had his own series on the BBC.

@DavidEagleman

Michael Mosely – Very popular science communicator and founder of the 5:2 diet.

@DrMichaelMosely

Derren Brown – Magician with an interest in all things psychological!

@DerrenBrown

Stephen Pinker – Cognitive scientist, wrote ‘the Blank Slate’.

@sapinker

Martin Seligman – Founded the area of Positive Psychology.

@MartinEPSeligma and @PositiveNewsUK

Mark Griffiths – Researches the psychology of Addiction.

@DrMarkGriffiths

Daniel Kahneman – Author of *Thinking: Fast and Slow*, and founder of ‘pop psychology’.

@DanielKahneman



Psychology Websites

These websites all offer an amazing collection of resources that you can (and should!) use again and again throughout your course.



Simply Psychology

Simply Psychology
Revision Resources for your
AS Level.

<http://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-psychology.html>



S-cool
Another useful revision
website...

<http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/psychology>

Psychology4A.com

A Level Psychology Revision

Great website with items from the news, videos to watch and up to date revision activities and materials to help you learn...

<http://www.psychology4a.com/>



The British Psychological Society

Promoting excellence in psychology

Opportunities to read current research and find out about events, plus the chance for free students membership of the BPS!

<http://www.bps.org.uk/>



Information on mental conditions and disorders; Psychological tests & quizzes; Ask The Therapist and Q&A; Medication drugs library; Over a dozen blogs with different focus areas; Latest news from the world of psychology; Research section with information on clinical trials.

<http://psychcentral.com/>



A pack of resources promoting mental health and explaining mental health problems.

<http://www.mentalhealtheducation.org.uk/home/>



The NIMH website features:

Extensive information on mental health topics; Access to free NIMH publications on a host of topics from disorders to treatment; Information about clinical trials for both participants and researchers; Access to statistical information about mental disorders; News in the science of mental health.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>



Tutor2u includes useful summaries of the topics studied at AS level, as well as a blog of recent uploaded materials, videos and opportunities to buy revision packs.

<http://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>

Your Summer Tasks!

To make sure you are fully prepared for A Level study, you have some tasks to complete over the summer holiday.

- 1) Complete your Cornell notes on two of the Ted talks you have watched. (Do watch more, but you don't need to make notes on them unless you want to!)
- 1) Read at least one of the suggested books, and watch at least one of the suggested films. We will be discussing these when you come back in September, so make sure you don't forget what you have read and watched!
- 1) Buy **Opening Skinner's Box** – in Psychology we have a fortnightly book discussion, and we will be covering a chapter of this book each session. This is fantastic extra study for our AS level students, and will really help you to understand the research we cover in much more detail.
- 1) Read the introductory booklet you have been given. Remember that there will be a 'baseline assessment' test in September based on this, which will let your teachers assess your ability to read, understand and learn new material.
- 1) Start to engage with and enjoy the world of Psychology, starting with the ideas in this pack! It's fantastic, and we hope you enjoy your studies!

