

Year 11 Introduction to Psychology

Lawrence Sheriff Sixth Form

This document will provide you with some interesting reading/research ideas to introduce you to Psychology (or hopefully some new areas if you have done GCSE!).

None of these readings are compulsory for the A Level course, however, they all cover some of the key themes in Psychology and will introduce you to some elements that will be built on during the course (e.g. case studies).

Feel free to read around, and if you want an idea of what will be covered during the course, do check out the Edexcel Psychology A Level website where you will be able to access a copy of the specification and past papers (<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/psychology-2015.html>).

Interesting Case Studies in Psychology

Case studies are an important research method in Psychology, although studying one person to learn about human behaviour as a whole is not without its problems! See what you can find out about the following famous case studies in Psychology. Start to think about what useful applications these studies have, as well as what you think might limit their usefulness.

- **Phineas Gage**
- **Henry Molaison**
- **Genie**

Understanding the Breadth of Psychology

Psychology is partly so interesting as it covers such a wide range of topics! See if you can find out what the following topics are all about!

- **Prosopagnosia** and the fusiform face area
- **The Halo Effect** (other biases include the self-serving bias, the fundamental attribution error, confirmation bias, availability heuristic- in fact there are many of these so see how many you can find!)
- Zimbardo's **Prison Experiment** (and Reicher & Haslam's later replication)
- Skinner's **superstitious pigeons**

Trial your own research

A great introduction to experiments and memory is to see if you can replicate the **primacy and recency effect** (Murdoch; <https://www.simplypsychology.org/primacy-recency.html>). For this you will need a few willing participants. Give them a list of words to recall (about 16 should do it). See if you notice anything about the pattern of the words they recall.

- Do they tend to recall the first and last words the easiest?
- What happens when you make them wait 30 seconds before recalling the words?

We'll be looking during A Level at how models of memory can explain this affect.

Finally, if you are a fan of reading, there are plenty of books out there that either cover Psychology or have Psychological themes. Here are some ideas to get you started!

Novels linked with Psychology

- '**The One Memory of Flora Banks**' by Emily Barr (memory)
- '**Goldfish Boy**' by (aimed at younger readers but gives an insight into OCD)

Interesting Non-Fiction Books

- '**Thinking Fast and Slow**' by Daniel Kahneman – great if you are interesting in Economics and Psychology!
- '**The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat**' by Oliver Sachs