**So you want to study A level Psychology?**

**Textbooks**

The textbook we use is without doubt the best A level Psychology textbook there has been in the 20 years we have taught this at WHS. The good news is, you have access to a free on-line copy using the following instructions:

1. Google ‘Illuminate digital’
2. Click on Digital Book Bundles
3. Select the book with ‘the green haired girl’ called AQA Psychology for A level Year 1 and AS
4. Your username is SWILMSLOW and your password is student

**How to use the book**

**Task 1**

Read pages 2, 3-13 IN DETAIL , This will give you a very good over-view of A level Psychology

**Task 2**

Read the following section in which we have tried to ‘explain’ psychology. This should fit in with what you have read from pages 2-13

Psychology is the study of the human mind and behaviour.

In Y12 we look at four key areas of research (called substantive content);

1. **Social Influence** (how our behaviour changes in the presence of others)
2. **Memory** (how our memory works)
3. **Attachment** (how babies become attached to care givers and how this affects future development)
4. **Psychopathology** (3 mental illnesses; OCD, depression and phobias)

*So what are the other chapters about?*

Psychology can be looked at from lots of ‘different angles’ for example people who study animal behaviour will have different explanations of human behaviour compared to a medical doctor. These different ‘ideas’ are called **Approaches**. In Y12 we study four different approaches and how they compare.

Psychology is a science because it is ‘studied’. However, there are lots of different ways to ‘study it’. We call this **Research Methods**. Studies are not just ***experiments***, there are ***case studies***, ***correlational analysis***, ***content analysis***, ***self-report*** (questionnaires and interviews) and ***observations.*** Each of these has strengths and limitations to be aware of. Research methods run through every aspect of psychology and they make up about 25% of available marks in the A level.

**Biological Psychology**. Like biology A level, we need a thorough knowledge of the brain, nerves, endocrine system, reflex arc. In Y13 we extend this to studies on brain plasticity, split brain studies and biological rhythms.

In Y13 we introduce yet more substantive content (aggression, relationships, biological psychology and schizophrenia). We also look at intrinsic issues and debates. There are many of these, but one example is the ‘nature-nurture’ debate. To what extent is an illness or behaviour genetic or a learned response to environmental influences?

**Task 3**

Select one of the substantive chapters and read it for pleasure. The substantive chapters are:

1,2,3 and 5

**Task 4**

Put your feet up and watch a film:

1. The Stanford Prison Experiment (2015) – Definitely watch this; it is something we teach!
2. One Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest (1975) – Fits in with classification and diagnosis of mental illnesses
3. Shutter Island (2010)

**Task 5**

A few YouTube clips we use within the course

Operant conditioning – from an episode of The Big Bang Theory

<https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=operant+conditioning+big+bang+theory>

A person suffering schizophrenia talks about her experiences

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjEN3peCJw>

Asch’s famous experiment on social influence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDDyT1lDhA>

The Strange situation; A famous experiment with mums and toddlers to identify attachment types

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqlbvpXp74k>

Crash Course In Psychology – This VERY fast talking American presenter will talk you through an entire topic in about 15 minutes. Probably too fast to take it all in, but a good way to get the feel for each topic area

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGxGDdQnC1Y> This is just one of about 15 videos (this one being social influence)