

AP PSYCHOLOGY STUDY GUIDE

182 High-Yield Concepts

Advanced Placement Course | College Board CED-aligned

- All 9 CED units: Scientific Foundations to Social Psychology
- Every concept: explanation + high-yield exam tip + example
 - Theorists, studies, and terms for every unit
 - Perfect for the AP Psychology exam in May

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How to Use This Guide

This guide condenses the AP Psychology course and exam description into high-yield concepts. It is not a textbook replacement -- it is the fastest way to review everything the exam covers and to target your weak units.

The AP Psychology exam is 90 minutes of 100 multiple-choice questions, then 50 minutes of 2 free-response questions. The free response asks you to apply concepts to a scenario -- define the term and connect it to the situation. The nine units below map directly to the College Board Course and Exam Description.

How to use the concepts

- Each concept = term + concise explanation + high-yield exam tip (+ example where useful).
- First pass: read every concept in order. Underline anything unfamiliar.
- Second pass: focus only on the concepts you underlined.
- Two weeks before the exam: rapid-review every tip line (they are the highest-yield).
- Use the Table of Contents to jump straight to your weakest units.

Table of Contents

1	Scientific Foundations of Psychology	20 concepts
2	Biological Bases of Behavior	20 concepts
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Total: 182 high-yield concepts

How to use the TOC: work through the units in order on your first pass, then jump back to your weakest units for review. Each concept includes an Explanation, a high-yield exam tip, and where useful an Example. Mark the concepts you miss with a small dot in the margin and revisit them 48 hours later.

Unit 1: Scientific Foundations of Psychology

10-14% of the exam. History, approaches, research methods, and ethics.

1 Psychology Defined

Explanation: Psychology is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. Behavior is observable action; mental processes are internal experiences (thoughts, feelings, memories).

AP Psych Tip: *Psychology is a SCIENCE -- conclusions come from systematic research, not intuition. The definition emphasizes both observable behavior and internal processes.*

Example: Studying why people obey authority uses both observable behavior (pressing a shock button) and mental processes (perceived obligation).

2 Wilhelm Wundt & Structuralism

Explanation: Wundt founded the first psychology lab (Leipzig, 1879) -- the 'father of psychology.' Structuralism (Titchener) aimed to reveal the basic elements of the mind using introspection.

AP Psych Tip: *Wundt = 1879, first lab. Structuralism = introspection, breaking consciousness into elements. Introspection proved unreliable (subjective), ending structuralism.*

Example: A structuralist asks you to introspect and describe the taste of lemonade as 'sweet,' 'sour,' 'cool' -- basic elements of the experience.

3 William James & Functionalism

Explanation: Functionalism (James) studied how the mind helps us adapt, function, and survive -- influenced by Darwin. Led to applied psychology and behaviorism's focus on function.

AP Psych Tip: *Functionalism asks WHY (function/purpose of behavior and consciousness); structuralism asks WHAT (structure). James wrote Principles of Psychology.*

Example: A functionalist asks why we feel fear: because it motivates survival behavior (fight or flight).

4 Behaviorism

Explanation: Behaviorism (Watson, Skinner) studies only observable behavior, rejecting introspection and the unconscious. Key ideas: conditioning, reinforcement, environment shapes behavior.

AP Psych Tip: *Behaviorism = observable behavior only; 'psychology as the science of behavior.' Watson's 'Little Albert' study showed fears are learned.*

Example: Watson conditioned Little Albert to fear a white rat by pairing it with a loud noise -- behaviorism in action.

5 Psychodynamic / Psychoanalytic Perspective

Explanation: Freud: behavior is driven by unconscious conflicts, childhood experiences, and sexual/aggressive drives. The id, ego, and superego battle; defense mechanisms protect the ego.

AP Psych Tip: *Psychodynamic = unconscious + childhood + inner conflicts. Key terms: id (pleasure), ego (reality), superego (morals), defense mechanisms (repression, projection).*

Example: Freud would explain a phobia as a repressed childhood conflict surfacing symbolically -- not as a learned association.

6 Humanistic Perspective

Explanation: Humanism (Rogers, Maslow) emphasizes free will, self-actualization, and the inherent goodness of people. Focus on conscious experience, personal growth, and self-concept.

AP Psych Tip: *Humanism: people strive toward self-actualization (Maslow's hierarchy top). Rogers emphasized unconditional positive regard for healthy development.*

Example: Rogers' client-centered therapy provides unconditional positive regard so clients can grow toward self-actualization.

7 Cognitive Perspective

Explanation: Cognitive psychology studies mental processes: perception, memory, thinking, problem solving, language. The brain processes information like a computer (encoding, storage, retrieval).

AP Psych Tip: *Cognitive = mental processes (thinking, memory, perception). Modern cognitive neuroscience links these to brain activity.*

Example: A cognitive psychologist studies how chunking improves memory or how schemas distort recall.

8 Evolutionary Perspective

Explanation: Evolutionary psychology explains behavior through natural selection: behaviors that aided survival/reproduction became widespread (mating preferences, fears, altruism toward kin).

AP Psych Tip: *Evolutionary = adaptation and natural selection. It explains universal patterns: fear of snakes, mate selection preferences, parental investment.*

Example: The universal fear of snakes and heights is explained evolutionarily -- those who avoided them survived to reproduce.

9 Biological / Neuroscience Perspective

Explanation: The biological perspective explains behavior through brain structures, neurotransmitters, hormones, and genetics. Neuroscience links mental processes to brain activity.

AP Psych Tip: *Biological = brain, body, genes, chemicals. Every psychological event has a biological correlate.*

Example: Depression is explained biologically by low serotonin; a biological psychologist studies how SSRIs (which raise serotonin) relieve symptoms.

10 Socio-Cultural Perspective

Explanation: This perspective examines how behavior and thinking vary across cultures and social situations: norms, roles, expectations, and social context shape individuals.

AP Psych Tip: *Socio-cultural = culture, norms, social context. It explains cultural differences in communication, parenting, and conformity.*

Example: Individualist (Western) vs collectivist (East Asian) cultures differ in how people define the self -- a socio-cultural finding.

11 Biopsychosocial Approach

Explanation: The biopsychosocial model integrates biological, psychological, and social-cultural factors. Modern psychology is eclectic -- combining perspectives for a fuller explanation.

AP Psych Tip: *Biopsychosocial = biology + psychology + social context together. This is the modern unifying approach.*

Example: Chronic pain is explained by biological (nerve damage), psychological (catastrophizing), and social (support) factors together.

12 Descriptive Research: Case Study

Explanation: A case study is an in-depth study of one person or small group. Provides rich detail and can reveal rare phenomena, but cannot establish generalizable causal conclusions.

AP Psych Tip: *Case studies generate hypotheses, not proofs. Famous examples: Phineas Gage (personality after brain damage), Genie (extreme deprivation).*

Example: Phineas Gage's personality change after a rod damaged his frontal lobe informed our understanding of the frontal lobe's role.

13 Descriptive Research: Surveys

Explanation: Surveys gather self-reported data from large samples quickly. Vulnerable to sampling bias, social desirability bias, and wording effects.

AP Psych Tip: *Surveys need representative random samples; wording and order of questions bias answers. Correlation does not equal causation from surveys.*

Example: A survey finding 'people who exercise report less stress' shows correlation only -- maybe stress causes less exercise.

14 Descriptive Research: Naturalistic Observation

Explanation: Observing behavior in natural settings without intervention. High external validity, but no control and possible observer effects (people act differently when watched).

AP Psych Tip: *Naturalistic observation describes, doesn't explain. Observer effect (Hawthorne effect) is a key limitation.*

Example: Jane Goodall observing chimpanzees in the wild is naturalistic observation -- rich description, no manipulation.

15 Correlational Research

Explanation: Correlational research measures how two variables relate: correlation coefficient r from -1 to $+1$. Strength (magnitude) and direction (sign). Correlation does NOT imply causation.

AP Psych Tip: r close to $+1$ or -1 = strong; $r = 0$ = none. Positive = same direction; negative = opposite. Correlations can't prove causation (third variables, directionality).

Example: $r = -0.85$ between hours of sleep and errors: strong negative correlation -- more sleep, fewer errors (but not proven causal).

16 Experiments & Causation

Explanation: Experiments manipulate the independent variable (IV) and measure the dependent variable (DV) while controlling extraneous variables -- the only way to establish cause and effect.

AP Psych Tip: IV = what you manipulate; DV = what you measure. Experiments need random assignment, control groups, and controlled conditions to infer causation.

Example: To test if caffeine improves memory: IV = caffeine dose, DV = memory test score. Randomly assign participants to caffeine or placebo.

17 Experimental Design Terms

Explanation: Experimental group receives treatment; control group does not. Confounding variables are extraneous factors that could explain results. Random assignment controls for participant differences.

AP Psych Tip: Experimental vs control group; random assignment (not random sampling) is what makes experiments causal. Watch for confounding variables.

Example: Testing a new teaching method: one class uses it (experimental), another doesn't (control); teacher quality could be a confounding variable.

18 Statistical Reasoning

Explanation: Descriptive statistics summarize data: mean, median, mode, range, standard deviation. Inferential statistics determine whether differences are significant ($p < 0.05$).

AP Psych Tip: Mean is sensitive to outliers; median is not. Standard deviation = spread. Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) means results are unlikely by chance.

Example: House prices: mean \$500k vs median \$350k -- outliers (a few mansions) inflate the mean. Standard deviation shows how spread out prices are.

19 Research Ethics

Explanation: Ethical principles: informed consent, confidentiality, debriefing, protection from harm, and (with justification) deception. IRBs review research. Animal research follows similar protections.

AP Psych Tip: Know the ethical safeguards: informed consent, debriefing (after deception), confidentiality, minimize harm. The APA ethics code governs research.

Example: Milgram's obedience study is criticized for deception and stress; modern replications require debriefing and right to withdraw.

20 Reliability & Validity

Explanation: Reliability = consistency (test-retest, inter-rater). Validity = measuring what you intend (construct, internal, external). A measure can be reliable but invalid.

AP Psych Tip: Reliability = consistency; validity = accuracy. A reliable-but-invalid measure consistently measures the WRONG thing (e.g., a broken scale that always reads 5).

Example: A test that gives the same score every time is reliable; if it doesn't measure what it claims (e.g., 'IQ' test measuring vocabulary only), it lacks validity.

Unit 2: Biological Bases of Behavior

8-10% of the exam. Neurons, the nervous system, the brain, and genetics.

21 Neuron Structure

Explanation: Neurons: dendrites (receive), cell body/soma (integrates), axon (transmits), axon terminals (release neurotransmitters), myelin sheath (insulates, speeds transmission).

AP Psych Tip: *Signal flows: dendrites → soma → axon → terminals. Myelin speeds transmission (nodes of Ranvier); multiple sclerosis damages myelin, slowing signals.*

Example: A sensory neuron receives touch at dendrites, sends the signal down the axon to terminals, which pass it to the next neuron.

22 Action Potential

Explanation: An action potential is the neuron's electrical impulse: resting potential (~-70 mV), depolarization (Na⁺ in), repolarization (K⁺ out), then refractory period. All-or-none.

AP Psych Tip: *All-or-none: either the neuron fires fully or not at all. Threshold (~-55 mV) must be reached. The refractory period prevents backward propagation and limits firing rate.*

Example: A neuron fires when stimulation pushes it past threshold; a stronger stimulus causes HIGHER FREQUENCY firing, not a bigger action potential.

23 Synaptic Transmission

Explanation: Neurotransmitters are released from axon terminals into the synapse, bind receptors on the next neuron, and are then reuptaken or broken down. Excitatory (EPSP) or inhibitory (IPSP) effects.

AP Psych Tip: *Synapse = gap. Neurotransmitters bind receptors; reuptake removes them (SSRIs block serotonin reuptake). Balance of excitation/inhibition determines firing.*

Example: Serotonin released into a synapse binds receptors; SSRIs keep serotonin in the synapse longer by blocking reuptake -- boosting mood signaling.

24 Neurotransmitters

Explanation: Acetylcholine (muscle movement, memory), dopamine (reward, movement -- Parkinson's/ schizophrenia), serotonin (mood, sleep), norepinephrine (alertness), GABA (inhibitory, calming), glutamate (excitatory, memory).

AP Psych Tip: *Dopamine: too little in Parkinson's, too much implicated in schizophrenia. GABA is the brain's main inhibitor (anti-anxiety drugs boost it). Acetylcholine deficits link to Alzheimer's.*

Example: Parkinson's disease = dopamine-producing neurons die. Benzodiazepines (Valium) reduce anxiety by enhancing GABA's inhibitory effect.

25 The Nervous System

Explanation: Central nervous system (CNS) = brain + spinal cord. Peripheral nervous system (PNS) = somatic (voluntary movement) + autonomic (automatic: sympathetic = arousal, parasympathetic = rest).

AP Psych Tip: *Somatic = voluntary; autonomic = involuntary. Sympathetic = fight or flight (accelerates heart); parasympathetic = rest and digest (calms).*

Example: Running from a bear: sympathetic system speeds your heart. Digesting after a meal: parasympathetic system dominates.

26 Endocrine System

Explanation: The endocrine system uses hormones (slow, long-lasting chemical messengers) via the bloodstream: pituitary (master gland), thyroid (metabolism), adrenal (stress: epinephrine, cortisol), gonads (sex hormones).

AP Psych Tip: *Hormones = slow chemical communication vs fast neural. Pituitary = master gland. Adrenal medulla releases epinephrine (fight/flight); cortex releases cortisol (chronic stress).*

Example: The adrenal glands release epinephrine during a surprise -- faster heartbeat, more blood sugar. Cortisol rises with chronic stress.

27 The Brainstem & Hindbrain

Explanation: The brainstem (medulla, pons) controls life support: breathing, heartbeat, swallowing. The reticular formation filters and relays information, regulating arousal. The cerebellum coordinates movement and balance.

AP Psych Tip: *Medulla = heart/breathing (damage = death). Reticular formation = arousal/attention (damage = coma). Cerebellum = balance, coordination, procedural memory.*

Example: Alcohol impairs the cerebellum first -- explaining slurred speech and poor coordination. Medulla damage stops breathing.

28 The Limbic System

Explanation: Limbic system: amygdala (fear, emotion), hippocampus (explicit memory formation), hypothalamus (hunger, thirst, body temperature, drives, links to pituitary), thalamus (sensory relay).

AP Psych Tip: *Amygdala = fear/emotion (fear conditioning). Hippocampus = forming new explicit memories (damage = anterograde amnesia). Hypothalamus = biological drives + reward (pleasure center).*

Example: HM lost the ability to form new memories after hippocampus removal. Rats press levers for hours stimulating the hypothalamus (pleasure center).

29 The Cerebral Cortex

Explanation: The cortex: frontal lobe (executive function, planning, personality -- Phineas Gage), parietal lobe (touch, spatial), temporal lobe (hearing, language comprehension), occipital lobe (vision).

AP Psych Tip: *Frontal = judgment/personality/movement (motor cortex); parietal = somatosensory (touch); temporal = auditory; occipital = visual. Association areas integrate.*

Example: Phineas Gage's frontal lobe damage changed his personality. Damage to the occipital lobe causes blindness despite intact eyes.

30 Language Areas

Explanation: Broca's area (frontal, left): speech PRODUCTION -- damage causes inability to speak fluently but comprehension intact. Wernicke's area (temporal, left): comprehension -- damage causes fluent but meaningless speech.

AP Psych Tip: *Broca = production (can't speak). Wernicke = comprehension (can't understand; speaks gibberish). Both usually in the LEFT hemisphere.*

Example: Broca's aphasia: patient knows what they want to say but can't form words. Wernicke's aphasia: patient speaks fluently but nonsensically.

31 Hemispheric Specialization

Explanation: The left hemisphere handles language (most people), logic, and the right side of the body. The right handles spatial skills, face recognition, and the left side. Corpus callosum connects them.

AP Psych Tip: *Left = language, right = spatial/faces. Split-brain patients (corpus callosum severed) reveal lateralization: left visual field goes to the right hemisphere.*

Example: In split-brain patients, an object shown to the left visual field can't be named verbally (language is in the left hemisphere, which didn't see it).

32 Brain Plasticity

Explanation: Neuroplasticity: the brain reorganizes -- forming new connections, rerouting functions after damage, and changing with experience (learning, recovery). Most plastic in childhood.

AP Psych Tip: *Plasticity explains recovery after stroke (other areas take over) and why children recover language better than adults after brain damage.*

Example: After a stroke damages the motor cortex, physical therapy helps nearby neurons take over lost functions.

33 Split-Brain Research

Explanation: Sperry and Gazzaniga's split-brain studies severed the corpus callosum to treat epilepsy. Each hemisphere processes independently: left visual field -> right hemisphere, right visual field -> left.

AP Psych Tip: *In split-brain patients: right hemisphere sees left visual field; left hemisphere controls speech. Information doesn't transfer across hemispheres.*

Example: A split-brain patient can name a word flashed in the right visual field (left hemisphere) but not one in the left visual field (right hemisphere).

34 Genetics & Behavior

Explanation: Behavior genetics studies how genes and environment shape behavior. Genotype (genetic makeup) vs phenotype (observable traits). Heritability = proportion of variation attributable to genes.

AP Psych Tip: *Heritability applies to POPULATIONS, not individuals. Twin studies (identical vs fraternal) and adoption studies separate genes from environment.*

Example: Identical twins reared apart show similar IQ (heritability evidence). Heritability of IQ ~0.5-0.8 means genes explain that share of population variation.

35 Twin & Adoption Studies

Explanation: Identical (monozygotic) twins share 100% of genes; fraternal (dizygotic) share ~50%. If identical twins are more similar than fraternal, a trait is heritable. Adoption studies separate nature from nurture.

AP Psych Tip: *MZ vs DZ comparisons reveal heritability. Adopted children resemble biological parents for heritable traits and adoptive parents for environmental ones.*

Example: Identical twins have more similar personalities and IQ than fraternal twins -- evidence of genetic influence on these traits.

36 Evolutionary Psychology & Behavior

Explanation: Evolutionary psychology: behaviors that aided survival/reproduction are naturally selected: fear of danger, food preferences, mate selection, parental investment, altruism toward kin.

AP Psych Tip: *Universal behaviors across cultures suggest evolutionary roots. Kin selection: we help relatives because they share our genes.*

Example: People across cultures fear snakes and spiders more than cars -- evolutionary mismatch (cars are more dangerous today).

37 Nervous System Communication

Explanation: Communication flows: sensory (afferent) neurons carry info TO the CNS; motor (efferent) neurons carry commands OUT; interneurons connect them in the CNS.

AP Psych Tip: *Afferent = arriving (sensory); efferent = exiting (motor). Reflexes use a spinal reflex arc (fast, without brain involvement).*

Example: Touching a hot stove: sensory neuron -> spinal cord interneuron -> motor neuron -- you pull back before the brain registers pain.

38 Sleep & Circadian Rhythms

Explanation: Sleep stages: NREM (stages 1-3, deep sleep) and REM (dreaming, rapid eye movements, paralyzed body). Circadian rhythm (~24 h) is regulated by the suprachiasmatic nucleus and melatonin.

AP Psych Tip: *REM = dreaming, brain active, body paralyzed (REM atonia). Deep NREM (stage 3) = slow waves, growth hormone. Sleep deprivation impairs memory and mood.*

Example: During REM, EEG looks awake but skeletal muscles are paralyzed -- preventing acting out dreams. Melatonin rises at night to induce sleep.

39 Drugs & Neurotransmitters

Explanation: Agonists mimic or enhance neurotransmitters (nicotine mimics acetylcholine). Antagonists block them (antipsychotics block dopamine). Psychoactive drugs: stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens.

AP Psych Tip: *Agonist = enhances; antagonist = blocks. Tolerance = needing more; withdrawal = symptoms when stopping; addiction = compulsive use despite harm.*

Example: Nicotine is an acetylcholine agonist (alertness). Caffeine blocks adenosine (an inhibitory molecule), reducing sleepiness.

40 Consciousness & Selective Attention

Explanation: Consciousness = awareness of ourselves and the environment. Selective attention filters input (cocktail party effect); inattention blindness = missing obvious stimuli when attention is focused elsewhere.

AP Psych Tip: *Selective attention is limited -- we can't process everything. Inattention blindness (gorilla video) shows attention's limits.*

Example: In the famous gorilla experiment, viewers focused on counting passes missed a person in a gorilla suit -- inattention blindness.

Unit 3: Sensation & Perception

6-8% of the exam. How we detect and interpret sensory information.

41 Sensation vs Perception

Explanation: Sensation = detecting physical energy (stimuli) by sense organs (bottom-up). Perception = organizing and interpreting sensory input (top-down).

AP Psych Tip: *Sensation = raw data (bottom-up processing); perception = interpretation (top-down processing, uses experience and expectations).*

Example: Light hitting your retina is sensation; recognizing a friend's face is perception.

42 Thresholds

Explanation: Absolute threshold = minimum stimulus detectable 50% of the time. Difference threshold (just noticeable difference, JND) = smallest detectable difference; Weber's law: JND is a constant proportion of the stimulus.

AP Psych Tip: *Absolute = can you detect it at all. Difference = can you tell them apart. Weber's law: bigger stimuli need bigger differences (JND proportion constant).*

Example: In a quiet room you hear a faint whisper (absolute threshold). A 100 g weight needs ~2 g added to notice; a 1 kg weight needs ~20 g (Weber's constant).

43 Signal Detection Theory

Explanation: Signal detection theory: detection depends on the stimulus AND the observer's sensitivity and decision criteria (response bias). Outcomes: hit, miss, false alarm, correct rejection.

AP Psych Tip: *Signal detection separates sensitivity (ability to detect) from bias (willingness to say 'yes'). A radiologist's threshold changes with context.*

Example: A radar operator's tendency to report blips depends on both radar sensitivity and the cost of missing vs false alarms.

44 Sensory Adaptation

Explanation: Sensory adaptation = diminished sensitivity to constant stimulation. We stop noticing constant stimuli (clothes, background noise) so we can detect changes.

AP Psych Tip: *Adaptation reduces response to CONSTANT stimuli; it's why you stop smelling your own perfume but notice new scents.*

Example: You don't feel your watch after wearing it all day; you notice the air conditioner hum only when it turns off.

45 Vision: The Eye

Explanation: Light enters through the cornea and pupil (iris controls size), is focused by the lens onto the retina. Rods (peripheral, low light, black/white) and cones (fovea, color, detail) are photoreceptors.

AP Psych Tip: *Rods = night vision, peripheral, no color. Cones = color and detail, concentrated in the fovea. The blind spot = where the optic nerve leaves (no receptors).*

Example: In dim light you see mostly in black and white (rods). Staring at a dim star -- look slightly to the side so light hits rods.

46 Vision: Pathways & Color

Explanation: Visual info goes retina -> optic nerve -> thalamus -> occipital lobe. Trichromatic theory: 3 types of cones (red, green, blue). Opponent-process theory: pairs (red-green, blue-yellow, black-white) explain afterimages.

AP Psych Tip: *Trichromatic explains color detection in the retina; opponent-process explains afterimages and color blindness (red-green most common).*

Example: Staring at a green flag then looking at white shows a red afterimage -- opponent-process cells are fatigued.

47 Hearing: The Ear

Explanation: Sound waves -> outer ear -> eardrum -> middle ear (hammer, anvil, stirrup) -> cochlea (inner ear) -> hair cells -> auditory nerve -> temporal lobe. Pitch via place and frequency theories.

AP Psych Tip: *Hair cells in the cochlea transduce sound. Damage to hair cells = hearing loss (loud noises!). Place theory: different pitches activate different cochlea locations.*

Example: Loud concerts damage cochlear hair cells -- permanent hearing loss. The cochlea converts vibrations to neural signals.

48 Touch, Pain & Skin Senses

Explanation: Skin senses: pressure, warmth, cold, pain. Gate-control theory: the spinal cord can block pain signals (rubbing, distraction, endorphins). Pain is a protective signal.

AP Psych Tip: *Gate-control theory explains why rubbing a stubbed toe helps and why distraction reduces pain. Congenital insensitivity to pain is dangerous (no warnings).*

Example: Athletes sometimes don't notice injuries during a game (endorphins + distraction) -- the 'gate' closes on pain signals.

49 Taste (Gustation)

Explanation: Taste buds on the tongue detect five basic tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami (savory). Taste is influenced by smell (flavor = taste + smell) and expectations.

AP Psych Tip: *Five tastes; flavor is mostly smell. Super-tasters are more sensitive to bitter. Taste preferences are partly genetic and learned.*

Example: A stuffy nose makes food taste bland -- flavor depends heavily on smell (retronasal olfaction).

50 Smell (Olfaction)

Explanation: Odor molecules bind receptors in the nasal cavity -> olfactory bulb -> brain (including amygdala/limbic system -- why smells trigger memories). Olfactory neurons are the only neurons that regenerate.

AP Psych Tip: *Smell connects directly to the limbic system, explaining vivid smell-evoked memories (Proust effect). Olfactory receptors regenerate (unlike most neurons).*

Example: The smell of a childhood food instantly brings back a memory -- olfaction's direct limbic link.

51 Body Senses: Kinesthesia & Vestibular

Explanation: Kinesthesia = sense of body position and movement (muscle/joint receptors). Vestibular sense = balance and head position (inner ear semicircular canals).

AP Psych Tip: *Kinesthesia = where your limbs are (proprioception). Vestibular = balance (semicircular canals, otolith organs). Alcohol impairs the vestibular system.*

Example: Closing your eyes and touching your nose uses kinesthesia. Spinning and stopping makes you dizzy because vestibular fluid keeps moving.

52 Gestalt Principles

Explanation: Gestalt psychology: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Grouping principles: proximity, similarity, continuity, closure, figure-ground. We organize sensory info into wholes.

AP Psych Tip: *AP Psych asks you to identify the Gestalt principle from an example: proximity (close = grouped), similarity (alike = grouped), closure (fill gaps), figure-ground (focus one part).*

Example: Seeing a circle from a broken ring = closure. Grouping dots by color = similarity. Seeing a face in a cloud = figure-ground.

53 Perceptual Constancies

Explanation: We perceive objects as stable despite changing sensory input: size constancy (car doesn't shrink as it recedes), shape constancy (door appears rectangular), color/brightness constancy.

AP Psych Tip: *Constancies let us perceive a stable world. Size constancy uses distance cues; brightness constancy uses relative luminance.*

Example: A door opening appears as a rectangle (shape constancy), not a trapezoid. A distant car is seen as small, not toy-sized.

54 Depth Perception: Monocular Cues

Explanation: Monocular cues (one eye): relative size, interposition (overlap), linear perspective, texture gradient, shading, motion parallax (near objects move faster).

AP Psych Tip: *Monocular = one eye: relative size, overlap, perspective lines, texture, shadows, motion parallax. Artists use these to create depth.*

Example: Railroad tracks converging = linear perspective. A nearer object overlapping a farther one = interposition.

55 Depth Perception: Binocular Cues

Explanation: Binocular cues (two eyes): retinal disparity (eyes see slightly different images; brain computes distance) and convergence (eyes turn inward for near objects).

AP Psych Tip: *Binocular = retinal disparity + convergence. Retinal disparity is how 3D movies work (different images per eye).*

Example: Holding a finger close to your nose, each eye sees it differently (retinal disparity) -- your brain fuses them into depth.

56 Perceptual Set & Top-Down Processing

Explanation: Perceptual set = readiness to perceive based on expectations, context, and experience. Top-down processing fills in ambiguous information using schemas.

AP Psych Tip: *Perceptual set: what you EXPECT shapes what you see. Context matters: '13' vs 'B' in a sequence. Ambiguous figures flip based on set.*

Example: Reading 'THE CAT' -- you perceive the H despite a damaged letter, using top-down processing.

57 Subliminal Perception & Priming

Explanation: Subliminal stimuli are below the absolute threshold. Priming: exposure to one stimulus influences response to another (even unconsciously). Subliminal messaging has weak, short-lived effects.

AP Psych Tip: *Priming is real (word association effects); subliminal advertising does NOT reliably change behavior (little effect on purchasing).*

Example: Seeing 'yellow' primes you to name the color faster. Subliminal messages in movies do NOT make you buy popcorn (research shows minimal effect).

58 Attention & Perception

Explanation: Attention selects what we process. Divided attention (multitasking) impairs performance. Change blindness = failing to notice changes in a scene. Cocktail party effect = hearing your name in noise.

AP Psych Tip: *Divided attention degrades performance (texting while driving). Change blindness and inattention blindness show attention's limits.*

Example: You fail to notice a sign swap between shots of a scene (change blindness) -- attention was elsewhere.

59 Perceptual Interpretation & Experience

Explanation: Perception is shaped by experience and culture: the Muller-Lyer illusion (line length) fools people in carpentered cultures more; visual cliff studies show depth perception develops with experience (crawling).

AP Psych Tip: *Culture affects perception (Muller-Lyer). Experience and maturation shape depth perception (visual cliff: babies with crawling experience avoid the deep side).*

Example: The Muller-Lyer illusion is weaker in cultures without many right-angle buildings -- experience shapes perception.

60 Sensory Interaction

Explanation: Senses interact: flavor = taste + smell; vision influences hearing (McGurk effect: visual lip movements change perceived sound); synesthesia = senses cross (hearing colors).

AP Psych Tip: *Sensory interaction: the McGurk effect (vision changes what you hear) and ventriloquism (vision 'pulls' sound) show senses combine.*

Example: In the McGurk effect, watching 'ga' lips while hearing 'ba' makes you perceive 'da' -- vision shapes hearing.

Unit 4: Learning

7-9% of the exam. Classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational learning.

61 Learning Defined

Explanation: Learning = a relatively permanent change in behavior or knowledge due to experience. Excludes temporary states (fatigue, drugs) and maturation.

AP Psych Tip: *Learning = durable change from experience. Reflexes and instincts are NOT learned; fatigue/drug effects are temporary, not learning.*

Example: Habituation (ignoring a repeated noise) is a simple form of learning. Knowing your way home is learned.

62 Classical Conditioning Basics

Explanation: Pavlov: a neutral stimulus (NS) paired with an unconditioned stimulus (US) that reflexively triggers an unconditioned response (UR) becomes a conditioned stimulus (CS) eliciting a conditioned response (CR).

AP Psych Tip: *US -> UR is automatic (food -> salivation). NS + US pairing makes the NS a CS that triggers the CR (bell -> salivation).*

Example: Pavlov's dog: bell (NS) + food (US -> salivation UR). After pairing, bell alone (CS) causes salivation (CR).

63 Classical Conditioning: Acquisition & Extinction

Explanation: Acquisition = forming the association (CS must precede US, usually within half a second). Extinction = CS alone no longer produces CR. Spontaneous recovery = CR returns after a rest period.

AP Psych Tip: *Timing matters: CS just before US works best. Extinction is UNlearning (inhibition), not forgetting. Spontaneous recovery shows the association survives.*

Example: If the bell rings repeatedly without food, the dog stops salivating (extinction). A day later the bell alone may again elicit a weak response (spontaneous recovery).

64 Generalization & Discrimination

Explanation: Stimulus generalization = responding to similar stimuli (Little Albert feared all furry things). Stimulus discrimination = responding only to the specific CS (learning to tell them apart).

AP Psych Tip: *Generalization = similar triggers. Discrimination = distinguishing. The more similar, the more generalization.*

Example: Little Albert generalized fear from a rat to a rabbit and a Santa mask. Pavlov's dogs discriminated between similar tones when only one was followed by food.

65 John Watson & Little Albert

Explanation: Watson conditioned 11-month-old 'Little Albert' to fear a white rat by pairing it with a loud noise -- demonstrating classical conditioning of emotion (ethics concerns).

AP Psych Tip: *Little Albert = classical conditioning of fear; generalizes to furry stimuli. Raises major ethical questions about harm.*

Example: Little Albert cried at the rat (CR) after rat + loud noise pairings, and feared rabbits too (generalization).

66 Operant Conditioning Basics

Explanation: Skinner: behavior is shaped by consequences. Reinforcement increases behavior; punishment decreases it. Operant = behavior operates on the environment.

AP Psych Tip: *Operant conditioning = learning by consequences (Skinner box, shaping). Reinforcement = strengthen; punishment = weaken.*

Example: A rat presses a lever and gets food (reinforcement) -- lever pressing increases. A child loses screen time for misbehavior (punishment) -- misbehavior decreases.

67 Positive vs Negative Reinforcement

Explanation: Positive reinforcement = ADD a pleasant stimulus (give candy). Negative reinforcement = REMOVE an aversive stimulus (stop nagging). BOTH increase behavior.

AP Psych Tip: *Reinforcement ALWAYS increases behavior. Positive = add something good; negative = remove something bad (NOT punishment!).*

Example: Giving a dog a treat for sitting = positive reinforcement. Buckling your seatbelt to stop the beeping = negative reinforcement (beep removed).

68 Positive vs Negative Punishment

Explanation: Positive punishment = ADD an aversive stimulus (spanking, speeding ticket). Negative punishment = REMOVE a pleasant stimulus (take away phone, time-out). BOTH decrease behavior.

AP Psych Tip: Punishment ALWAYS decreases behavior. Positive = add bad; negative = remove good. Punishment is less effective than reinforcement (side effects: resentment, escape).

Example: A speeding ticket adds a fine (positive punishment). Taking away video games removes a privilege (negative punishment).

69 Reinforcement Schedules

Explanation: Continuous (every response) is fastest to learn but fastest to extinguish. Partial: fixed-ratio (after N responses), variable-ratio (unpredictable -- gambling, most resistant), fixed-interval (after time), variable-interval (random time).

AP Psych Tip: Variable-ratio = most resistant to extinction (slot machines). Fixed-interval produces a scalloped response pattern (cramming before a test).

Example: Slot machines pay out on a variable-ratio schedule -- that's why they're so addictive. Weekly quizzes = fixed-interval studying pattern.

70 Shaping & Chaining

Explanation: Shaping = reinforcing successive approximations toward a target behavior. Chaining = linking a sequence of behaviors. Used to train complex behaviors.

AP Psych Tip: Shaping rewards each step closer to the goal (training a dog to spin). Complex behaviors are built step by step.

Example: Teaching a rat to press a lever: reward approaching, then touching, then pressing -- shaping.

71 Primary vs Conditioned Reinforcers

Explanation: Primary reinforcers satisfy biological needs (food, water, warmth). Conditioned (secondary) reinforcers gain value through association (money, grades, praise, tokens).

AP Psych Tip: Primary = innate (food). Secondary = learned (money, tokens, praise). Token economies use conditioned reinforcers.

Example: Money is a conditioned reinforcer -- it's just paper until we learn it buys food. A gold star motivates a child through learned association.

72 Instinctive Drift & Biological Constraints

Explanation: Instinctive drift: animals revert to instinctive behaviors even when reinforced otherwise (raccoons 'washing' coins). Biology constrains what can be learned.

AP Psych Tip: Biological preparedness limits conditioning: pigeons can learn pecking easily; fear conditioning is easier for evolutionary threats (snakes, heights).

Example: Skinner trained raccoons to drop coins in a box, but they drifted to rubbing/washing them -- instinctive drift.

73 Operant vs Classical Conditioning

Explanation: Classical: involuntary reflexive responses, learned via association of stimuli (US-CS), passive. Operant: voluntary behaviors, learned via consequences, active (operating on environment).

AP Psych Tip: Classical = reflexes (automatic), operant = voluntary behavior. Classical pairs stimuli; operant pairs behavior and consequence.

Example: Fear of the dentist = classical (association). Studying to get good grades = operant (consequence).

74 Observational Learning

Explanation: Bandura: learning by watching others (models). Bobo doll study: children imitated an adult's aggression toward a doll. Requires attention, retention, reproduction, motivation.

AP Psych Tip: Observational learning = modeling/vicarious learning. Bobo doll = children copy aggression. Vicarious reinforcement = learning from others' outcomes.

Example: After watching an adult hit a Bobo doll, children hit it too -- even with novel aggressive acts (Bandura).

75 Mirror Neurons & Imitation

- Explanation:** Mirror neurons fire both when performing an action and when watching someone else perform it -- a neural basis for imitation and empathy.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Mirror neurons = observed action triggers the same neurons as performing it. Linked to empathy, language, and observational learning.*
- Example:** When you watch someone bite into a lemon, your mirror neurons fire as if you bit it -- you wince.
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76 Latent Learning & Cognitive Maps

- Explanation:** Tolman: learning can occur without reinforcement and remain hidden until needed. Rats explored a maze without reward (latent learning) then navigated it quickly once rewarded (cognitive map).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Latent learning = learned but not shown until motivated. Cognitive maps = mental representations. Proves learning isn't only reinforcement-driven.*
- Example:** Tolman's rats formed a cognitive map of the maze with no reward, then ran it efficiently once food appeared.
-

77 Insight Learning

- Explanation:** Kohler: sudden realization of a solution (insight) -- the 'aha' moment. Chimpanzees stacked boxes to reach bananas after appearing to ponder the problem.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Insight = sudden problem solution, not trial-and-error. Kohler's Sultan the chimp used insight to reach bananas.*
- Example:** Staring at a puzzle then suddenly knowing the answer -- insight learning (Kohler's chimps).
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78 Behavior Modification Applications

- Explanation:** Operant principles applied: token economies (reinforce desired behavior with tokens), systematic desensitization (classical: pairing relaxation with feared stimuli), behavior contracts.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Token economies and rewards are used in schools, clinics, and workplaces. Systematic desensitization uses counterconditioning (relaxation vs fear).*
- Example:** A classroom token economy rewards good behavior with tokens exchangeable for privileges. Phobia therapy pairs relaxation with feared images progressively.
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79 Learning & the Brain

- Explanation:** The cerebellum and basal ganglia are involved in implicit (procedural) learning; the amygdala in fear conditioning; the hippocampus in explicit learning. Long-term potentiation (LTP) strengthens synapses in learning.
- AP Psych Tip:** *LTP = strengthened synaptic connections (learning's neural basis). Amygdala = fear conditioning (classical); hippocampus = explicit memories.*
- Example:** Fear conditioning depends on the amygdala -- rats without amygdalas can't learn to fear a tone paired with shock.
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80 Extinction & Spontaneous Recovery in Operant

- Explanation:** In operant conditioning, extinction = reinforcement stops, behavior decreases. Spontaneous recovery possible. Variable schedules resist extinction best.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Stop reinforcing and behavior declines (operant extinction). Intermittent reinforcement is hardest to extinguish.*
- Example:** If the vending machine stops delivering, you stop putting money in (extinction). If it occasionally worked, you'd keep trying longer.
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Unit 5: Cognitive Psychology

13-17% of the exam. Memory, thinking, problem solving, and language.

81 Memory Models

Explanation: Information processing model: encoding -> storage -> retrieval (like a computer). Three-stage model (Atkinson-Shiffrin): sensory memory -> short-term memory -> long-term memory.

AP Psych Tip: *Encoding (input), storage (retention), retrieval (output). Sensory -> short-term (STM) -> long-term (LTM) with rehearsal and attention as gates.*

Example: Seeing a phone number, repeating it (STM), then recalling it tomorrow (LTM) demonstrates the three stages.

82 Working Memory

Explanation: Baddeley's working memory model updates STM: a central executive coordinates the phonological loop (verbal info) and visuospatial sketchpad (visual/spatial info).

AP Psych Tip: *Working memory = active processing, limited capacity (~7 +/- 2 chunks). The central executive directs attention between subsystems.*

Example: Holding a conversation while mentally navigating uses the phonological loop and visuospatial sketchpad simultaneously.

83 Sensory Memory

Explanation: Sensory memory holds raw sensory info briefly: iconic (visual, ~0.3-0.5 s, Sperling) and echoic (auditory, ~3-4 s). Large capacity, very brief duration.

AP Psych Tip: *Iconic = visual (fraction of a second); echoic = auditory (a few seconds, like an echo). Sperling's experiment measured iconic memory.*

Example: After a flash of a 12-letter grid, you 'see' all letters for a split second (iconic memory) but can report only a few.

84 Encoding: Automatic vs Effortful

Explanation: Automatic encoding: without effort (space, time, frequency). Effortful encoding: requires attention and rehearsal (studying, new facts). Rehearsal (maintenance vs elaborative) transfers info to LTM.

AP Psych Tip: *Automatic = effortless (where you parked). Effortful = deliberate (vocabulary). Elaborative rehearsal (connecting meaning) beats rote maintenance.*

Example: You automatically remember what you ate for breakfast; you effortfully memorize psychology terms.

85 Encoding: Visual, Acoustic, Semantic

Explanation: Visual encoding (images), acoustic encoding (sounds), semantic encoding (MEANING -- best retention). Deep processing (meaning) leads to better memory than shallow (appearance/sound).

AP Psych Tip: *Semantic/deep processing = best memory. Self-reference effect: relating info to yourself boosts encoding.*

Example: Remembering 'neuron' by its meaning (a brain cell that fires) beats remembering its spelling -- deep processing.

86 Chunking & Mnemonics

Explanation: Chunking groups items into meaningful units, expanding STM capacity (FBICIAATM). Mnemonics (acronyms, method of loci, peg words) aid encoding and retrieval.

AP Psych Tip: *Chunking: C-I-A-F-B-I = CIA, FBI (3 chunks). Method of loci: associate items with locations you know.*

Example: Remembering a grocery list by placing items along your mental walk home = method of loci.

87 Storage: Long-Term Memory Types

Explanation: LTM types: explicit (declarative) = semantic (facts) + episodic (events); implicit (nondeclarative) = procedural (skills) + conditioned associations. Hippocampus consolidates explicit; cerebellum/basal ganglia handle implicit.

AP Psych Tip: *Explicit = facts/events (semantic + episodic), hippocampus-dependent. Implicit = skills/habits (procedural), cerebellum/basal ganglia.*

Example: Knowing Paris is in France = semantic. Remembering your first day of school = episodic. Riding a bike = procedural.

88 Retrieval: Recall vs Recognition

Explanation: Recall = retrieving without cues (essay, fill-in-the-blank). Recognition = identifying from options (multiple choice). Retrieval cues (context, state) improve access.

AP Psych Tip: *Recognition is easier than recall (cues present). Context-dependent memory: studying in the same environment aids retrieval.*

Example: Multiple-choice questions test recognition; essays test recall. Scuba divers remembered word lists better when tested underwater (context-dependent).

89 Forgetting: Interference

Explanation: Retroactive interference: NEW info disrupts recall of OLD (learning French hurts Spanish). Proactive interference: OLD info disrupts NEW (Spanish interferes with French).

AP Psych Tip: *Retro = new blocks old ('retro' = backward). Pro = old blocks new ('pro' = forward). Forgetting is often interference, not loss.*

Example: After learning a new password, you forget the old one (retroactive). Your old locker combination keeps popping up (proactive).

90 Forgetting: Decay, Retrieval Failure, Motivated

Explanation: Decay theory: memory traces fade over time. Retrieval failure: info stored but inaccessible (tip-of-the-tongue). Motivated forgetting (Freud): repression of anxiety-provoking memories.

AP Psych Tip: *Tip-of-the-tongue = retrieval failure (the memory is there). Decay is controversial; interference + retrieval failure explain most forgetting.*

Example: You can't recall an actor's name but it 'feels close' -- retrieval failure. Not thinking about a trauma = motivated forgetting.

91 Amnesia

Explanation: Anterograde amnesia: can't form NEW memories (hippocampus damage -- HM). Retrograde amnesia: can't recall OLD memories (often head trauma).

AP Psych Tip: *Anterograde = forward, can't make new (HM). Retrograde = backward, can't recall past. HM retained procedural learning despite losing explicit memory.*

Example: After hippocampus surgery, HM couldn't remember new people but could learn new mirror-tracing skills (implicit intact).

92 Memory Construction & False Memories

Explanation: Memories are reconstructed, not replayed. Misinformation effect (Loftus): post-event info distorts memory. Source amnesia: forgetting where info came from. Imagination inflation creates false memories.

AP Psych Tip: *Loftus: leading questions implant false memories ('smashed' vs 'hit' changed speed estimates). Eyewitness testimony is fallible.*

Example: Asked 'How fast were the cars going when they SMASHED?' witnesses recall higher speeds and even broken glass that wasn't there.

93 Eyewitness Testimony

Explanation: Eyewitness memory is unreliable: weapon focus, cross-race effect, misleading questions, confidence does not equal accuracy. Lineups and interviews are designed to reduce bias.

AP Psych Tip: *Confidence-accuracy correlation is weak. Sequential lineups, unbiased instructions, and double-blind administration reduce false identifications.*

Example: A witness confidently picks the wrong suspect after seeing a weapon (weapon focus) and a suggestive lineup.

94 Thinking & Concepts

Explanation: Thinking = manipulating mental representations. Concepts = mental categories (prototypes = best examples). Schemas = frameworks organizing knowledge. Mental sets = fixed problem-solving approaches.

AP Psych Tip: *Prototype = typical example (a robin is a prototypical bird). Schemas guide expectations; mental sets can block problem solving.*

Example: A schema for 'restaurant' predicts ordering, eating, paying. A mental set makes you keep using a formula that no longer fits.

95 Problem Solving Strategies

Explanation: Algorithms = step-by-step, guaranteed but slow. Heuristics = mental shortcuts, fast but error-prone (availability, representativeness, anchoring). Insight = sudden solution.

AP Psych Tip: *Algorithms guarantee answers; heuristics are efficient but biased. Availability heuristic: judge likelihood by how easily examples come to mind.*

Example: Checking every route systematically = algorithm. Assuming a country is dangerous because you remember news stories = availability heuristic.

96 Cognitive Biases & Heuristics

Explanation: Availability (vivid examples overestimate likelihood), representativeness (stereotyping by similarity, ignoring base rates), anchoring (initial info biases judgment), confirmation bias (seek confirming evidence).

AP Psych Tip: *Representativeness ignores base rates; availability overweights memorable events; anchoring sticks to the first number; confirmation bias filters evidence.*

Example: 'He's quiet and likes math, so he must be an engineer' = representativeness. 'Plane crashes are common' after news coverage = availability.

97 Framing & Belief Perseverance

Explanation: Framing: how a choice is presented changes decisions ('90% survival' vs '10% mortality'). Belief perseverance: clinging to beliefs despite contrary evidence.

AP Psych Tip: *Framing changes risk decisions (gain vs loss frame). Belief perseverance + confirmation bias keep wrong beliefs alive.*

Example: Doctors choose '90% survival' surgery over '10% mortality' surgery even though they're identical -- framing effect.

98 Language Structure

Explanation: Language = spoken/written symbols combined by rules. Phonemes (sounds), morphemes (meaning units), grammar (rules), syntax (word order), semantics (meaning).

AP Psych Tip: *Phoneme = basic sound ('b'). Morpheme = smallest meaning unit ('un-', '-ed'). Syntax = order rules. Semantics = meaning.*

Example: 'Unbreakable' = 3 morphemes (un-break-able). 'The cat chased the dog' vs 'the dog chased the cat' differ in syntax and meaning.

99 Language Development

Explanation: Language develops: babbling (4-6 months, universal) -> one-word (1 yr) -> telegraphic (2 yr, 'want milk') -> full sentences. Critical period (childhood) for native fluency; learning language after it is harder.

AP Psych Tip: *Telegraphic speech = two-word essentials ('more juice'). Critical period hypothesis: full fluency requires early exposure (Genie case).*

Example: Genie, deprived of language until 13, never achieved full grammar -- evidence for the critical period.

100 Language & Thought: Whorf Hypothesis

Explanation: Linguistic relativity (Whorf): language shapes thought. Strong version (language determines thought) is largely unsupported; weak version (language influences perception/categorization) has support.

AP Psych Tip: *Language influences (not determines) thought. Color terms and spatial language shape how speakers categorize the world.*

Example: The Piraha (few number words) struggle with exact counts; Russian speakers distinguish light/dark blue faster -- language influences cognition.

Unit 6: Developmental Psychology

7-9% of the exam. Physical, cognitive, and social development across the lifespan.

101 Developmental Research Methods

Explanation: Cross-sectional: different ages at one time (fast, but cohort effects). Longitudinal: same people over time (rich data, attrition, time). Both study change over the lifespan.

AP Psych Tip: *Cross-sectional = different people, different ages, one time. Longitudinal = same people, over years. Cohort effects plague cross-sectional studies.*

Example: Measuring IQ in 20-, 40-, and 60-year-olds today = cross-sectional. Testing the same people at 20, 40, 60 = longitudinal.

102 Prenatal Development

Explanation: Stages: zygote -> embryo (2-8 weeks, organs form -- most vulnerable) -> fetus (9 weeks-birth). Teratogens (alcohol, drugs, toxins) harm development; Fetal Alcohol Syndrome results from maternal drinking.

AP Psych Tip: *Embryonic stage = organogenesis, most sensitive to teratogens. FAS = alcohol effects (facial features, cognitive deficits).*

Example: Alcohol during pregnancy can cause fetal alcohol syndrome -- growth deficits and learning problems.

103 Infant Reflexes & Motor Development

Explanation: Newborns have reflexes (rooting, sucking, grasping, Moro). Motor milestones follow a universal sequence: roll -> sit -> crawl -> walk (cephalocaudal: head to tail; proximodistal: center out).

AP Psych Tip: *Motor development is genetically guided (maturation), not just practice. Cephalocaudal = head first; proximodistal = trunk before limbs.*

Example: Babies control their head before their trunk before their legs -- cephalocaudal development.

104 Harlow's Monkey Studies

Explanation: Harlow: infant monkeys preferred a cloth 'mother' (comfort) over a wire mother with food -- attachment is driven by contact comfort, not feeding.

AP Psych Tip: *Contact comfort > feeding for attachment. Harlow's monkeys with cloth mothers still showed distress (imperfect attachment).*

Example: Monkeys clung to the soft cloth mother even when the wire mother provided milk -- comfort matters most.

105 Attachment Styles

Explanation: Ainsworth's Strange Situation: secure (explore, upset at separation, comforted on return), avoidant (ignore caregiver), resistant/ambivalent (clingy, angry), disorganized. Secure = sensitive, responsive caregiving.

AP Psych Tip: *Secure attachment = caregiver is a safe base (responsive care). Insecure patterns (avoidant, resistant, disorganized) correlate with caregiver behavior.*

Example: A securely attached toddler explores the room, cries when mom leaves, and is quickly soothed when she returns.

106 Parenting Styles

Explanation: Baumrind: authoritative (warm + firm limits -- best outcomes), authoritarian (strict, cold, obedience), permissive (warm, few limits), neglectful/uninvolved (absent).

AP Psych Tip: *Authoritative = high warmth + high control = best outcomes. Authoritarian = low warmth + high control. Permissive = high warmth + low control.*

Example: Authoritative parents explain rules and listen -- teens show higher self-esteem and achievement. Authoritarian parents demand obedience without warmth.

107 Piaget's Theory Overview

Explanation: Piaget: children actively build understanding through stages: sensorimotor (0-2, object permanence), preoperational (2-7, egocentrism, no conservation), concrete operational (7-11, conservation, logic), formal operational (12+, abstract reasoning).

AP Psych Tip: *Know the four stages and a hallmark of each: object permanence, egocentrism, conservation, abstract thought. Piaget said children are little scientists.*

Example: A preoperational child believes a taller glass has more juice (no conservation). A formal-operational teen can reason about hypotheticals.

108 Piaget: Key Concepts

- Explanation:** Schemas (mental frameworks), assimilation (fit new info into existing schema), accommodation (change schema for new info), equilibration (balance). Object permanence = knowing objects exist when hidden.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Assimilation = absorb; accommodation = adjust. Object permanence develops in the sensorimotor stage (Peek-a-boo works before it develops).*
- Example:** A baby seeing a horse and calling it 'doggie' = assimilation; learning 'horse' = accommodation.
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109 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

- Explanation:** Vygotsky: learning is social. Zone of proximal development (ZPD) = tasks just beyond ability; scaffolding = support to bridge the gap. Language is central to thinking.
- AP Psych Tip:** *ZPD = what you can do with help but not alone. Scaffolding = temporary support, then fade. Contrast with Piaget (children as solitary explorers).*
- Example:** A child solves a puzzle with a parent's hints (ZPD); the parent gradually removes hints (scaffolding).
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110 Kohlberg's Moral Development

- Explanation:** Kohlberg: preconventional (avoid punishment, gain rewards), conventional (gain approval, follow laws), postconventional (abstract principles, universal ethics). Heinz dilemma assesses reasoning.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Preconventional = self-interest. Conventional = social rules. Postconventional = universal principles (rare). Kohlberg studied moral REASONING, not behavior.*
- Example:** 'Don't steal because you'll get caught' = preconventional. 'Don't steal because it's illegal' = conventional. 'Because life outweighs property' = postconventional.
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111 Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

- Explanation:** Erikson: 8 stages, each with a crisis: trust vs mistrust (infancy), autonomy vs shame (toddler), initiative vs guilt (preschool), industry vs inferiority (school age), identity vs role confusion (adolescence), intimacy vs isolation, generativity vs stagnation, integrity vs despair.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Memorize the big five: trust (infant), autonomy (2), initiative (4), industry (6), identity (adolescent). Outcomes depend on resolving each crisis.*
- Example:** Adolescents struggle with identity vs role confusion -- 'Who am I?' Teen identity exploration is normal.
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112 Adolescence & Identity

- Explanation:** Adolescence features: puberty, formal operational thought, identity formation (Marcia: identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion), and increased peer influence + risk taking (frontal lobe immature).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Frontal lobe (judgment) matures last (~25) -- explains teen risk-taking with a developed limbic system (emotional reactivity).*
- Example:** A teen seeks thrills (mature amygdala, immature prefrontal cortex) -- identity moratorium ('trying on' roles) is normal.
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113 Erikson's Later Stages

- Explanation:** Intimacy vs isolation (young adulthood: forming close relationships), generativity vs stagnation (middle adulthood: contributing to next generation), integrity vs despair (late adulthood: reflecting on life).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Intimacy (20s-30s), generativity (40s-60s), integrity (65+). Each builds on earlier resolutions.*
- Example:** A middle-aged person mentors younger workers (generativity). An elder who accepts their life feels integrity, not despair.
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114 Cognitive Aging & Dementia

- Explanation:** Fluid intelligence (processing speed, novel problems) declines with age; crystallized intelligence (knowledge, vocabulary) holds or grows. Dementia/Alzheimer's = progressive cognitive decline; Alzheimer's involves plaques and tangles.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Fluid declines, crystallized holds. Alzheimer's: amyloid plaques + neurofibrillary tangles, memory loss, eventually global decline.*
- Example:** An older adult solves crossword puzzles well (crystallized) but is slower on novel puzzles (fluid). Alzheimer's destroys memory progressively.
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115 Temperament

Explanation: Temperament = biologically based emotional style, stable from infancy: easy (regular, adaptable), difficult (irregular, intense), slow-to-warm-up (cautious). Chess & Thomas research.

AP Psych Tip: *Temperament is innate and relatively stable. 'Goodness of fit' = matching parenting to temperament improves adjustment.*

Example: An easy baby sleeps and feeds regularly; a difficult baby reacts intensely to change -- both patterns persist.

116 Gender Development

Explanation: Gender identity (internal sense of being male/female/other), gender roles (cultural expectations), gender typing (learning gender-appropriate behavior). Influenced by biology (hormones) and social learning.

AP Psych Tip: *Gender identity vs roles: identity = self-concept; roles = cultural scripts. Social learning theory: children learn gender through modeling and reinforcement.*

Example: A boy learning 'boys don't cry' from parents and media is gender typing -- social learning of gender roles.

117 Social Learning & Gender

Explanation: Social learning theory (Bandura) and gender schema theory (Martin & Halverson: children build schemas of gender and filter experience through them) explain gender development.

AP Psych Tip: *Gender schema theory: once a child has a gender schema, they notice and remember schema-consistent info.*

Example: A girl with a 'dolls are for girls' schema pays more attention to doll ads than truck ads.

118 Death & Dying: Kubler-Ross

Explanation: Kubler-Ross stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance (DABDA). Not universal or strictly sequential, but a useful framework.

AP Psych Tip: *DABDA: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance. Criticized for being too rigid -- grief varies by culture and person.*

Example: A patient first denies a diagnosis, then gets angry, then bargains ('if I survive, I'll change') -- Kubler-Ross stages.

119 Maturation & Experience

Explanation: Maturation = biologically driven development unfolding on its own schedule (walking, puberty, brain growth). Experience (nurture) interacts with maturation; critical periods exist (imprinting, language).

AP Psych Tip: *Maturation sets the timetable; experience fine-tunes it. Critical period = time window when certain learning must occur (imprinting in birds, language in humans).*

Example: Lorenz's goslings imprinted on him during a critical period. Children must be exposed to language early for full fluency.

120 Lifespan Perspective

Explanation: Development is lifelong, multidimensional, multidirectional (gains and losses at every age), plastic (changeable), and embedded in context (cohort, culture).

AP Psych Tip: *Development never stops; early experiences matter but don't fix outcomes (plasticity). Context shapes every stage.*

Example: An 80-year-old learns a new language skill (plasticity) even as processing speed declines -- multidirectional change.

Unit 7: Motivation, Emotion, & Personality

11-15% of the exam. Theories of motivation, emotion, and major personality approaches.

121 Motivation Theories

Explanation: Instinct theory (fixed innate behaviors), drive-reduction theory (need → drive → behavior to reduce tension), arousal theory (seek optimal arousal), incentive theory (external rewards pull behavior).

AP Psych Tip: *Drive-reduction: homeostasis (balance) -- hunger drives eating. Arousal theory explains thrill-seeking (optimal arousal differs per person).*

Example: You eat because hunger (drive) pushes you (drive-reduction). You ride a roller coaster for optimal arousal (arousal theory).

122 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Explanation: Maslow: physiological → safety → belongingness → esteem → self-actualization (transcendence at top). Lower needs must be mostly satisfied before higher ones motivate.

AP Psych Tip: *Know the pyramid: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, self-actualization. Criticized: people pursue higher needs despite unmet lower ones.*

Example: A starving person is motivated by food, not self-esteem -- lower needs come first.

123 Hunger & Eating Motivation

Explanation: Hunger is regulated by the hypothalamus: lateral hypothalamus (LH) = hunger center (stimulation causes eating); ventromedial hypothalamus (VMH) = satiety center. Glucose and hormones (ghrelin, leptin) signal.

AP Psych Tip: *LH = 'on' switch for hunger; VMH = 'off' switch. Ghrelin (hungry hormone) rises before meals; leptin (satiety) signals fat stores.*

Example: A rat with a lesioned VMH eats excessively and becomes obese. Ghrelin spikes before lunch, driving hunger.

124 Set Point & Weight Regulation

Explanation: Set point theory: the body defends a stable weight via metabolism and hormones. Losing weight triggers metabolic slowdown; gaining triggers increase. Genetics set the range.

AP Psych Tip: *Set point explains why crash diets fail -- metabolism adapts. Weight is influenced by genes, environment, and habits.*

Example: After losing weight, your metabolism slows and hunger hormones rise, pulling you back toward your set point.

125 Sexual Motivation & Masters & Johnson

Explanation: Masters & Johnson: human sexual response cycle -- excitement, plateau, orgasm, resolution. Sexual motivation is influenced by hormones (testosterone in both sexes) and culture.

AP Psych Tip: *Four phases: excitement, plateau, orgasm, resolution. Testosterone fuels sex drive in males AND females.*

Example: The sexual response cycle: arousal builds (excitement), peaks (orgasm), and resolves -- studied physiologically by Masters & Johnson.

126 Achievement Motivation

Explanation: Achievement motivation = drive to excel and meet standards. McClelland: high achievers seek challenging-but-attainable goals, prefer feedback, and persist. Influenced by parenting (encouraging independence).

AP Psych Tip: *High achievers choose moderately difficult tasks (not too easy, not impossible). Intrinsic motivation (internal) beats extrinsic (rewards) for sustained effort.*

Example: A student who picks a challenging project and works for mastery shows high achievement motivation (intrinsic).

127 James-Lange Theory of Emotion

Explanation: James-Lange: physiological arousal FIRST, then emotion ('we feel sorry because we cry'). Different emotions = different physiological patterns.

AP Psych Tip: *James-Lange: stimulus → arousal → emotion. The body response comes first.*

Example: You see a bear, your heart races, then you feel fear (arousal precedes emotion).

128 Cannon-Bard Theory

Explanation: Cannon-Bard: physiological arousal and emotion occur **SIMULTANEOUSLY** -- the thalamus sends signals to both the cortex (emotion) and body (arousal).

AP Psych Tip: *Cannon-Bard: arousal and emotion at the same time, independent. Arousal patterns are too similar to distinguish emotions (criticism of James-Lange).*

Example: Your heart races **WHILE** you feel fear at the same moment -- not one causing the other (Cannon-Bard).

129 Schachter-Singer Two-Factor Theory

Explanation: Two-factor: emotion = physiological arousal + cognitive **LABEL**. Arousal is general; the label ('fear,' 'excitement') depends on context. Misattribution of arousal occurs.

AP Psych Tip: *Two-factor: arousal + cognitive appraisal. Misattribution: on a swaying bridge, arousal is labeled 'attraction' (Dutton & Aron's bridge study).*

Example: On a shaky suspension bridge, men mislabeled arousal as attraction and called back more (misattribution of arousal).

130 Zajonc, LeDoux & Lazarus: Emotion Debate

Explanation: Zajonc/LeDoux: some emotions bypass cognition (fast, automatic 'low road' -- amygdala before cortex). Lazarus: appraisal (thinking) always precedes emotion. Both have evidence.

AP Psych Tip: *LeDoux's low road: sensory -> thalamus -> amygdala directly (fast fear). Lazarus: cognitive appraisal comes first. Automatic vs conscious routes both exist.*

Example: You flinch at a snake shape before consciously identifying it -- the amygdala's fast low road.

131 Facial Feedback & Emotion

Explanation: Facial feedback hypothesis: facial expressions influence emotion (smiling makes you feel happier; holding a pen in your teeth -- smile -- boosts mood).

AP Psych Tip: *Facial feedback: expression -> emotion. Botox (blocks frowning) can reduce negative emotion -- evidence for facial feedback.*

Example: People rating cartoons while holding a pen in their teeth (forced smile) found them funnier.

132 Display Rules & Cultural Emotion

Explanation: Display rules = cultural norms about which emotions to show and when. Basic emotions (happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, disgust) are universal (Ekman), but expression rules differ by culture.

AP Psych Tip: *Ekman: six basic emotions are recognized cross-culturally. Display rules differ: bowing, masking anger, emotional restraint.*

Example: Japanese and American participants showed the same facial expressions when alone, but Japanese masked negative emotions in public -- display rules.

133 Stress & General Adaptation Syndrome

Explanation: Selye's GAS: alarm (mobilize), resistance (cope), exhaustion (resources depleted -> illness). Stress = the body's response to demands (stressors).

AP Psych Tip: *GAS three stages: alarm, resistance, exhaustion. Chronic stress in exhaustion phase damages health (immunosuppression).*

Example: First week of finals: alarm (adrenaline). Midterms: resistance (coping). Burnout before finals: exhaustion.

134 Stress & Health: Type A/B

Explanation: Type A (competitive, impatient, hostile -- higher heart disease risk, especially hostility) vs Type B (relaxed). Stress hormones (cortisol) and lifestyle link stress to illness.

AP Psych Tip: *Type A hostility predicts heart disease more than Type A competitiveness. Chronic cortisol weakens immunity.*

Example: A hostile, rushed, competitive person (Type A) has elevated heart disease risk compared with an easygoing Type B.

135 Coping & Locus of Control

Explanation: Problem-focused coping (change the stressor) vs emotion-focused coping (manage feelings). Locus of control: internal (I control outcomes) vs external (fate/others control). Learned helplessness = giving up after repeated failure.

AP Psych Tip: *Problem-focused for controllable stressors; emotion-focused for uncontrollable ones. Internal locus = better adjustment; learned helplessness follows uncontrollable aversive events.*

Example: Studying for an exam = problem-focused; venting to a friend = emotion-focused. Dogs inescapably shocked gave up (learned helplessness).

136 Personality: Psychodynamic (Freud)

Explanation: Freud: personality from unconscious conflicts among id (pleasure principle), ego (reality principle), superego (morals). Psychosexual stages (oral, anal, phallic, latency, genital); fixation at a stage shapes personality.

AP Psych Tip: *Id = pleasure, ego = reality, superego = morals. Psychosexual stages: oral, anal, phallic, latency, genital. Fixation = stuck at a stage (oral = smoking, overeating).*

Example: An 'oral personality' (smoking, nail-biting) reflects fixation in the oral stage. The superego produces guilt.

137 Defense Mechanisms

Explanation: Unconscious strategies protecting the ego: repression (bury), regression (retreat to earlier stage), reaction formation (opposite), projection (attribute to others), rationalization (excuses), displacement (redirect), sublimation (channel into acceptable activity).

AP Psych Tip: *Know the common ones: repression, regression, reaction formation, projection, rationalization, displacement, sublimation, denial.*

Example: A rival becomes 'just a friend' and you praise them loudly (reaction formation). Channeling anger into sports = sublimation.

138 Humanistic Personality: Rogers & Maslow

Explanation: Rogers: self-concept (how you see yourself) + unconditional positive regard (acceptance without conditions) = healthy personality; conditional regard creates incongruence and anxiety. Maslow: self-actualization at the top.

AP Psych Tip: *Rogers: unconditional positive regard fosters congruence and growth. Conditional positive regard = conditions of worth = incongruence.*

Example: Parents who accept the child unconditionally (love regardless of grades) foster a healthy self-concept (Rogers).

139 Trait Theories & the Big Five

Explanation: Trait theory: personality = stable traits. Allport (cardinal, central, secondary traits). Big Five (OCEAN): Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism -- supported by cross-cultural research.

AP Psych Tip: *Big Five = OCEAN. Conscientiousness predicts academic/job success; Extraversion = sociability; Neuroticism = emotional instability. Traits are stable but heritable (~50%).*

Example: A person who is organized, reliable, and disciplined scores high on Conscientiousness. OCEAN is the most empirically supported trait model.

140 Social-Cognitive Personality: Bandura & Rotter

Explanation: Social-cognitive theory: personality = interaction of behavior, cognition, and environment (reciprocal determinism, Bandura). Rotter's locus of control. Self-efficacy = belief in your ability.

AP Psych Tip: *Reciprocal determinism: behavior <-> cognition <-> environment. Self-efficacy predicts persistence and performance.*

Example: Believing you can pass the exam (self-efficacy) makes you study more, which improves performance -- reciprocal determinism.

141 Personality Assessment

Explanation: Projective tests (Rorschach inkblots, TAT -- ambiguous stimuli reveal unconscious) lack reliability/validity. Self-report inventories (MMPI-2 -- true/false items, empirically derived) are reliable and standardized.

AP Psych Tip: *MMPI-2 = objective, reliable, standardized. Projective tests (Rorschach, TAT) = subjective, criticized for validity. Know this contrast.*

Example: The MMPI-2 uses true/false items scored objectively; the Rorschach asks 'what do you see?' -- interpretation is subjective.

Unit 8: Clinical Psychology

12-16% of the exam. Psychological disorders, diagnosis, and therapies.

142 Defining Psychological Disorders

- Explanation:** A psychological disorder = deviant, distressing, and dysfunctional behavior/thinking (the '3 D's'). The DSM-5-TR classifies disorders by symptoms; the medical model treats them as illnesses.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Disorder = deviance + distress + dysfunction. DSM-5-TR = diagnostic manual (categorical, symptom-based). Critics note overdiagnosis and labeling effects.*
- Example:** Hearing voices that cause distress and prevent work qualifies as disordered; eccentricity alone (purple hair) does not.

143 Anxiety Disorders

- Explanation:** Anxiety disorders: generalized anxiety disorder (persistent worry), panic disorder (sudden panic attacks), phobias (intense fear of specific objects/situations), social anxiety, agoraphobia (fear of open/public spaces).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Distinguish: GAD = chronic worry; panic = acute attacks; phobia = specific fear; agoraphobia = fear of situations with no escape.*
- Example:** Agoraphobia: fear of leaving home (panic risk in public). Specific phobia: terror of spiders without general anxiety.

144 OCD & Related Disorders

- Explanation:** Obsessive-compulsive disorder: obsessions (recurring thoughts) + compulsions (repetitive behaviors to reduce anxiety). The behaviors temporarily relieve anxiety, reinforcing the cycle.
- AP Psych Tip:** *OCD = obsessions (thoughts) + compulsions (actions). Compulsions are negatively reinforced (relief from anxiety).*
- Example:** Fear of germs (obsession) leads to hand-washing 30 times a day (compulsion) -- temporary relief reinforces the cycle.

145 Trauma & Stressor Disorders: PTSD

- Explanation:** PTSD: after trauma -- intrusive memories, flashbacks, avoidance, hypervigilance, negative mood. Risk factors: severity, history, lack of support. Explains survival responses gone awry.
- AP Psych Tip:** *PTSD = re-experiencing + avoidance + arousal + negative cognition after trauma. Not everyone exposed to trauma develops it.*
- Example:** A veteran startled by loud noises and avoiding crowds months after combat shows PTSD symptoms.

146 Major Depressive Disorder

- Explanation:** MDD: persistent sad mood + loss of interest (anhedonia) for 2+ weeks, with sleep/appetite changes, fatigue, worthlessness, concentration problems. Episodes recur. Leading cause of disability.
- AP Psych Tip:** *MDD = 2+ weeks of depressed mood + anhedonia + physical/cognitive symptoms. Distinguish from normal sadness (duration, impairment).*
- Example:** A person sleeping 14 hours, losing interest in hobbies, and feeling worthless for a month meets MDD criteria.

147 Bipolar Disorder

- Explanation:** Bipolar: alternating manic episodes (elevated mood, high energy, grandiosity, little sleep, risk-taking) and depressive episodes. Bipolar I = full mania; Bipolar II = hypomania + depression. Lithium treats it.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Mania = euphoria, grandiosity, decreased need for sleep, impulsivity. Bipolar = mania + depression cycles; lithium stabilizes mood.*
- Example:** During mania, a person spends savings on impulsive ventures and sleeps 2 hours; weeks later they're deeply depressed.

148 Schizophrenia

- Explanation:** Schizophrenia: psychosis -- hallucinations (false perceptions, often auditory), delusions (false beliefs), disorganized speech/behavior, and negative symptoms (flat affect, withdrawal). Onset in late teens/20s.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Positive symptoms (hallucinations, delusions) = excess; negative (flat affect, avolition) = deficit. Dopamine overactivity implicated; antipsychotics block dopamine.*
- Example:** Hearing voices commanding actions (auditory hallucination) and believing you're being followed (delusion) are positive symptoms.

149 Schizophrenia: Causes

Explanation: Biological: genetics (twin studies), dopamine excess, brain structure differences, prenatal factors. Psychological: stress (diathesis-stress model -- genetic vulnerability + stress triggers disorder).

AP Psych Tip: *Diathesis-stress: genetic predisposition + environmental stress = disorder. Family environment doesn't CAUSE schizophrenia.*

Example: Identical twins of schizophrenic patients have ~50% concordance; a vulnerable teen develops it after major stress (diathesis-stress).

150 Dissociative Disorders

Explanation: Dissociative identity disorder (DID): two+ distinct personalities/identities with memory gaps (formerly multiple personality disorder). Dissociative amnesia: memory loss without physical cause. Controversial diagnosis.

AP Psych Tip: *DID = distinct identities + amnesia; linked to severe childhood trauma (debated). Dissociative amnesia = forgetting without brain damage.*

Example: A person with DID switches between identities and has gaps in memory; some clinicians dispute whether DID is iatrogenic (created by therapy).

151 Somatic Symptom & Illness Anxiety

Explanation: Somatic symptom disorder: physical symptoms with no medical cause, with excessive worry. Illness anxiety disorder (hypochondriasis): fear of having a serious illness despite reassurance. Conversion disorder: neurological symptoms (blindness, paralysis) without neurological cause.

AP Psych Tip: *Somatic = real symptoms, no medical explanation. Conversion = sensory/motor loss without organic cause. Illness anxiety = fear of illness.*

Example: A patient is blind but eye exams are normal (conversion disorder). A patient constantly fears cancer despite negative tests (illness anxiety).

152 Eating Disorders

Explanation: Anorexia nervosa: extreme weight loss, starvation, distorted body image, fear of gaining weight. Bulimia nervosa: binge-purge cycles. Binge-eating disorder: binges without purging. Genetic + sociocultural (thin ideal) factors.

AP Psych Tip: *Anorexia = restriction + distorted body image (highest mortality of mental disorders). Bulimia = binge + purge (often normal weight). Binge-eating = no purge.*

Example: A teen weighing 85 lbs still sees herself as fat (anorexia). A normal-weight student secretly binges and vomits (bulimia).

153 Personality Disorders

Explanation: Personality disorders = rigid, maladaptive traits: cluster A (odd: paranoid, schizoid), cluster B (dramatic: borderline, antisocial, narcissistic), cluster C (anxious: avoidant, dependent, OCD). Antisocial = disregard for others, no remorse.

AP Psych Tip: *Antisocial personality disorder = manipulative, impulsive, no empathy/remorse (psychopathy). Borderline = unstable mood/relationships, fear of abandonment.*

Example: A person who lies, breaks rules, and feels no guilt after harming others fits antisocial personality disorder.

154 Neurodevelopmental: ADHD & Autism

Explanation: ADHD: inattention, hyperactivity, impulsivity -- onset in childhood, persists. Autism spectrum: social communication deficits + restricted/repetitive behaviors and interests. Both are neurodevelopmental (brain-based).

AP Psych Tip: *ADHD = attention + hyperactivity/impulsivity. Autism = social + repetitive patterns. Both start early and are biological, not bad parenting.*

Example: A 9-year-old who can't sit still in class and loses homework constantly may have ADHD. A child who avoids eye contact and repeats phrases may have autism.

155 Stigma & Labeling Effects

Explanation: Labels can create stigma and self-fulfilling prophecies (Rosenhan's 'sane in insane places' study). The biopsychosocial approach reduces blame by showing disorders have biological causes.

AP Psych Tip: *Rosenhan: pseudopatients admitted to psychiatric hospitals were treated as patients -- labeling effects. Labels shape how others (and the self) perceive behavior.*

Example: In Rosenhan's study, real patients noticed the pseudopatients were 'not crazy' but staff didn't -- labeling dominated perception.

156 Psychotherapy Overview

Explanation: Psychotherapy = psychological treatment (talking, behavior change). Biomedical therapy = medication, ECT, psychosurgery. Eclectic = combining approaches. Evidence-based practice = treatments supported by research.

AP Psych Tip: *Psychotherapy vs biomedical: talk vs biological interventions. Most effective treatment combines therapy + medication where indicated.*

Example: CBT for depression (psychotherapy) can be combined with SSRIs (biomedical) -- often more effective than either alone.

157 Psychoanalytic & Psychodynamic Therapy

Explanation: Freud's therapy: free association, dream analysis, transference -- revealing unconscious conflicts. Long-term, insight-oriented. Modern psychodynamic is shorter and more focused.

AP Psych Tip: *Key techniques: free association (say whatever comes), dream analysis (manifest vs latent content), transference (projecting feelings onto therapist).*

Example: A patient free-associates and the therapist interprets slips revealing unconscious conflict; the patient feels anger toward the therapist (transference) that mirrors feelings about a parent.

158 Humanistic Therapies

Explanation: Rogers' client-centered therapy: unconditional positive regard, empathy, active listening, genuineness -- creating a safe space for growth. Goal: self-acceptance and congruence.

AP Psych Tip: *Client-centered = non-directive, empathetic, unconditional positive regard. The client leads; the therapist reflects and accepts.*

Example: A therapist listens without judgment and reflects feelings ('it sounds like you felt unheard') -- unconditional positive regard.

159 Behavioral Therapies

Explanation: Behavioral therapy changes behavior directly: systematic desensitization (phobias: gradual exposure + relaxation), exposure therapy, aversive conditioning, token economies, modeling.

AP Psych Tip: *Systematic desensitization = fear hierarchy + relaxation (counterconditioning). Exposure therapy = facing feared stimuli (habituation). Token economies = operant reinforcement.*

Example: For a spider phobia: relax, then view pictures, then a real spider in a jar (systematic desensitization). A token economy rewards classroom behavior.

160 Cognitive & CBT Therapies

Explanation: Cognitive therapy (Beck): identify and challenge distorted thoughts ('I'm a failure'). Rational-emotive therapy (Ellis): dispute irrational beliefs. CBT combines cognitive restructuring + behavioral techniques -- highly effective for depression, anxiety.

AP Psych Tip: *CBT challenges cognitive distortions (all-or-nothing, catastrophizing) and changes behavior. Beck's cognitive triad: negative views of self, world, future.*

Example: A depressed client learns to test the belief 'I always fail' against evidence (cognitive restructuring) and schedules pleasant activities (behavioral activation).

161 Biomedical Therapies

Explanation: Psychopharmacology: antidepressants (SSRIs raise serotonin), anti-anxiety (benzodiazepines boost GABA), antipsychotics (block dopamine), mood stabilizers (lithium for bipolar). ECT (severe depression, when meds fail); psychosurgery is last-resort.

AP Psych Tip: *Match drugs to disorders: SSRIs -> depression/anxiety; benzodiazepines -> anxiety (GABA); antipsychotics -> schizophrenia (dopamine); lithium -> bipolar. ECT = rapid relief for severe depression.*

Example: Lithium evens out bipolar mood swings. An antipsychotic reduces hallucinations by blocking dopamine receptors.

162 Evaluating Therapies & Outcomes

Explanation: Research shows therapy is effective overall; specific treatments work for specific disorders (CBT for anxiety/depression, exposure for phobias/PTSD). Placebo and spontaneous recovery complicate evaluation.

AP Psych Tip: *Therapy effectiveness is real (dodo bird debate: most therapies work similarly). Evidence-based treatments are matched to diagnoses.*

Example: CBT and exposure therapy outperform general counseling for panic disorder -- evidence-based matching improves outcomes.

Unit 9: Social Psychology

8-10% of the exam. How we think about, influence, and relate to each other.

163 Attribution Theory

Explanation: Attribution = explaining others' behavior. Dispositional (internal: personality) vs situational (external: environment). Fundamental attribution error: overattribute others' behavior to disposition, underestimating situation.

AP Psych Tip: *FAE = blaming personality for others' behavior while excusing your own with situation (actor-observer bias).*

Example: The professor is late: 'he's disorganized' (dispositional) when actually traffic was terrible (situational) -- fundamental attribution error.

164 Attitudes & Persuasion

Explanation: Attitudes = feelings/opinions influencing behavior. Central route persuasion: careful, logical processing (lasting change). Peripheral route: superficial cues (attractiveness, celebrity -- quick, less lasting).

AP Psych Tip: *Central = logic, lasting; peripheral = cues, fleeting. The elaboration-likelihood model describes these two routes.*

Example: A car ad with detailed safety data persuades via the central route; a celebrity endorsement works via the peripheral route.

165 Foot-in-the-Door & Door-in-the-Face

Explanation: Foot-in-the-door: agree to small request first, then more likely to agree to a large one. Door-in-the-face: refuse a large request, then more likely to agree to a smaller one.

AP Psych Tip: *Foot-in-the-door = start small, escalate (commitment consistency). Door-in-the-face = start huge, drop to the real ask.*

Example: Sign a petition (small), then donate (foot-in-the-door). 'Will you volunteer 20 hours?' 'No.' 'How about 2?' (door-in-the-face).

166 Cognitive Dissonance

Explanation: Festinger: discomfort when attitudes and behavior conflict; we reduce it by changing the attitude or rationalizing. Forced compliance: insufficient justification -> more attitude change.

AP Psych Tip: *Dissonance -> attitude change. \$1 vs \$20 study: those paid \$1 (insufficient justification) changed their attitude more than those paid \$20.*

Example: Paid \$1 to lie about a boring task, people concluded the task was fun (dissonance); paid \$20, they kept the attitude 'it was boring.'

167 Conformity: Asch

Explanation: Asch's line studies: participants conformed to a wrong majority ~37% of the time. Conformity increases with group size (up to ~4-5), unanimity, and when responses are public.

AP Psych Tip: *Asch = conformity to a unanimous wrong majority. Conformity drops when one dissenter joins the group.*

Example: In Asch's study, people agreed the obviously wrong line matched because everyone else did -- especially with 4+ confederates.

168 Obedience: Milgram

Explanation: Milgram: participants delivered 'shocks' (fake) to a learner when ordered, up to 450V -- 65% obeyed fully. Obedience increased with authority legitimacy, proximity of authority, and distance from the victim.

AP Psych Tip: *Milgram: 65% fully obeyed. Factors: legitimate authority, prestige, gradual escalation, depersonalization of victim. Ethical concerns (deception, stress).*

Example: In Milgram's study, a 'scientist' in a lab coat urged participants to continue; most delivered the maximum shock despite the learner's screams.

169 Social Facilitation & Social Loafing

Explanation: Social facilitation: presence of others IMPROVES performance on easy/well-learned tasks, HURTS on difficult/novel tasks (arousal). Social loafing: people exert LESS effort in groups (diffusion of responsibility).

AP Psych Tip: *Facilitation: arousal amplifies dominant response (good on easy, bad on hard). Loafing: individual effort is less identifiable in groups.*

Example: A skilled musician plays better with an audience (facilitation); a beginner chokes. Team members slack on a group project (loafing).

170 Deindividuation & Group Polarization

Explanation: Deindividuation: loss of self-awareness in groups/online (anonymity) -> impulsive behavior (mobs, riots). Group polarization: group discussion strengthens the initial attitude (moderates become more extreme).

AP Psych Tip: *Deindividuation = anonymity reduces restraint. Group polarization = discussion amplifies the dominant view. Groupthink = flawed consensus seeking.*

Example: A normally mild-mannered person loots during a riot (deindividuation). A jury leaning guilty becomes more certain after deliberation (polarization).

171 Groupthink & Group Decision Making

Explanation: Groupthink: desire for harmony overrides critical thinking -- flawed decisions (Bay of Pigs, Challenger). Symptoms: illusion of invulnerability, pressure to conform, self-censorship. Prevention: devil's advocate, anonymous votes.

AP Psych Tip: *Groupthink = harmony over accuracy. Prevent with dissent, outside experts, anonymous feedback.*

Example: NASA managers ignored engineer warnings before Challenger because consensus and pressure dominated -- groupthink.

172 Bystander Effect & Diffusion of Responsibility

Explanation: Bystander effect: more witnesses = less help (Kitty Genovese). Causes: diffusion of responsibility, pluralistic ignorance (no one acts, so no one reacts), evaluation apprehension.

AP Psych Tip: *Bystander effect: help is LESS likely with more people. Helping increases when alone, when the victim is clearly in danger, and when someone takes initiative.*

Example: A person collapses in a crowded street; everyone assumes someone else will call 911 -- diffusion of responsibility.

173 Helping & Altruism

Explanation: Altruism = helping without personal gain. Social exchange theory: help when benefits exceed costs. Empathy-altruism hypothesis: genuine empathy produces selfless helping. Reciprocity norm and social responsibility norm motivate help.

AP Psych Tip: *Empathy-altruism: empathy drives true altruism. The reciprocity norm: help those who help you. Social responsibility: help those who depend on you.*

Example: A bystander jumps into a river to save a stranger (altruism, empathy-driven). Returning a favor because they helped you = reciprocity.

174 Prejudice & Stereotypes

Explanation: Prejudice = negative attitude toward a group (affective). Stereotype = generalized belief (cognitive). Discrimination = unequal treatment (behavioral). Explicit (conscious) vs implicit (automatic) bias.

AP Psych Tip: *Prejudice (attitude) -> discrimination (behavior); stereotypes are the cognitive component. Implicit bias operates automatically (IAT measures it).*

Example: Believing 'older workers are slow' = stereotype. Disliking them = prejudice. Refusing to hire them = discrimination.

175 Ingroup/Outgroup & Social Identity

Explanation: Ingroup = 'us' (favoritism); outgroup = 'them' (often devalued). Ingroup bias: favor own group even with minimal criteria (Robbers Cave). Outgroup homogeneity effect: 'they all look alike.'

AP Psych Tip: *Ingroup bias forms with minimal groups (Tajfel). Sherif's Robbers Cave: competition created hostility; superordinate goals reduced it.*

Example: Campers at Robbers Cave favored their own group immediately; shared goals (fixing the water supply) ended the conflict.

176 Social Identity Theory

Explanation: Tajfel: self-esteem comes partly from group membership. We boost our groups (and self) by favoring ingroup and viewing outgroup negatively.

AP Psych Tip: *Social identity = self-concept from group membership. Ingroup favoritism boosts self-esteem.*

Example: Fans feel personal pride when their team wins ('we won!') -- identification with the group.

177 Just-World Phenomenon & Blaming the Victim

- Explanation:** Just-world hypothesis: people get what they deserve -- blaming victims ('she was asking for it') to preserve the belief that the world is fair.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Just-world = the world is fair, so victims must have caused their fate. Protects the belief in a controllable world.*
- Example:** Blaming a robbery victim for 'walking alone at night' reflects the just-world bias.
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178 Aggression: Causes

- Explanation:** Aggression influenced by biology (amygdala, testosterone, genetics) and environment (frustration-aggression hypothesis, social learning, heat, media modeling, deindividuation).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Frustration-aggression: frustration increases aggression. Social learning: observing aggression (media, models) increases it (Bobo doll).*
- Example:** Hot temperatures correlate with more violent crime; children exposed to violent media show more aggression (modeling).
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179 Attraction & Relationships

- Explanation:** Attraction factors: proximity (mere exposure effect -- familiarity breeds liking), physical attractiveness (matching hypothesis), similarity (attitudes, values), reciprocity (we like those who like us).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Proximity + mere exposure, similarity, and reciprocity predict attraction. Physical attractiveness matters early; similarity sustains relationships.*
- Example:** Office neighbors become friends (proximity). We like people who share our values (similarity) and who like us back (reciprocity).
-

180 Love: Sternberg's Triangular Theory

- Explanation:** Sternberg: love = intimacy (closeness) + passion (desire) + commitment. Combinations: liking (intimacy), infatuation (passion), empty love (commitment), romantic (intimacy + passion), companionate (intimacy + commitment), consummate (all three).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Consummate love = intimacy + passion + commitment (rare, ideal). Companionate love (intimacy + commitment) characterizes long marriages.*
- Example:** An old couple with deep closeness and commitment but low passion has companionate love. A whirlwind romance with only passion is infatuation.
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181 Conflict & Cooperation: Game Theory

- Explanation:** Social dilemmas (prisoner's dilemma, tragedy of the commons): individual rationality leads to collective harm. Cooperation emerges with communication, trust, and superordinate goals (Sherif).
- AP Psych Tip:** *Prisoner's dilemma shows why self-interest can hurt everyone; repeated interaction and trust enable cooperation.*
- Example:** Two firms each cut prices to compete (defect) and both lose -- prisoner's dilemma. Communication lets them cooperate.
-

182 Culture & Social Behavior

- Explanation:** Culture shapes conformity (collectivist cultures conform more), self-concept (independent vs interdependent), and display rules. Individualist cultures emphasize uniqueness; collectivist emphasize harmony.
- AP Psych Tip:** *Collectivist cultures show higher conformity (Asch replications in Japan/Norway). Self-concept differs: independent (West) vs interdependent (East).*
- Example:** Japanese participants conformed more in Asch-type studies than Americans -- cultural norms of harmony.
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What's Next?

You have now reviewed every unit of the AP Psychology course. The concepts that matter most are the ones you almost knew -- go back to the Table of Contents, find the units you marked, and reread just those tip lines. Two weeks out, do a rapid pass over the entire guide; the day before, review only the tip lines. On free-response day, define each term you use and apply it to the scenario -- application points are where most students lose them.

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