



AP[®] Psychology

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Psychology Course Overview

The AP Psychology course introduces students to the systematic and scientific study of human behavior and mental processes. While considering the studies that have shaped the field, students explore and apply psychological theories, key concepts, and phenomena associated with major units of study, including biological bases of behavior, cognition, development, learning, social psychology, personality, and mental and physical health. Throughout the course, students apply psychological concepts and employ psychological research methods and data interpretation to evaluate claims, consider evidence, and effectively communicate ideas.

The AP Psychology course is equivalent to an introductory college-level psychology course.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for AP Psychology. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and to express themselves clearly in writing.

AP Psychology Course Content

The course content is organized into units of study that provide a suggested sequence for the course. These units comprise the content and conceptual understandings that colleges and universities typically expect students to be proficient in to qualify for college credit and/or placement.

- Biological Bases of Behavior
- Cognition
- Development and Learning
- Social Psychology and Personality
- Mental and Physical Health

AP Psychology Science Practices

The science practices and skills are central to the study and practice of psychology. Students should develop and apply the described skills on a regular basis over the span of the course.

- Concept Application
 - ♦ Apply psychological perspectives, theories, concepts, and research findings.
- Research Methods and Design
 - ♦ Evaluate qualitative and quantitative research methods and study designs.
- Data Interpretation
 - ♦ Evaluate qualitative and quantitative research methods and study designs.
- Argumentation
 - ♦ Develop and justify psychological arguments using evidence.

AP Psychology Exam Structure

AP PSYCHOLOGY EXAM: 2 HOURS AND 40 MINUTES

Assessment Overview

The AP Psychology Exam assesses student understanding of the practices and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours and 40 minutes long and includes 75 multiple-choice questions and 2 free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple Choice | 75 Questions | 90 Minutes | 66.7% of Exam Score

- Assesses the all content and Practices 1, 2, and 3 of the course.

Section II: Free-response | 2 Questions | 70 Minutes | 33.3% of Exam Score

- Question 1 is the Article Analysis Question (AAQ). Students will be provided with 1 summarized peer-reviewed source and respond to six questions parts to earn up to 7 points. They will have 25 minutes, including a 10-minute reading period, to complete this question. Practices 2, 3, and 4 are assessed.
- Question 2 is the Evidence-Based Question (EBQ). Students will be provided with 3 summarized peer-reviewed sources and respond to 3 question parts to earn up to 7 points. They will have 45 minutes, including a 15-minute reading period, to complete this question. Practices 1 and 4 are assessed.

Exam Components

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

A researcher noticed that Ryan, a young child, learned to write his name better when he was given the opportunity to respond to people around him. Ryan appeared to learn the most when more experienced people assisted him. Which of the following concepts best describes this pattern of development?

- (A) Zone of proximal development
- (B) Egocentrism
- (C) Autonomy
- (D) Object permanence

Correct answer: A

Sample Free-Response Question

QUESTION 1: ARTICLE ANALYSIS QUESTION (AAQ)

Your response to the question should be provided in six parts: A, B, C, D, E, and F. Write the response to each part of the question in complete sentences. Use appropriate psychological terminology in your response.

Using the source provided, respond to all parts of the question.

- (A) **Identify** the research method used in the study.
- (B) **State** the operational definition of executive functioning.
- (C) **Describe** the meaning of the differences in the means for the immediate recall task between the multivitamin group and the placebo group.
- (D) **Identify** one ethical guideline described in the study. **Describe** one way the researchers in the study applied this ethical guideline.
- (E) **Explain** the extent to which the research findings may or may not be generalizable using specific and relevant evidence from the study.
- (F) **Explain** how at least one of the research findings supports or refutes the researchers' hypothesis that taking a multivitamin slows cognitive decline in later life.

Source adapted from The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Reprinted from The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 118, Yeung, L-K., Alschuler, D. M., Wall, M., Luttman-Gibson, H., Copeland, T., Hale, C., Sloan, R. P., Sesso, H. D., Manson, J. E., Brickman, A. M. Multivitamin supplementation improves memory in older adults: A randomized clinical trial, pages 273–282, Copyright 2023, with permission from Elsevier.

Please refer to the *AP Psychology Course and Exam Description* (2025) to access the full summarized peer-reviewed source and scoring rubric used for this sample AAQ.