



AP Psychology Summer Reading and Assignments

You will have two options this summer. Whichever assignment you choose will be due on the first day of school. You only have to choose one.

- 1) Assignment #1: "What is a Psychological 'Perspective'?" (directions below)
- 2) Assignment #2: Read one of the following books (or any book on psychology that is approved by the teacher) and write a reflection (described below):

Dweck, Carol *Mindset*

Gladwell, Malcolm *Outliers*

Assignment Choice #1:

"What is a Psychological 'Perspective?' (summer assignment)

Over the course of the year, we will be studying a number of different "perspectives" in the field of psychology. A psychological perspective is a school of thought or a philosophy which would guide someone's interpretation of an individual's mental illness or behavior. Take the subject of aggression, for example. Someone working from a "biological" perspective would focus on how the brain and nervous system are working in combination to produce aggressive behavior. Another researcher working from a "behavioral" perspective would instead investigate how aspects of the subject's environment have reinforced, supported, or encouraged aggressive actions. Yet another psychologist working in a "psychodynamic" (Freudian) perspective would seek to understand how the subject's aggression is rooted in past experiences and unconscious motives. This assignment is designed to familiarize you with a number of perspectives we will be studying in this course.



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Assignment: Psychological Perspectives

1. Research your choice of four of the psychological perspectives (listed below) using either print or online sources. If using websites, be sure they are valid and trustworthy. You must cite each of your sources in APA (American Psychological Association) format. Help with proper APA formatting may be found at this [link](#).
2. Present the definition of each of the four perspectives found in your source(s). This will be your "official" definition.
3. Define each of the perspectives again, but this time in your own original words (assignment will be uploaded to Turnitin.com). Don't worry about using technical language. Just do your best to express your understanding of that school of thought.
4. List any significant psychologists associated with these perspectives that you come across in your research:
 - Behavioral (**Different from the "Behavioral Genetics")
 - Biological (Neuroscientific)
 - Cognitive
 - Evolutionary
 - Humanistic
 - Psychodynamic (Freudian)
 - Social-Cultural
5. In your own original wording, write out an example of how each perspective might apply to a real-life problem or situation. This will likely require you to engage in a bit of research in order to fully understand that school of thought. Don't worry about 100% accuracy. I'm just looking to see that you have a basic understanding of the applications of these schools of thought.

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***See below for an example of how each of your four entries should be structured.

Behavioral Genetics (you aren't assigned this one)

OFFICIAL DEFINITION: A field of study which focuses on the role of genetics in human behavior. It examines behavior patterns which are familial and hereditary in origin. It studies behavior traits and their genetic mechanism. Also called behavioral genetics.

SOURCE: What is Behavior Genetics? (n.d.). In *Psychology Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://psychologydictionary.org/behavior-genetics/>

MY DEFINITION: Behavioral genetics tries to explain human behavior by understanding what parts of it are based on our inherited genes versus being brought about by the environments in which we live. It basically focuses on the question of "nature vs. nurture."

SIGNIFICANT NAMES: John Locke, Sir Francis Galton, Charles Darwin, Thomas Bouchard

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: Behavioral geneticists spend a lot of time studying twin siblings. Of greatest interest are identical twins who were separated at birth and raised in significantly different home environments. This allows them to compare the twins and determine the extent to which a shared genetic makeup combined with different life experiences create similar or different individuals, all for the purpose of seeking to settle the "nature vs. nurture" debate.

That's it! Do this for four perspectives listed below and be ready to turn it in by the FIRST DAY OF CLASS. Here is the list of perspectives:

1. Behavioral (***Different from the "Behavioral Genetics" example above)
2. Biological (Neuroscientific)

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3. Cognitive
4. Evolutionary
5. Humanistic
6. Psychodynamic (Freudian)
7. Social-Cultural

Assignment Choice #2: Reading

1) Choosing what to read: You may read either book on the list.

2) Reading: Take notes as you read. They will not be turned in and need not be formal. Be guided by the requirements for the written assignment below (which you should examine before you start). Good notes will save you time when you turn your attention to writing.

3) Written Assignment:

A. Write three "reflections" which convey your thoughts on specific passages in the book. Each of the three reflections should be at most a page in length (taken altogether, two or three pages in total). Begin with a quote or a synopsis of an issue taken from the book, one that gets you thinking. Then create a well-written response, developing your ideas carefully. Your responses can include critiques, questions, disagreements, ideas you like (explaining why), comparisons to other things you have read, connections to your personal experiences, etc. Have fun with this, but develop your thoughts and express them clearly. This exercise is designed to get you thinking more deeply as you read (and to give me as your teacher a sense of who you are and how you think). Credit will relate to the quality of your writing (and not the views you express). It would be a good idea, as you read, to journal several possible reflections, i.e. to take a note of passages that seem interesting, and your reasons for thinking so. Then choose the best three to write up formally when you are finished with the book.

B. Write a critical review of the book as a whole. This review should be in the form of a brief essay (one page). A critical review should briefly introduce the book, summarizing the author's main argument and key points. It should evaluate how well the book makes its argument: the quality of writing, reasoning, evidence, etc. And it should express your thoughts as a reader on the value of the book, to you and/or to other readers. Ultimately, you are trying to decide whether to recommend the book and, if so, to what kind of reader, for what purpose, and with what reservations. It is thus helpful if you go beyond broad generalizations and empty praise or criticism. Elaborate; explain; give specific examples. If someone



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reading your review can make a well-informed judgment about the book, you've done your job well. Credit will relate to the quality of your writing (and to repeat, not the views you express). As a student new to psychology, it is understood that your background knowledge is limited, so you should base the review on your perspective as a layperson (not an expert). But your review will suggest what you have learned by reading the book, so be sure to give specific information to illustrate your thinking. Be sure to edit your writing carefully so that your thoughts are well organized and clearly expressed (in grammatically correct sentences, of course). Have some fun with this. Try to make the book come alive.

Due date: Your written assignment is due the first day of class and may be submitted using Google Classroom or printed out on the first day.