



Psychology Starter Pack





Holiday Reading List

Engaging with literature is an important part of studying at A Level. If you love to read – our teachers and students have put together some recommendations that you could dive into over summer.

Bad Science by Ben Goldacre

"This book helps the average reader break down what might seem like complex science that surrounds us every day. Anti-aging creams? Detox Diets? – Do these things really work? Dr Ben Goldacre puts the advertising companies on high alert as he sets out to disprove some of their increasingly sensational claims, with science!"

Jigsaw Man by Paul Brittain

"Forensic psychologist Paul Britton asks himself four questions when he is faced with a crime scene: what happened: who is the victim: how was it done, and why? Only when he has the answers to these questions can he address the fifth: who is responsible? – This book is a detailed re-telling of a gruesome career in forensic psychology, told by the man himself."

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell

"This is one of the most important books of the 20th Century, and it's still spookily relevant today. Orwell's masterpiece inspired so many things in pop culture, from The Matrix movies to Dr. Who – and it forces us to consider how many freedoms we'd be willing to sacrifice in the same of safety, and just how important it is to question authority and stand up for what you believe in."

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time by Mark Haddon

"This is an award-winning book told from the perspective of a boy with autism. It gives us a valuable insight into what it is like to see the world differently, and how difficult it can be for some people to overcome what might seem like trivial tests for everybody else. It's been adapted into a play, and continues to sell millions of copies around the world. Essential!"

Netflix Streaming Specials

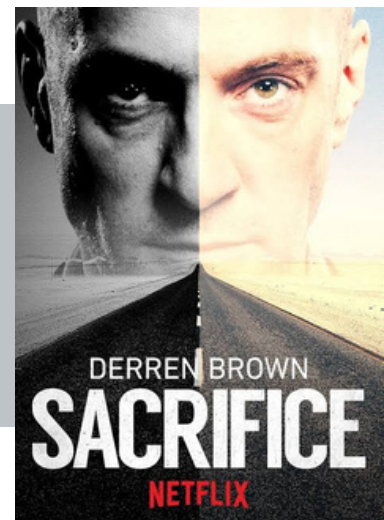
If you prefer to binge-watch the latest Netflix series then you will find some entertaining streaming content that links very well with the Psychology A Level specification. Share your thoughts with us, Is there a great show we've missed that everyone is talking about?



Mindhunter (Netflix): Catching a criminal often requires the authorities to get inside the villain's mind to figure out how he thinks. That's the job of FBI agents Holden Ford and Bill Tench. They attempt to understand and catch serial killers by studying their damaged psyches. Along the way, the agents pioneer the development of modern serial-killer profiling. This links really strongly to the specification, where we study Forensic Psychology in Year 2.

Derren Brown 'Sacrifice

Illusionist Derren Brown concocts a psychological experiment in which he tries to manipulate an ordinary person into taking a bullet for a stranger.



A Beautiful Mind (Google Play Store): A human drama inspired by events in the life of John Forbes Nash Jr. From the heights of notoriety to the depths of depravity, Nash Jr. experienced it all. A mathematical genius, he made an astonishing discovery early in his career and stood on the brink of international acclaim. But the handsome and arrogant Nash soon found himself on a painful and harrowing journey of self-discovery.

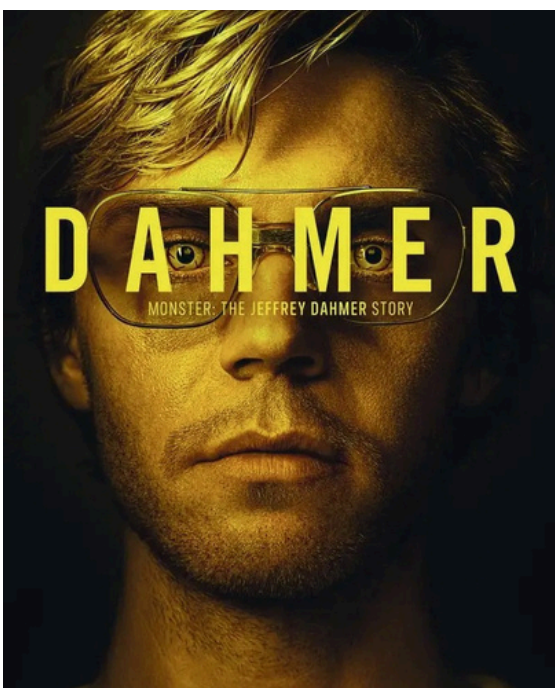
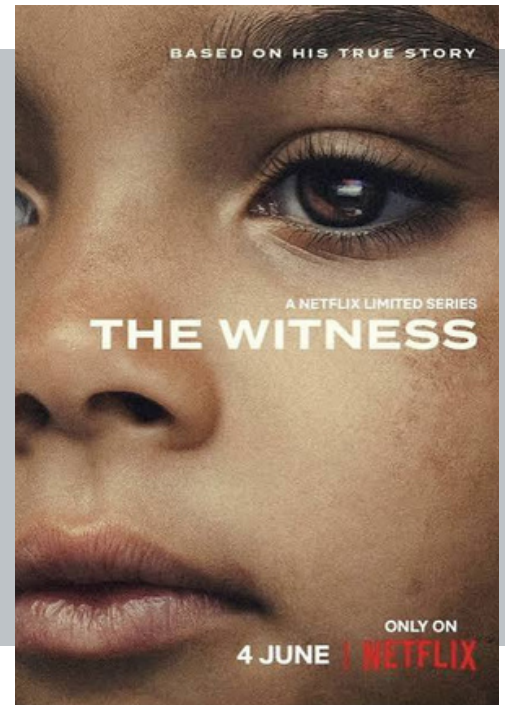


Behind Her Eyes

Behind Her Eyes follows the story of Louise, a single mother, whose world is thrown off kilter when she begins an affair with her new boss, David, and matters take an even stranger turn when she's drawn into an unlikely friendship with his wife, Adele. What starts as an unconventional love triangle soon becomes a dark, psychological tale of suspense and twisted revelations, as Louise finds herself caught in a dangerous web of secrets where nothing and no one is what they seem.

The Witness

The Witness follows the heartbreaking aftermath of a brutal crime where a traumatized toddler is left as the sole observer of his mother's murder. The show powerfully mirrors core concepts in psychology by illustrating how extreme trauma, high-stakes police pressure, and cognitive developmental limitations can profoundly compromise the reliability and retrieval of eyewitness testimony. ' If you need it to be shorter you could say 'The Witness follows a traumatized toddler who is the sole observer of his mother's murder. The show powerfully mirrors psychological research by exposing how intense trauma, developmental limitations, and police pressure can completely compromise eyewitness testimony.



Dahmer

Across more than a decade, 17 teen boys and young men were murdered by convicted killer Jeffrey Dahmer. How did he evade arrest for so long?

Streaming Specials



- ANTISOCIAL
- ANXIETY
- BEHAVIOR
- CASE STUDY
- COGNITIVE

- CORRELATION
- DUALISM
- HORMONES
- HYPNOSIS
- IDENTITY

- ANTISOCIAL
- ANXIETY
- BEHAVIOR
- CASE STUDY
- COGNITIVE

- ANTISOCIAL
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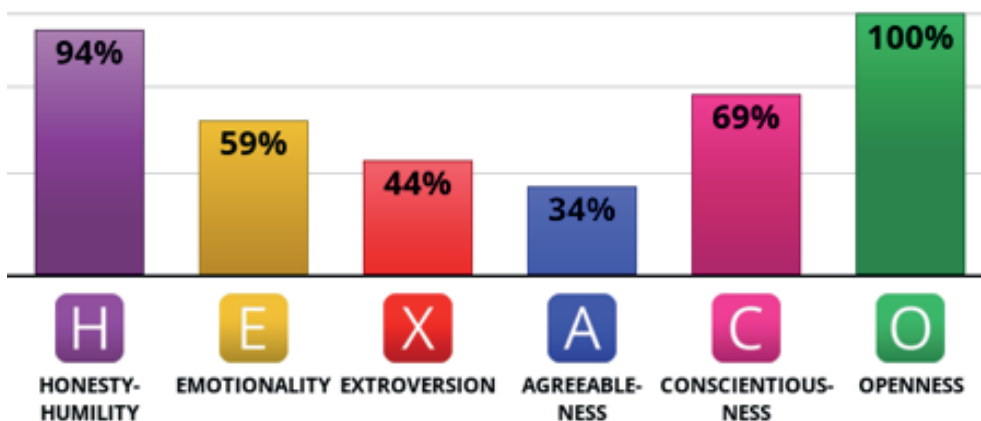
Personality Test

Personality testing is a complex and interesting area of Psychological research. You've probably taken a personality test on social media platforms for entertainment purposes (e.g. Which Game of Thrones character are you?) – but there's plenty of resources out there that have been developed by professional Psychologists with the aim of gaining an insight into our individual character and personality. Have a go at the HEXACO personality inventory, and make a note of your most extreme traits (very high or very low scores).

<http://hexaco.org/hexaco-online>

Highest Scores:

Lowest Scores:



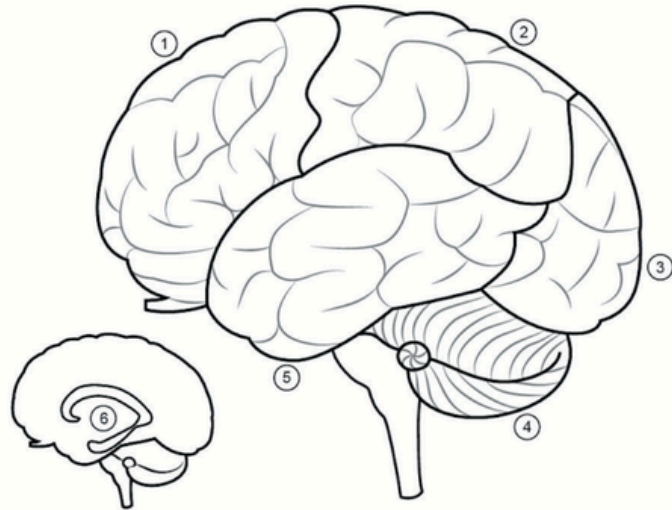
How accurate do you think the results are? Did they confirm something you already knew about yourself or reveal something you hadn't realised?





What's Your Brain Doing?

The regions of the brain have been labelled. Your challenge is to write the correct name for each region and describe what they do. If you need some help, visit <https://askabiologist.asu.edu/brain-regions>.



1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

4. _____

 5. _____

 6. _____

Psychological Research Task

Psychology is underpinned by a substantial amount of research. Your task is to research a psychological study and describe the following features:

	KEY RESEARCH – NAME
AIM	The aim was to investigate...
PROCEDURES	Research method – Sample – What happened?
FINDINGS	1. 2. 3.
CONCLUSIONS	The findings suggest that...

Stuck for ideas? Why don't you research 'the most famous' psychological studies, 'the most unethical' psychological studies or a piece of research you are likely to study on your A Level programme. Don't just stop at one, research as many as you like!

Bring this along to your first psychology lesson - your teachers will love to hear the studies you have found.

The Red Herring

Read through the 6 studies below and identify which study you think is the 'red herring' i.e. the fake study.

Research 1 - Nim Chimpsky



There has been some debate concerning whether, as humans, we develop language because our brains are hardwired to do so or whether the use of language, with grammatical structure, is learned. In order to try to resolve this debate Psychologist Herbert Terrace carried out a study to find out whether a chimpanzee exposed to a human environment could acquire language like a human. The chimp who was raised by a surrogate mother (for the investigation was removed from his mother at 2 weeks of age and

placed in a human home) was named Nim Chimsky. The chimp was treated like a human and brought up alongside seven human siblings. He was taught sign language in order to communicate by rewarding him every time he used signs correctly to communicate. By the age of 4 years it was documented that the chimp had acquired a vocabulary of over 100 signs which had been used in 20,000 combinations in communication with the humans around him.

Research 2 - Project Pigeon



American Psychologist B.F Skinner, is well known for his research into the effects of rewards and punishments on behaviour. He also attempted to develop a pigeon-guided missile during World War II.

At the front of the missile, a lens projected an image of the target to a screen inside. The pigeons had been trained to peck the target image and were placed inside the missile. As long as the pigeon kept pecking the centre of the screen, the missile fly straight, but pecks off centre would cause the screen to tilt, which would then, via a connection to the missile's flight controls, cause the missile to change course.

The National Defense Research Committee contributed \$25,000 to the research. The program was cancelled on October 8, 1944, because the military did not feel it was a high priority. Project Pigeon was revived by the Navy in 1948 as "Project Orcon"; it was later cancelled in 1953 when electronic guidance systems' took over.

Research 3 - Obedient Nurses



Hofling (1966) carried out a field experiment in a hospital setting. The study aimed to find out whether a group of nurses would obey an order from an authority figure (a doctor) even if this action was against the rules and meant they could lose their job. In the study, 22 nurses received a telephone call from a man who identified himself as "Dr Smith" (an investigator, pretending to be a doctor). Dr Smith asked each nurse (individually) to administer a dose of "10mg" of "Astroten" to a patient. This was not a real drug but a bottle had been made and labelled and placed in the drugs cupboard.

In the phone call the "Doctor" said he would write up the paperwork to authorise the treatment later on but that the nurse should administer the drug straight away. The dosage was twice the recommended dose printed on the bottle, and the rules stated that an order over the telephone - and from a doctor who was not familiar to them - was not allowed. Despite numerous reasons to refuse, only 1 out of the 22 refused to carry out the order.

Research 4 - Gendered Numbers

Wilkie and Bodenhausen conducted an experiment where they showed participants photos of babies and asked them to determine for each photo the likelihood that the baby was male. They found that when a baby photo was paired with the number 1, people were much more likely to think the baby was male.

In a separate study, the researchers had participants rate the masculinity and femininity of the numbers themselves. People readily rated the number 1, as well as other odd numbers, as being more masculine. They also rated the number 2, and other even numbers, as appearing more feminine. This last finding was replicated with a sample from India which suggests that this is consistent across different cultures.

Research 5 - Attachments



Hazan and Shaver (1987) published a questionnaire in a newspaper asking people to write in and describe their experiences in romantic relationships and their relationship with their parents during early childhood. They did this by choosing statements that they felt best described these experiences. The researchers analysed the responses that were sent in to them.

Those responders who described their childhood relationships as positive and secure also expressed healthy views of adult romantic relationships. For example, they said they believed in true love, found it easy to trust others and were confident that they were a lovable person. People who described their early parental relationships negatively, however, were more sceptical of the existence of "true love" and tended to be mistrusting of others.

Research 6 - The power of Facebook



Radley (2006) carried out a study into the impact of the use of social networking sites on psychopathic tendencies. The researchers wanted to test whether communicating with people via Facebook, rather than face to face, might be decreasing our ability to empathise with others (feel other people's emotions) as there are less cues available (e.g. tone of voice, facial expression) to detect the emotional state of others online.

Psychopaths are unable to feel empathy, so spending lots of time using social networking sites might lead to an increase in psychopaths and potentially more serial killers in society as a result. A group of teenage volunteers, who regularly use Facebook, underwent brain scans whilst using Facebook for 30 minutes. The activity of the empathy centres of the brain were compared with a control group of teenagers who never, or rarely, use social networks whilst using Facebook for the same period of time. The researchers found that those who used Facebook regularly showed less activity in their empathy brain centres than the control group. Radley concluded that Facebook might create a generation of Psychopaths and that further research was needed in this area to determine whether warnings should be placed on the site in the future.

