



VCE PSYCHOLOGY 2005–2008: UNIT 1 SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

This sample course outline represents one teaching and learning sequence for Unit 1.

Week	Area of Study	Key knowledge	Key Skills	Possible activities and assessment tasks
1	1. Introduction to psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematic study of behaviour and mental processes distinction between psychology and psychiatry and the diverse fields of psychology 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> guest speaker – psychologist and psychiatrist to highlight similarities and differences collecting job advertisements for specialist fields of psychologists and comparing job descriptions
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> historical development of psychology – Wundt, James, Ebbinghaus, Binet, Watson 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop an annotated poster or table to compare the approach and contributions of the theorists
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> steps in psychological research reliability and validity in psychological research experimental design - independent and dependent variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe research methods in psychological research recognise the importance of reliability and validity in psychological research use examples from research studies to identify and explain the differences between IVs and DVs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the steps of a psychological research study from information provided in a research abstract ERA using the scientific method – e.g., evaluating astrological descriptions of personality use zodiac predictions to highlight lack of reliability and validity and contrast with psychological research students identify IVs and DVs in research proposals

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4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethical principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe ethical principles applied to the conduct of research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present research abstracts, flawed in their dealing with ethics; students identify ethical concerns based on APS guidelines
5	2. Social relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • characteristics of prosocial /helping behaviour • factors influencing prosocial behaviour, including situational factors • qualitative and quantitative data • descriptive and inferential statistics in the study of social behaviour, including line graphs, box and whiskas plots, scatter plots, histograms and frequency distributions (polygons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify factors influencing prosocial behaviour • collect quantitative data and use it to determine mean, median, mode • use and interpret graphical representation of data in psychological research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERA – influence of number of bystanders on helping, use of quantitative descriptive statistics, such as mean , median and mode and graphical representation of data collected
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing prosocial behaviour, including social norms – reciprocity principle, social responsibility norm, personal factors (empathy, mood, competence) • altruism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify factors influencing prosocial behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary and evaluation of research by Daniel Batson (1985) on empathy and helping • students write and role play their own everyday scenario to highlight one of the factors that influences prosocial behaviour
7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors influencing reluctance to help, for example, diffusion of responsibility, audience inhibition, social influence, cost-benefit analysis 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • table summarising the effects of the various factors that influence prosocial behaviour

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8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> characteristics of anti-social behaviour aggression 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summary of factors influencing antisocial behaviour
9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bullying, harassment effect of group influences to change behaviour 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annotated poster to illustrate the different kinds of bullying, its causes and gender differences in bullying ERA – effects of social influence on volunteering
10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> peer groups, peer pressure and risk-taking behaviour status and power within groups – Zimbardo experiment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describing and analysing data used in a research study on risk taking behaviour, such as Gullone & Moore (2000) role Plays to illustrate one of the kinds of power used in groups Summary of Research Design – Zimbardo (1970)
11		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> factors affecting conformity – Asch (1951), Smith and Bond (1998); OR factors affecting obedience – Milgram (1963), Kilham & Mann (1974) ethical principles related to studies of conformity or obedience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use evidence to explain when conformity or obedience is likely to occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> summary of research findings of two related studies essay identifying the characteristics of prosocial and antisocial behaviour and evaluate factors that influence them debate about the ethics used in one of the listed research studies
12	3. Development of individual behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> research methods used to study perceptual skills infants' perceptual abilities using two different research studies, such as Gibson and Walk (1960) and Campos et al (1992) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> compare one historical and one recent research method used to study the development of perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> design an experiment to test a perceptual ability in an infant using one of the research methods used by psychologist to study perceptual skills in infants table to compare and contrast the research methods used to study development of perception in the Gibson & Walk (1960) study and the Campos et al (1992)

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13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piaget’s four stage theory of cognitive development, including assimilation, accommodation and the key cognitive accomplishments at each stage 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ERA – Testing Piaget’s theory • develop an appropriate learning activity for a student at each of Piaget’s four stages
14		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implications of sample size and population on research conclusions • evaluation of Piaget’s theory in light of recent research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use secondary data to explain the effects of sample size on research conclusions in studies on human development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of secondary data using the summary of a research study as the data and questions to elicit information about the effect of sample size on research conclusions • summarise the criticisms of Piaget’s theory
15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • variations in self esteem as a function of age and gender • relationship between motor, perceptual, cognitive and social development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify factors that influence self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a timeline to summarise the relationship between self-esteem and age • in a table, summarise the relationship between self-esteem and gender • develop a concept map to show the relationship between motor, perceptual, cognitive and social development
16	EXAM REVISION			