

# VCE Psychology

## *Exam Planner*

*Your guide for exam goal-setting,  
preparation and success.*



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## Subject: Psychology

EXAM DATE .....

GOAL .....

Topic: How does the nervous system enable psychological functioning?	Do I have it in my notes?	Note-making deadline	Memorising deadline
The roles of different divisions of the nervous system (central and peripheral nervous systems and their associated sub-divisions) in responding to, and integrating and coordinating with, sensory stimuli received by the body			
The distinction between conscious and unconscious responses by the nervous system to sensory stimuli, including the role of the spinal reflex			
The role of the neuron (dendrites, axon, myelin and axon terminals) as the primary cell involved in the reception and transmission of information across the synapse (excluding details related to signal transduction)			
The role of neurotransmitters in the transmission of neural information between neurons (lock-and-key process) to produce excitatory effects (as with glutamate) or inhibitory effects (as with gamma-amino butyric acid [GABA])			
The effects of chronic changes to the functioning of the nervous system due to interference to neurotransmitter function, as illustrated by the role of dopamine in Parkinson's disease.			
Sources of stress (eustress and distress) including daily pressures, life events, acculturative stress, major stress and catastrophes that disrupt whole communities			
Models of stress as a biological process, with reference to Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome of alarm reaction (shock/counter shock), resistance and exhaustion, including the 'fight-flight-freeze' response and the role of cortisol			
Models of stress as a psychological process, with reference to Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (stages of primary and secondary appraisal)			
Context-specific effectiveness, coping flexibility and use of particular strategies (exercise and approach and avoidance strategies) for coping with stress.			

Topic: How do people learn and remember	Do I have it in my notes?	Note-making deadline	Memorising deadline
Neural plasticity and changes to connections between neurons (including long-term potentiation and long-term depression) as the fundamental mechanisms of memory formation that leads to learning			
The role of neurotransmitters and neurohormones in the neural basis of memory and learning (including the role of glutamate in synaptic plasticity and the role of adrenaline in the consolidation of emotionally arousing experiences).			
Classical conditioning as a three-phase process (before conditioning, during conditioning and after conditioning) that results in the involuntary association between a neutral stimulus and unconditioned stimulus to produce a conditioned response, including stimulus generalisation, stimulus discrimination, extinction and spontaneous recovery			
Operant conditioning as a three-phase model (antecedent, behaviour, consequence) involving reinforcers (positive and negative) and punishment (including response cost) that can be used to change voluntary behaviours, including stimulus generalisation, stimulus discrimination and spontaneous recovery (excluding schedules of reinforcement)			
Observational learning as a method of social learning, particularly in children, involving attention, retention, reproduction, motivation and reinforcement			
The 'Little Albert' experiment as illustrating how classical conditioning can be used to condition an emotional response, including ethical implications of the experiment.			
The multi-store model of memory (Atkinson-Shiffrin) with reference to the function, capacity and duration of sensory, short-term and long-term memory			
Interactions between specific regions of the brain (cerebral cortex, hippocampus, amygdala and cerebellum) in the storage of long-term memories, including implicit and explicit memories.			
Methods to retrieve information from memory or demonstrate the existence of information in memory, including recall, recognition, relearning and reconstruction			
The effects of brain trauma on areas of the brain associated with memory and neurodegenerative diseases, including brain surgery, anterograde amnesia and Alzheimer's disease			
The factors influencing a person's ability and inability to remember information, including context and state dependent cues, maintenance and elaborative rehearsal and serial position effect			
The reconstruction of memories as evidence for the fallibility of memory, with reference to Loftus' research into the effect of leading questions on eye-witness testimonies			

Topic: How do levels of consciousness affect mental processes and behaviour?	Do I have it in my notes?	Note-making deadline	Memorising deadline
Consciousness as a psychological construct that varies along a continuum, broadly categorised into normal waking consciousness and altered states of consciousness (naturally occurring and induced)			
The measurement of physiological responses to indicate different states of consciousness, including electroencephalograph (EEG), electromyograph (EMG), electro-oculograph (EOG) and other techniques to investigate consciousness (measurement of speed and accuracy on cognitive tasks, subjective reporting of consciousness, including sleep diaries, and video monitoring)			
Changes in a person's psychological state due to levels of awareness, controlled and automatic processes, content limitations, perceptual and cognitive distortions, emotional awareness, self-control and time orientation			
The effects on consciousness (cognition, concentration and mood) of one night of full sleep deprivation as a comparison with effects of legal blood-alcohol concentrations.			
Sleep as a regular and naturally occurring altered state of consciousness that follows a circadian rhythm and involves the ultradian rhythms of REM and NREM Stages 1–4 sleep excluding corresponding brain wave patterns and physiological responses for each stage			
Theories of the purpose and function of sleep (REM and NREM) including restoration theory and evolutionary (circadian) theory			
The differences in sleep across the lifespan and how these can be explained with reference to the total amount of sleep and changes in a typical pattern of sleep (proportion of REM and NREM).			
Changes to a person's sleep-wake cycle and susceptibility to experiencing a circadian phase disorder, including sleep-wake shifts in adolescence, shift work and jet lag			
The effects of partial sleep deprivation (inadequate sleep either in quantity or quality) on a person's affective (amplified emotional responses), behavioural and cognitive functioning			
The interventions to treat sleep disorders including bright light therapy (with reference to circadian phase disorders).			

Topic: What influences mental wellbeing?	Do I have it in my notes?	Note-making deadline	Memorising deadline
Mental health as a continuum (mentally healthy, mental health problems, mental disorders) influenced by internal and external factors that can fluctuate over time			
The typical characteristics of a mentally healthy person, including high levels of functioning, social and emotional well-being and resilience to life stressors			
Ethical implications in the study of, and research into, mental health, including informed consent and use of placebo treatments. Factors that contribute to the development and progression of mental health disorders			
The distinctions between stress, phobia and anxiety; variation for individuals with stress, phobia and anxiety on a mental health continuum			
The relative influences of contributing factors to the development of specific phobia with reference to: gammaamino butyric acid (GABA) dysfunction, the role of stress response and long-term potentiation (biological); behavioural models involving precipitation by classical conditioning and perpetuation by operant conditioning, cognitive bias including memory bias and catastrophic thinking (psychological); specific environmental triggers and stigma around seeking treatment (social)			
Evidence-based interventions and their use for specific phobia with reference to: the use of short-acting anti-anxiety benzodiazepine agents (gamma-amino butyric acid [GABA] agonists) in the management of phobic anxiety and relaxation techniques including breathing retraining and exercise (biological); the use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and systematic desensitisation as psychotherapeutic treatments of phobia (psychological); psychoeducation for families/supporters with reference to challenging unrealistic or anxious thoughts and not encouraging avoidance behaviours (social). Maintenance of mental health			
Resilience as a positive adaption to adversity including the relative influence of protective factors with reference to: adequate diet and sleep (biological); cognitive behavioural strategies (psychological); support from family, friends and community (social)			

Topic: Practical investigation	Do I have it in my notes?	Note-making deadline	Memorising deadline
Independent and dependent variables and operationalisation of variables			
The psychological concepts specific to the investigation and their significance, including definitions of key terms, and psychological representations			
The characteristics of scientific research methodologies and techniques of primary qualitative and quantitative data collection relevant to the selected investigation: experiments, self-reports, questionnaires, interviews and/ or use of rating scales; reliability and validity of data; and minimisation of experimental bias and confounding and extraneous variables			
Ethics and issues of research including identification and application of relevant ethical, health and safety guidelines, and use of human subjects			
Methods of organising, analysing and evaluating primary and/or data to identify patterns and relationships including sources of error and limitations of data, methodologies and / or methods.			
Models and theories, and their use in organising and understanding observed phenomena and psychological concepts including their limitations			
The nature of evidence that supports or refutes a hypothesis, model or theory			
Generalisability of statistics from samples to the populations from which the sample was derived			
The key findings of the analysis and evaluation of the investigation and their relationship to psychological concepts and theories associated with neural function, consciousness, learning, memory and/or mental wellbeing			
Conventions of psychological report writing and / or scientific poster presentation including psychological terminology and representations, standard abbreviations and acknowledgment of references.			

## Practice Schedule

PRACTICE EXAM	DEADLINE
Practice Exam 1	
Practice Exam 2	
Practice Exam 3	
Practice Exam 4	
Practice Exam 5	
<b>EXAM DATE:</b>	

### › Congratulations!

*You're ready! Now relax and think about how good it will feel leaving the exam room knowing the hard work has paid off. Congratulations and good luck (not that you need it)!*



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