

## Wilson Area School District Planned Course Guide

**Title of planned course:** AP Psychology

**Subject Area:** Social Studies

**Grade Level:** 11, 12

**Course Description:** The AP Psychology course is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major subfields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice.

**Time/Credit for this Course:** One Full Academic year

**Curriculum Writing Committee:** Brendan Powers

## Curriculum Map

**August:** Unit 1: History, Approaches, and Research Methods

**September:** Unit 1: History, Approaches, and Research Methods  
Unit 2: Biological Basis of Behavior

**October:** Unit 3: Developmental Psychology  
Unit 4: States of Consciousness

**November:** Unit 4: States of Consciousness  
Unit 5: Sensation and Perception

**December:** Unit 6: Learning  
Unit 7: Memory

**January:** Unit 7: Memory  
Unit 8: Thinking and Language

**February:** Unit 9: Motivation and Emotion  
Unit 10: Testing and Individual Differences

**March:** Unit 11: Personality  
Unit 12: Abnormal Psychology

**April:** Unit 13: Treatment of Psychological Disorders  
Unit 14: Social Psychology

**May:** Review for AP exam/AP Exam  
Individual Projects

**June:** Individual Projects

## **Wilson Area School District Planned Course Materials**

**Course Title:** AP Psychology

**Textbook:**

*Psychology for AP, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*  
Meyers, David G. and Amy C Fineburg  
NY: Worth Publishers 2014

## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** History, Approaches, and Research Methods

**Time frame:** 3 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Define psychology and trace its historical development.
- Compare and contrast the psychological perspectives.
- Identify basic and applied research subfields of psychology.
- Identify basic elements of an experiment (variables, groups, sampling, population, etc.)
- Compare and contrast research methods (case, survey, naturalistic observation).
- Explain correlational studies.
- Describe the three measures of central tendency and measures of variation.
- Discuss the ethics of animal and human research.

**Core Activities** Students will complete/participate in the following:

- Assigned readings
- Note taking
- Small group discussion
- Evaluating primary and secondary source material

**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
- Graphic organizers
- Video clips

**Assessments:**

- Quizzes
- Tests
- FRQ's Free Response Questions
- Self/peer assessment

## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Biological Basis of Behavior

**Time frame:** 3 Weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe the structure of a neuron and explain neural impulses.
- Describe neuron communication and discuss the impact of neurotransmitters.
- Classify and explain major divisions of the nervous system.
- Describe the functions of the brain structures (thalamus, cerebellum, limbic system, etc.).
- Identify the four lobes of the cerebral cortex and their functions.
- Discuss the association areas.
- Explain the split-brain studies.
- Describe the nature of the endocrine system and its interaction with the nervous system.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

- Assigned readings
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- Evaluating primary and secondary source material

**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
- Graphic organizers
- Video clips

**Assessments:**

- Quizzes
- Tests
- FRQ's Free Response Questions
- Self/peer assessment

## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Developmental Psychology

**Time frame:** 3 Weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the course of prenatal development.
- Illustrate development changes in physical, social, and cognitive areas.
- Discuss the effect of body contact, familiarity, and responsive parenting on attachments.
- Describe the benefits of a secure attachment and the impact of parental neglect and separation as well as day care on childhood development.
- Describe the theories of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg.
- Describe the early development of a self-concept.
- Distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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- Evaluating primary and secondary source material

**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
- Graphic organizers
- Video clips

**Assessments:**

- Quizzes
- Tests
- FRQ's Free Response Questions
- Self/peer assessment

## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** States of Consciousness

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe the cyclical nature and possible functions of sleep.
- Identify the major sleep disorders.
- Discuss the content and possible functions of dreams.
- Discuss hypnosis, noting the behavior of hypnotized people and claims regarding its uses.
- Discuss the nature of drug dependence.
- Chart names and effects of depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogenic drugs.
- Compare differences between NREM and REM.
- Describe the physiological and psychological effects of depressants, stimulants, and hallucinogens.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
- Graphic organizers
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**Assessments:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Sensation and Perception

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Contrast the processes of sensation and perception.
- Distinguish between absolute and difference thresholds.
- Label a diagram of the parts of the eye and ear.
- Describe the operation of the sensory systems (five senses).
- Explain the Young-Helmholtz and opponent-process theories of color vision.
- Explain the place and frequency theories of pitch perception.
- Discuss Gestalt psychology's contribution to our understanding of perception.
- Discuss research on depth perception and cues.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
- Graphic organizers
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**Assessments:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Learning

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe the process of classical conditioning (Pavlov's experiments).
- Explain the processes of acquisition, extinction, spontaneous recovery, generalization, and discrimination.
- Describe the process of operant conditioning, including the procedure of shaping, as demonstrated by Skinner's experiments.
- Identify the different types of reinforcers and describe the schedules of reinforcement.
- Discuss the importance of cognitive processes and biological predispositions in conditioning.
- Discuss the effects of punishment on behavior.
- Describe the process of observational learning (Bandura's experiments).

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

- Independent Study
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**Assessments:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Memory

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe memory in terms of information processing and distinguish among sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory.
- Distinguish between automatic and effortful processing.
- Explain the encoding process (including imagery, organization, etc.).
- Describe the capacity and duration of long-term memory.
- Distinguish between implicit and explicit memory.
- Describe the importance of retrieval cues.
- Discuss the effects of interference and motivated forgetting on retrieval.
- Describe the evidence for the constructive nature of memory.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Thinking and Language

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe the nature of concepts and the role of prototypes in concept formation.
- Discuss how we use trial and error, algorithms, heuristics, and insight to solve problems.
- Explain how the representativeness and availability of heuristics influence our judgments.
- Describe the structure of language (phonemes, morphemes, grammar).
- Identify language developmental stages (babbling, one word, etc.).
- Explain how the nature-nurture debate is illustrated in the theories of language development.
- Discuss Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis.
- Describe the research on animal cognition and communication.

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**Instructional Methods:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Motivation and Emotion

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Define motivation and identify motivational theories.
- Describe the physiological determinants of hunger.
- Discuss psychological and cultural influences on hunger.
- Define achievement motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.
- Identify the three theories of emotion (James-Lange, Cannon-Bard, Schachter-Singer)
- Describe the physiological changes that occur during emotional arousal.
- Discuss the catharsis hypothesis.
- Describe the biological response to stress.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Testing and Individual Difference

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Trace the origins of intelligence testing.
- Describe the nature of intelligence.
- Identify the factors associated with creativity.
- Distinguish between aptitude and achievement tests.
- Describe test standardization.
- Distinguish between the reliability and validity of intelligence tests.
- Describe the two extremes of the normal distribution of intelligence.
- Discuss evidence for both genetic and environmental influences on intelligence.
- Discuss whether intelligence tests are culturally biased

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**Instructional Methods:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Personality

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe personality structure in terms of the interactions of the id, ego, and superego.
- Explain how defense mechanisms protect the individual from anxiety.
- Describe the contributions of the neo-Freudians.
- Explain how personality inventories are used to assess traits.
- Describe the humanistic perspective on personality in terms of Maslow's focus on self-actualization and Rogers's emphasis on people's potential for growth.
- Describe the impact of individualism and collectivism on self-identity.
- Describe the social-cognitive perspective on personality.
- Discuss the consequences of personal control, learned helplessness, and optimism.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

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**Assessments:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Abnormal Psychology

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Identify the criteria for judging whether behavior is psychologically disordered.
- Describe the medical model of psychological disorders.
- Describe the aims of the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), and discuss the potential dangers of diagnostic labels
- Describe the symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Describe and explain the development of somatoform and mood disorders.
- Describe the various symptoms and types of schizophrenia.
- Describe the nature of organic and personality disorders.
- Describe the characteristics and possible causes of dissociative disorders.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

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**Assessments:**

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## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Treatment of Psychological disorders

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Discuss the aims and methods of psychoanalysis.
- Identify the basic characteristics of the humanistic therapies.
- Identify the basic assumptions of behavior therapy.
- Describe the assumptions and goals of the cognitive therapies.
- Discuss the benefits of group therapy and family therapy.
- Discuss the findings regarding the effectiveness of the psychotherapies.
- Discuss the role of values and cultural differences in the therapeutic process.
- Identify the common forms of drug therapy and the use of electroconvulsive therapy.

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Instructional Methods:**

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**Assessments:**

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- Self/peer assessment



## Curriculum Scope & Sequence

**Planned Course:** AP Psychology

**Unit:** Social Psychology

**Time frame:** 2 weeks

**Essential content/objectives:** At end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Describe the importance of attribution in social behavior.
- Explain the effect of role-playing on attitudes in terms of cognitive dissonance theory.
- Discuss the results of Asch's experiment on conformity.
- Describe Milgram's controversial experiments on obedience.
- Discuss how group interaction can facilitate group polarization and groupthink.
- Describe the social, emotional, and cognitive factors that contribute to the persistence of cultural, ethnic, and gender prejudice and discrimination.
- Discuss the issues related to aggression and attraction.
- Explain altruistic behavior in terms of social exchange theory and social norms

**Core Activities:** Students will complete/participate in the following:

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**Assessments:**

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