

AP Psychology (2019) Summer Assignment
Mr. Massey

Over the summer you need to do a few things in preparation for your study of psychology. First you must choose, carefully read, and complete a written assignment about a book chosen from a list assembled for the course. This part of the assignment is due Friday, August 30th. It should be may be submitted as a **PDF** email attachment to: craigmassey@salem.k12.org

1. Choosing what to read: You may read any book from the list below: "Summer Reading: Annotated Bibliography (2018)." The first thing you will notice is that it is a lengthy list. As you explore it, you will begin to appreciate the breadth of psychology as a discipline. You are sure to find several works that pique your interest. Your first task is to choose one book to read. Don't wait too long to get started. The task is more enjoyable if not done under the pressure that results from procrastinating. Take the time to find and examine several books that interest you. Browse, either in a library or bookstore, or at an online bookseller such as Amazon. Then pick the one you like best. If you cannot decide, ask for guidance, from a parent, a relative, a sibling or a friend, or from your teacher. While some titles can be found in libraries, it would be a good idea to purchase your own copy. Then you can mark it up and take notes in the margin as you read. Choose a good book and, if you lose interest after starting it, don't force yourself to get through... simply pick another.
2. **READING:** You should definitely take some form of 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. **WRITING:** Your written assignment is in two parts (total 4-5 pages). Do both of them, as below.
 - 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, 2-3 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 frankly 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 or two pages). The books in the bibliography are very

different from one another, and there is no magic formula for writing this review. But there are some things you should be sure to do (in one way or another). 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 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 (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). 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.

Salem High School AP Psychology Summer Reading: Annotated Bibliography (2019)

The following are well-written, engaging, interesting and readable books that have something worthwhile to say about one or another aspect of psychology.

Aronson, E. (2007). *The Social Animal* (10th ed.) NY: W.H. Freeman. A comprehensive introduction to social psychology, with topics including conformity, mass communication, propaganda, persuasion, aggression, prejudice, attraction and loving. Could be a textbook, but far too readable for that!

Budiansky, S. (1998). *If a Lion Could Talk: Animal Intelligence and the Evolution of Consciousness*. NY: Free Press. Trying to understand animal behavior and intelligence in human terms is poor science. Anthropomorphism must be rejected if we are to understand the way animals truly think. The author proposes an alternative.

Burton, R. (2008). *On Being Certain. Believing You Are Right Even When You're Not*. NY: St. Martin's Press. An examination of evidence from recent studies in neuroscience that suggests that "being certain" of anything is more a "mental sensation" or neurological state than it is the product of careful reflection and reasoning. What we think we know is not always so.

Chabris, C. and D Simons. (2010). *The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us*. NY: Harmony. Combine the work of other researchers with the authors' findings on attention, perception, memory, and reasoning to reveal how faulty intuitions often get us into trouble.

Cheever, S., J. Hoffman, S. Froemke and S. Nevins. (2007). *Addiction: Why Can't They Just Stop?* NY: Rodale Books. Companion book to an HBO documentary assesses our current understanding of addiction, combining expert opinions with personal narratives of impact of this epidemic on addicts, their friends and family, and our society.

Cialdini, R.B. (2009). *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (5th ed.). NY: Pearson. This updated classic outlines six basic principles of influence and persuasion. What does psychology have to tell us about selling, marketing and political persuasion?

Dubner, S and Leavitt, S. (2014) *Think Like a Freak*. NY: William Morrow This book gives you a blueprint for critical thinking to be more productive, more creative, and more rational in your thought. How do you deal with incentives? What does it mean to think like a child? Is there an upside to quitting? And what does economics have to do with psychology?

Erme, Merve (2018) *The Personality Brokers: The Strange History of Myers-Briggs and the Birth of Personality Testing*. NY: Doubleday An unprecedented history of the personality test conceived a century ago by a mother and her daughter--fiction writers with no formal training in psychology--and how it insinuated itself into our boardrooms, classrooms, and beyond

Gladwell, M. (2007) *Blink*. MA: Back Bay Publishing. Drawing on cutting-edge neuroscience and psychology, examining case studies as diverse as speed dating, pop music, and New Coke, Gladwell shows how the difference between good decision-making and bad has nothing to do with how much information we can process quickly, but rather with the few particular details on which we focus..

Jamison, K.R. (1995). *An Unquiet Mind*. NY: Knopf. A beautifully written account of manic bipolar disorder (manic depression) written by a professor of psychiatry who is a victim of the disorder. A central theme is her reluctance to take the drug lithium even though it will be beneficial because she is afraid to lose the creative energy that comes with the disorder.

Jourdan, R. (1997). *Music, the Brain and Ecstasy: How Music Captures our Imagination*. NY: William Morrow. What is music, how does it affect us, and what accounts for musical genius? Are there any musicians out there?

Kerr, J.H. (2006). *Rethinking Violence and Aggression in Sport*. London: Routledge. Applies current theory of aggression to sport, inter alia how players become acclimatized to physical violence, the psychological benefits of sport violence, the problem of spectator aggression and the moral and ethical dimensions of the issue.

Schacter, D.L. (2001). *The Seven Sins of Memory How the Mind Forgets and Remembers*. NY: Houghton Mifflin & Co. Excellent, highly readable discussion of the nature of human memory, where and how it fails us, and why it works so well nonetheless.

Segal, N.L. (1999). *Entwined Lives: Twins and What They Tell us About Human behavior*. NY: Dutton. You will not find a more thorough presentation of what is known about twins and how they have contributed to our knowledge of psychology.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned Optimism*. NY: Pocket Books. Highly regarded book on optimism, pessimism, and positive thinking based on research and theory in cognitive psychology. The author, a leader in the "positive psychology" movement, believes optimism and pessimism are learned and so can be changed. Includes self-tests and practical advice.

Shorter, E. (1997). *A History of Psychiatry From the Era of the Asylum to the Age of Prozac*. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Excellent historical narrative of how the treatment of the mentally ill in western society has evolved from the 18th century to the present.

Tavris, C. and E. Aronson. (2007). *Mistakes Were Made (But Not By Me)*. NY: Harvest Books. Interesting review of work by social psychologists to explain self-deception, the human tendency to justify and adhere to mistaken actions and beliefs long after there is reason to admit error.

Zimbardo, P.G. (2007). *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. NY: Random House. What makes good people do bad things? How can moral people be seduced to act immorally? Who is in danger of crossing the line between good and evil? Zimbardo explains how we are susceptible to the lure of "the dark side" and offers an explanation of a variety of phenomena, from corporate malfeasance to organized genocide to how once upstanding American soldiers came to abuse and torture Iraqi detainees in Abu Ghraib.