



**MOUNT NOTRE DAME**

*Empowering Young Women*

## AP Psychology Summer Assignment and Course Introduction

Welcome to AP Psychology! I hope that you are excited for this journey that begin to explore the scientific study of behavior and mental processes. The units of study for this course range from neuroanatomy to personality to abnormal behaviors with special emphasis on psychology as science, including research methods and statistics. You will discover that psychology is ubiquitous! The more exposure you have to the psychological concepts that we will be discussing throughout the year, the more you will observe psychology all around you. Because of the extensive amount of content in AP Psychology, it is necessary that you complete two summer assignments by the first day of school. Below is a summary of those two assignments and a suggested schedule.

### Summer Assignment #1: *Opening Skinner's Box*

Purchase a print copy of *Opening Skinner's Box* by Lauren Slater, ISBN 978-0393326550 (we will be reading more chapters throughout the school year which is why I recommend that you have your own copy). Read chapters one, two, six and seven and complete the online assignment for each chapter (using the link below). As you will learn, each chapter of the book is about an influential study in twentieth century psychology. By the time you have finished reading each of these chapters, you should understand the basic setup of the experiment presented and why each study (and psychologist who carried out the study) was significant in the field of psychology. Additionally, you will notice that the author also addresses how these studies relate to some larger issue and/or debates in psychology (e.g. ethics).

**This assignment must be completed prior to the first day of class.** Link to the assignment:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=BkYOzvvg80GcsrzUgtpBJP3jKNy8gHBMj6fK6lw0VhIUOfdCT1ZJRUE1NTlHMIRWWDFPOFpNSFdFUy4u>

### Summer Assignment #2: "What is a Psychological Perspective?"

Over the course of the next school year we will be studying a number of "perspectives" in the field of psychology. A psychological perspective is a philosophy or school of thought which would guide someone's interpretation of an individual's mental illness or behavior. This assignment is important as it is designed to familiarize you with the perspectives that are the foundation of much of the course. Details of the assignment, along with an example for formatting, are described on the next page.



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## **“What is a Psychological Perspective” Summer Assignment #2**

1. Research the seven assigned psychological perspectives (listed below) using either print or online sources of your choosing. If using websites, be sure they are valid and trustworthy. You must cite each of your sources using MLA format.
2. Present the definition of each of the seven perspectives found in your source(s). This will be your “official” definition.
3. Define each of the perspectives again, but this time in your own original words. Do not worry about using technical language. Just do your best to express your understanding of that school of thought.
4. List any significant psychologists associated with these perspectives that you come across in your research:
  - a. Cognitive
  - b. Humanistic
  - c. Psychodynamic
  - d. Behavioral
5. In your own original wording, write out an example of how each perspective might apply to a real-life problem or situation. This will likely require you to engage in a bit of research in order to fully understand that school of thought. Don’t worry about 100% accuracy. I’m just looking to see that you have a basic understanding of the applications of these schools of thought.

\*An example of how each of your seven entries should be formatted is shown on the next page.



## EXAMPLE:

### **Behavioral Genetics** (*you aren't assigned this one*)

OFFICIAL DEFINITION: A field of study which focuses on the role of genetics in human behavior. It examines behavior patterns which are familial and hereditary in origin. It studies behavior traits and their genetic mechanism. Also called behavioral genetics.

SOURCE: What is Behavior Genetics? (n.d.). In *Psychology Dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://psychologydictionary.org/behavior-genetics/>

MY DEFINITION: Behavioral genetics tries to explain human behavior by understanding what parts of it are based on our inherited genes versus being brought about by the environments in which we live. It basically focuses on the question of "nature vs. nurture."

SIGNIFICANT NAMES: John Locke, Sir Francis Galton, Charles Darwin, Thomas Bouchard

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: Behavioral geneticists spend a lot of time studying twin siblings. Of greatest interest are identical twins who were separated at birth and raised in significantly different home environments. This allows them to compare the twins and determine the extent to which a shared genetic makeup combined with different life experiences create similar or different individuals, all for the purpose of seeking to settle the "nature vs. nurture" debate.

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Do this for all seven perspectives listed below and be ready to turn in a paper copy of the assignment on the FIRST DAY OF CLASS. Here is the list of perspectives:

1. Behavioral (\*\*Different from the "Behavioral Genetics" example above)
2. Biological (Neuroscientific)
3. Cognitive
4. Evolutionary
5. Humanistic
6. Psychodynamic (Freudian)
7. Social-Cultural