



## SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

---

# AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology

The guide contains the following information:

### Curricular Requirements

The curricular requirements are the core elements of the course. A syllabus must provide explicit evidence of each requirement based on the required evidence statement(s).

The Unit Guides and the “Instructional Approaches” section of the *AP<sup>®</sup> Psychology Course and Exam Description (CED)* may be useful in providing evidence for satisfying these curricular requirements.

### Required Evidence

These statements describe the type of evidence and level of detail required in the syllabus to demonstrate how the curricular requirement is met in the course.

Note: Curricular requirements may have more than one required evidence statement. Each statement must be addressed to fulfill the requirement.

### Samples of Evidence

For each curricular requirement, three separate samples of evidence are provided. These samples provide either verbatim evidence or clear descriptions of what acceptable evidence could look like in a syllabus. In some samples, the specific language that addresses the required evidence is highlighted in **bold** text.

# Curricular Requirements

---

<b>CR1</b>	The teacher and students have access to college-level resources, including a recently published (within the last 10 years) college-level textbook(s) in print or electronic format.	<i>See page:</i> 2
<b>CR2</b>	The course provides opportunities to develop student understanding of the required content outlined in each of the five units described in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.	<i>See page:</i> 2
<b>CR3</b>	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 1: Concept Application.	<i>See page:</i> 2
<b>CR4</b>	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 2: Research Methods & Design.	<i>See page:</i> 2
<b>CR5</b>	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 3: Data Interpretation.	<i>See page:</i> 3
<b>CR6</b>	The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 4: Argumentation.	<i>See page:</i> 3

---

## Curricular Requirement 1

The teacher and students have access to college-level resources, including a recently published (within the last 10 years) college-level textbook(s) in print or electronic format.

### Required Evidence

- The teacher must provide the title, author(s), and the publication date of a college-level psychology textbook.

### Sample 1

The teacher selects a pre-approved college-level textbook.

### Sample 2

The teacher provides the title, author, and publication date of a college-level psychology textbook.

---

## Curricular Requirement 2

The course provides opportunities to develop student understanding of the required content outlined in each of the five units described in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.

### Required Evidence

- The syllabus must include an outline of course content by unit title or topic using any organizational approach to demonstrate inclusion of required course content

Note: If the syllabus demonstrates a different approach than the five units outlined in the current *AP Psychology Course and Exam Description (CED)* (e.g., teaching the units in a different order, see Sample of Evidence 3), the teacher must indicate where the content of each unit in the CED will be taught.

### Samples of Evidence

#### Sample 1

##### Course Content

Note: Research methods will be included across all units

##### CED Unit 1: Biological Bases of Behavior

- Heredity and Environment
- The Nervous System, Brain Structure, and Function
- Consciousness
- Sensation

##### CED Unit 2: Cognition

- Perception
- Memory
- Thinking and Language
- Intelligence and Testing

##### CED Unit 3: Development and Learning

- Developmental Psychology
- Classical and Operant Conditioning
- Social, Cognitive, Neural Factors in Learning

##### CED Unit 4: Social and Personality

- Personality
- Motivation and Emotion
- Social Psychology

##### CED Unit 5: Physical and Mental Health

- Positive Psychology
- Disorders
- Treatment
- Health Psychology

## Sample 2

This class will discuss the following units:

1. Biological Bases of Behavior
2. Cognition
3. Development and Learning
4. Social and Personality
5. Physical and Mental Health

## Sample 3

### Course Progression – AP Psychology

CED Units	Class Topic	Text Reading
Unit 4	Social Influence	Ch. 1 (p.1–8)
Unit 4	Group Antagonism	Ch. 18
Unit 4	Conflict, Cooperation, & Altruism	Ch. 19
Unit 4	Motivated Behavior	Ch. 12
Unit 3	Conditioned Behavior	Ch. 7
Unit 2	Human Memory	Ch. 8
Unit 2	Biases & Obstacles to Problem Solving	Ch. 9
Unit 1	The Nervous & Endocrine Systems	Ch. 2
Unit 1	Structures & Functions of the Brain	Ch. 3
<b>Mid-Term Break</b>		
Unit 1	Bio Rhythms: Sleeping & Dreaming	Ch. 4
Units 1 & 2	Sensation & Perception	Ch. 3 & 9
Unit 4	Measuring Differences in Intelligence	Ch. 10
Unit 4	Individual Differences in Personality	Ch. 14
Unit 3	Prenatal Development & Infancy	Ch. 1 (p. 9–22)
Unit 3	Childhood & Adolescence	
Unit 3	Adulthood & Aging	Ch. 5 & 6
Unit 4	Human Emotions & the Stress Response	Ch. 15
Unit 5	Health & Positive Psychology	Ch. 16
Unit 5	The DSM & Specific Disorders	Ch. 16
Unit 5	Biomedical Treatments & Talk Therapies	Ch. 17

---

## Curricular Requirement 3

The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 1: Concept Application, as outlined in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.

### Required Evidence

- The syllabus must include a description of at least one activity (e.g., labs, student-driven demonstrations and/or presentations, etc.) or one series of activities incorporating Science Practice 1: Concept Application. **The description must explicitly state what content students will apply in the activity or series of activities.**

Each activity or series of activities must be labeled (e.g., “SP1,” “Practice 1,” “Science Practice 1”).

### Samples of Evidence

#### Sample 1

Student application of operant conditioning concepts (**Science Practice 1**)

**Students will demonstrate understanding of operant conditioning by first identifying the types of reinforcement or punishment in a variety of scenarios.** Then, for all positive reinforcement examples, students will identify whether the reinforcer is primary or secondary.

#### Sample 2

Students will watch the movie *The Breakfast Club* and write a three-page paper in which **they apply at least 10 concepts from Unit 4: Social Psychology** to the characters and scenes in that movie. (**SP1**)

#### Sample 3

##### Activity #1: Picturing the Difference (Practice #1)

Using their text and online sources, students will be asked to create an 11x17 infographic to **aid fellow students in differentiating various types of a broad area of study.**

Students will be asked to do a “stand-and-talk” for 3–5 minutes where they discuss the importance of their given topic and highlight a few blocks of their visual. Some possibilities include:

**Monocular Depth Clues:** Aerial perspective, texture gradient, vertical plane, and more

**Components of Language:** Syntax, semantic, pragmatics, and more

**Defense Mechanisms:** Rationalization, humor, passive aggression, denial, and more

**Obstacles to Problem Solving:** Confirmation bias, belief bias, hindsight bias, and more

**Directional Memory:** Prospective memory, retrograde amnesia, proactive interference, and more

---

## Curricular Requirement 4

The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 2: Research Methods & Design, as outlined in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.

### Required Evidence

- The syllabus must include a description of at least one activity (e.g., labs, student-driven demonstrations and/or presentations, etc.) or one series of activities incorporating Practice 2: Research Methods & Design. **The description must explicitly state what research methods and/or design element students will apply in the activity or series of activities.**

Each activity or series of activities must be labeled (e.g., “SP2,” “Practice 2,” “Science Practice 2”).

### Samples of Evidence

#### Sample 1

##### Research Methods Stations Activity (Science Practice 2)

Student groups will rotate to each of five methods stations. Each station will have a detailed description of a particular study. After reading the summary at the station, the group will:

1. **Identify the method of research (the stations are not labeled, but each method is represented in the five stations): case study, naturalistic observation, survey, correlational study, or experiment.**
2. List the elements of the study that make it fit the method of research.
3. Describe the positive aspects of that type of study.
4. Describe any problems that are associated with that type of study.

#### Sample 2

Students will **discuss the difference between measured, manipulated, and confounding variables**, and then provide and explain three examples of each in a one-page paper that they will present to the class. (SP2)

#### Sample 3

##### Activity #2: Read & React (Practice #2)

Students will first be introduced to methodological terms such as between-subjects design, within-subjects design, simple random sample, stratified random sample, longitudinal study, and cross-sectional study. Examples will be given of each, and a variety of well-known studies will be discussed. **Students will then use their tablets or laptops to read 30 brief summaries of different studies.** Students will then apply their knowledge about sampling subjects and methodologies. Utilizing the program “Word Wall,” the description will appear in the middle, with a left and right button students can tap to make their selection. In mastery-based fashion, students will be able to replay the program an unlimited number of times, with a leaderboard available that shows the number correct and time.

---

## Curricular Requirement 5

The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 3: Data Interpretation, as outlined in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.

### Required Evidence

- The syllabus must include a description of at least one activity (e.g., labs, student-driven demonstrations and/or presentations, etc.) or one series of activities incorporating Practice 3: Data Interpretation. **The description must explicitly state what students will identify, calculate or interpret in the activity or series of activities.**

Each activity or series of activities must be labeled (e.g., “SP3,” “Practice 3,” “Science Practice 3”).

### Samples of Evidence

#### Sample 1

Intermittent Reinforcement Schedules Graph Activity (**Science Practice 3**)

**Students will identify the intermittent reinforcement schedule shown in each of 4 graphs.** Then, they will create a scenario that fits each graph. The best examples may be used for a future matching activity where student groups match scenarios to the correct graphs/reinforcement schedules.

#### Sample 2

Students will be given a small data set and **calculate its measures of central tendency and variability. (SP3)**

#### Sample 3

**Activity #3: Understanding the Numbers: Not Always a “Slam Dunk” (Practice 3)**

On the first day of the activity, each class of 30 will travel to the fieldhouse where one of our basketball coaches will provide a quick talk on the history, purpose, and function of something called a “free throw.” Each student, with a partner to feed the ball back, will then proceed to shoot 25 consecutive shots from the free-throw line, recording “makes” and “misses.”

Upon entry back into the room, all **30 students will compile their data onto a frequency distribution on the white board.** Using a colored pencil, each individual will then create a boxplot showing the distribution of scores (followed by discussion of the distribution). Students will then calculate (by hand) the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation.



---

## Curricular Requirement 6

The course provides opportunities for students to develop understanding of the course content related to Science Practice 4: Argumentation, as outlined in the current AP Psychology Course and Exam Description.

### Required Evidence

- The syllabus must include a description of at least one activity (e.g., labs, student-driven demonstrations and/or presentations, etc.) or one series of activities incorporating Practice 4: Argumentation. **The description must explicitly state that students are proposing a claim or supporting or refuting an existing claim using evidence the activity or series of activities.**

Each activity or series of activities must be labeled (e.g., “SP4,” “Practice 4,” “Science Practice 4”).

### Samples of Evidence

#### Sample 1

##### Social Psychology Activity (Science Practice 4)

Students will practice the skill of argumentation in collaborative groups. **Each group will write a claim, and then will choose two concepts and one study or theory to support their claim.** They will construct a written response as a group for this assignment.

#### Sample 2

Students will read a primary source that presents empirical findings. **They will then write a brief paper that presents at least one piece of evidence to support the conclusions of the study based on information covered in the course. (SP 4)**

#### Sample 3

##### Activity #4: Understanding Eponyms (Practice #4)

Students will be given an eponym (e.g., Alzheimer disease, Flynn effect, Weber’s law), and **will be asked to create a five-minute oral argument to be presented in the first month of class (staggered, or one per day).** The student must argue that their individual is more important to their given thematic area (e.g., cognitive, biological, mental health, social, developmental) than their opponent is to their own field. For example, if a student was given Weber’s law and it was matched against the Premack principle in the first round, their job would be to argue the Ernst Weber’s contribution to the biological domain was greater than David Premack’s contribution to the cognitive domain. Each student has five minutes to speak and will take three questions from assigned students. At the conclusion of their front-of-class talk, they will submit the argument, complete with 1) a stated conclusion, and 2) four different premises/rationales that serve as the cornerstones or legs of support for the conclusion. After hearing each, the class will vote anonymously as to who moves forward in the tournament.