**PSYCHOLOGY**



This document contains activities and resources to prepare you to start an A-level in Psychology in September. So try and watch a few of the TED talks, read one of the suggested books and complete some research. Start to engage with and enjoy the world of Psychology!

**TED Talks**

**1. How we read each other's minds, Rebecca Saxe**

According to Saxe, a professor of neuroscience at MIT, you don't need tarot cards or ESP to read people's minds. A functioning right temporo-parietal junction will do just fine. In her talk, Saxe explains how this brain region allows humans to be uncannily good at sensing other people's feelings, thoughts, and motivations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOCUH7TxHRI>

**2. The riddle of experience vs. memory, Daniel Kahneman**

If you're looking for highly credentialed TED speakers, Kahneman's résumé won't fail to impress. A Nobel Prize-winning psychologist and bestselling author, Kahneman uses his 20 minutes on the TED stage to explain that there are actually two flavours of happiness: the kind we experience in the moment and the kind we experience in our memories. Maximizing your own well-being in life means keeping both in mind.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgRlrBl-7Yg>

**3. The paradox of choice, Barry Schwartz**

More choice is always better, right? Not according to Schwartz, a psychologist who argues that having to decide which of approximately 6,000 brands of similar toothpaste to buy "has made us not freer but more paralyzed, not happier but more dissatisfied.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO6XEQIsCoM>

**4. Are we in control of our own decisions?, Dan Ariely**

This talk "uses classic visual illusions and Ariely’s own counterintuitive (and sometimes shocking) research findings to show how we're not as rational as we think when we make decisions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X68dm92HVI>

**5. Flow, the secret to happiness, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**

In this talk, legendary psychologist Csikszentmihalyi dares to ask one of life's biggest questions: What makes us happy? The answer isn't fame or money, he insists, but flow -- that lost-in-time feeling you get when you focus intensely on work you're good at.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXIeFJCqsPs>

**6. The power of vulnerability, Brené Brown**

One of the top-five-most-popular TED Talks of all time, this moving account of Brown's own struggles with shame and control weaves together sometimes hilarious personal anecdotes with hard research to convince viewers that forging real connections requires the bravery to be vulnerable.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCvmsMzlF7o>

**Topics to Research**

**Memory**

Memory helps make individuals who they are. Without the help of memories, someone would struggle to learn new information, form lasting relationships, or function in daily life. Memory allows the brain to encode, store, and retrieve information.

Different areas of the brain affect different aspects of memory. The hippocampus, for instance, is related to spatial memory, which helps the brain map the surrounding world and find its way around a known place. The amygdala, on the other hand, is linked to emotional memory.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/basics/memory>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/memory.html>

**Obedience**

Obedience is a form of social influence where an individual acts in response to a direct order from another individual, who is usually an authority figure. It is assumed that without such an order the person would not have acted in this way.

Stanley Milgram (1963) wanted to investigate whether Germans were particularly obedient to authority figures as this was a common explanation for the Nazi killings in World War II.

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/obedience.html>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html>

**Criminal psychology**

Criminal psychology looks at the interaction between psychology and criminology and criminal justice. It is concerned with using psychological research and theories to analyse and improve the criminal justice system. Try the ‘You be the Judge’ activity by following this link. YOU hear the case, YOU decide the sentence!

<http://ybtj.justice.gov.uk/>

**Issues in mental health**

What do we mean by mental health? Which behaviours should be classified as ‘sane’ or ‘insane’, and which should be medicated or treated non-biologically? Perhaps we shouldn’t treat any mental illness at all and simply accept the diversity of human behaviour? Follow these links to find out more about the explanations and treatments of mental illness.

<https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/daily-use-high-strength-cannabis-increases-risk-psychosis/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/could-virtual-reality-help-cure-fear-heights/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/regular-exercise-may-help-lower-your-risk-depression/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/news/mental-health/body-clock-disruptions-linked-mood-disorders/>

**Suggested Books to Read**

* Inventing Ourselves by Sarah Jayne Blakemore
* Friend Request, 2018 by Laura Marshall
* Opening Skinners Box by Lauren Slater
* Born Evil by Julia Derek
* Lies, 2017 by T.M. Logan
* The Psychopath Whisperer by Dr Kent Keihl
* Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole, 2016 by Allan Ropper and Brian David Burrell
* Good Me Bad Me, 2017 by Ali Land
* Selfie: How the West Became Self-Obsessed, 2018 by Will Storr
* The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil, 2008 by Philip Zimbardo

