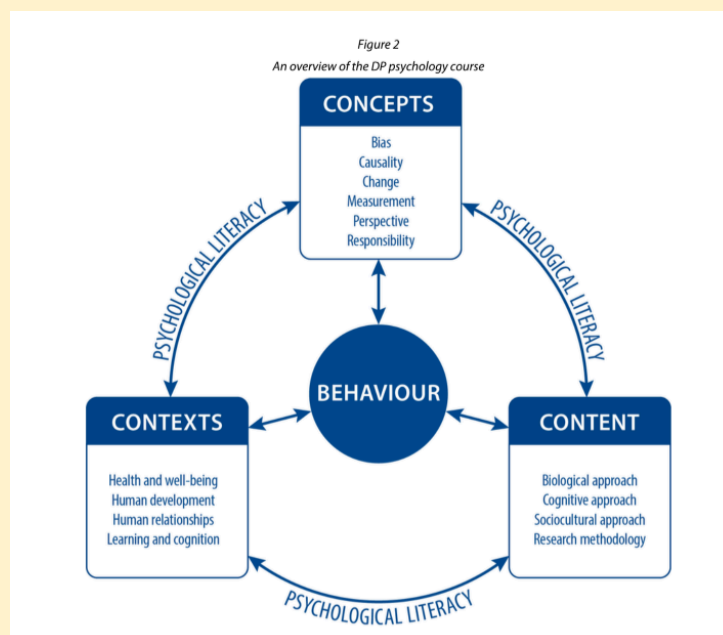




Course Start

Course Start is independent learning that you must complete as a fundamental part of your introduction to the course. It should take you approximately **3 hours** to complete. You can complete this by hand or digitally.

Course Name	IB PSYCHOLOGY
How this Course Start fits into the first term of the course	During the first term, you will study Learning & Cognition in Psychology, including Behaviourism , memory, decision making and cognitive biases.
How will my Course Start learning be used in lessons?	It will highlight the • Importance of research and data in Psychology • Importance of understanding the historical context of Behaviourism
Course Start learning objectives	• To introduce students to aspects of Cognitive Psychology, specifically reconstructive memory • To emphasise the importance of Psychology research to the explanations of human behaviour • To introduce aspects of data analysis and research methods • To introduce students to Behaviourism
Study Skills	• Note taking • Academic reading, note-taking and essay writing skills • Understanding and presenting data • Critical thinking and creative skills • Appropriate AI use in Psychology



Expectations for: IB PSYCHOLOGY

Our specification is: IB

What this course involves

SL			
IB Psychology			
Context: Learning & Cognition	Context: Health & Wellbeing	Context: Human Development	Context: Human Relationships
Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B
Experiment Paper 2 A	Interview Paper 2 A	Observation Paper 2 A	Questionnaire Paper 2 A
Bias, Change, Perspective, Responsibility, Causality, Measurement, Paper 1 C (15 mark essay based on one of four contexts)			
Research Methods			
Internal Assessment: A research proposal			

HL			
IB Psychology			
Context: Learning & Cognition	Context: Health & Wellbeing	Context: Human Development	Context: Human Relationships
Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B	Cognitive Biological Sociocultural Paper 1 A & B
Experiment Paper 2 A	Interview Paper 2 A	Observation Paper 2 A	Questionnaire Paper 2 A
Bias, Change, Perspective, Responsibility, Causality, Measurement Paper 1 C (15 mark essay based on one of four contexts)			
Research Methods & Extension Topics (Culture, Motivation, Technology & Data Analysis)			
Internal Assessment: A research proposal			

Course Start IB Psychology (Year 1)

1. Cognitive Psychology & Eyewitness Testimony (reconstructive memory)

1. Watch the 4 BBC Eye-Witness videos (**Health warning: this video contains violence**):

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL45AB31EB55229143>

2. Read a summary of the psychological research below: Loftus, E. F., & Palmer, J. C. (1974). Reconstruction of automobile destruction: An example of the interaction between language and memory. *Journal of Verbal Learning & Verbal Behavior*, 13(5), 585-589.

Background:

- Memory involves interpreting what is seen or heard, recording bits of it and then reconstructing these bits into memories when required.
- This implies recall can be distorted or biased by certain features of the situation.
- Loftus and Palmer conducted many studies investigating ways in which memory can be distorted, many of which show that EWT is highly unreliable because it can be influenced by such things as subtle differences in the wording of questions.
- This study focuses on the effects of 'leading questions' on an individual's ability to accurately remember events.
- The expectation was that any information subtly introduced after the event through leading questions – questions phrased in a way suggesting the expected answer – would distort the original memory.

Aim:

This study aimed to investigate how information supplied after an event influences a witness's memory for that event.

Experiment 1:

Method:

- This was a laboratory experiment using an independent measures design.
- The independent variable (IV) was the wording of a critical question hidden in a questionnaire.
- This question asked, "**About how fast were the cars going when they hit / smashed / collided / contacted / bumped each other?**"
- The dependent variable (DV) was the **estimated speed** given by the participant.

Sample: 45 students were divided into five groups with nine participants in each group.

Procedure:

- All participants were shown the same seven film clips of different traffic accidents which were originally made as part of a driver safety film.
- After each clip, participants were given a questionnaire which asked them firstly to describe the accident and then answer a series of questions about the accident.
- There was one critical question in the questionnaire: "**About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?**"

- One group was given this question while the other four groups were given the verbs **"smashed", 'collided', 'contacted' or 'bumped', instead of 'hit'.**

Findings of the first experiment:

Table 1. Speed estimates for the verbs used in the estimation of the speed question

VERB	AVERAGE SPEED (MPH)
Smashed	40.8
Collided	39.3
Bumped	38.1
Hit	34
Contacted	31.8

The results in Table 1 show that the **phrasing of the question brought about a change in speed estimate. With smashed eliciting a higher speed estimate than contacted.**

*****Data Analysis Task: Using the results from the table, draw (by hand or digitally) an appropriate bar chart to display the data for the five conditions. (4 marks)*****

Experiment 2:

Method:

- This was also a laboratory experiment using an independent measures design.
- The independent variable (IV) was the wording on a question in a questionnaire:
- One group was asked, **"About how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?"**
- A second group was asked, **"About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?"**
- A third group was not asked about speed.
- One week later, all participants were asked to complete another questionnaire which contained the critical question, **"Did you see any broken glass?"**
- The dependent variable (DV) was whether the answer to this question was, **"Yes/No."**

Sample: 150 students were divided into three groups with 50 participants in each group

Procedure:

- All participants were shown a one-minute film which contained a four-second multiple car crash.
 - They were then given a questionnaire which asked them to describe the accident and answer a set of questions about the incident.
 - There was a critical question about speed:
 - One group was asked, "About how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?"
 - Another group was asked, "About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?"
 - The third group did not have a question about vehicular speed.
 - One week later, all participants, without seeing the film again, completed another questionnaire about the accident which contained the further critical question, "Did you see any broken glass – Yes/No?"
- There had been no broken glass in the original film.

Results of the second experiment:

Table 2. Response to the question 'Did you see any broken glass?'



Experiment 2
Response to the question
"Did you see any broken glass?"

Response	Smashed	Hit	Control
Yes	16	7	6
No	34	43	44

These results show that the **verb (smashed) in the question did have a significant effect on the misperception of glass in the film**. Those participants who heard the word 'smashed' were more than twice as likely to recall seeing broken glass.

Conclusions:

- The verb used in a question influences a participant's response i.e. the way a question is phrased influences the answer given.
- People are not very good at judging vehicular speed.
- Misleading post-event information can distort an individual's memory.
- It is proposed that two kinds of information go into our memory for a 'complex occurrence' such as this.
- Firstly, the information gleaned during the perception of the original event. Secondly, the post-event information is gained after the fact. Information from the two sources will integrate over time, and we will be unable to decipher which source the information comes from.
- We are therefore unable to tell whether our memory is accurate.

Explanation of results

- To account for the results of the second experiment, Loftus and Palmer developed the following explanation called the reconstructive hypothesis:
- They argue that **two kinds of information go into a person's memory of an event**.
- The first is the information obtained from **perceiving an event** (e.g. witnessing a video of a car accident), and the second is the other **information supplied to us after the event** (e.g. the question containing hit or smashed). Over time, the information from these two sources may be **integrated** in such a way that we are unable to tell from which source some specific detail is recalled. **All we have is one 'memory'**.
- For example, in Loftus and Palmer's second experiment, the participants first form some memory of the video they have witnessed. The experimenter then, while asking, "About how fast were the cars going when they smashed into each other?" supplies a piece of external information, namely, that the cars did indeed smash into each other. When these two pieces of information are integrated, the participant has a memory of an accident that was more severe than it was. Since broken glass corresponds to a severe accident, the participant is more likely to think that broken glass was present.

Evaluation of Explanation

- One way in which we could criticise this argument is to recognise that it is not only the type of question asked but also many other factors which could influence your memory of an event.
- Other factors include food, alcohol, emotions, environment, who you were with, what the event meant to you, and so forth.

- Some psychologists have made a further criticism of the argument. They do not agree with Loftus that post-event information changes the witness's original memory, never to be retrieved again.
- They suggest that witnesses merely follow the questioner's suggestions, leaving the original memory intact for retrieval under appropriate conditions.
- The main strength of Loftus' argument is its wider implications. Based on evidence like that of Loftus's, the Devlin Report (1976) recommended that the trial judge be required to instruct the jury that it is not safe to convict on a single eyewitness testimony alone, except in exceptional circumstances or when there is substantial corroborative evidence.
- Loftus's reconstructive hypothesis has also meant that the police and lawyers are urged to use as few leading questions as possible (i.e. questions suggesting to the witness the desired answer), although in reality this practice is still widely carried out.

3. Watch the following TED Talk and make some brief notes to help you write the essay (see below):

https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory?language=en

4. In Psychology, you will need to read original Psychological journal articles.

Read the following study: Loftus, E. F., Loftus, G. R., & Messo, J. (1987). Some facts about "weapon focus." *Law and Human Behavior*, 11(1), 55-62. [Some Facts About "Weapon Focus"](#)

Here is a summary: Weapon focus refers to the concentration of a witness's attention on a weapon which results in them having difficulty recalling other details of the scene and identifying the perpetrator of the crime. Previous research carried out has shown that people fixate their gaze for longer, faster and more often on unusual or highly informative objects.

Aim:
To provide support for the Weapons focus effect when witnessing a crime.
Method:
Laboratory experiment
Participants & Details:
The participants were 36 students from the University of Washington, aged 18-31, half were recruited via advertisements and paid \$3.50, the others were psychology students participating for extra credits. All participants were shown 18 slides of a series of events in a Taco Time restaurant. For both groups the slide was the same except for one slide. This slide was the independent variable. In the control group the second person in the queue hands the cashier a cheque, in the experimental group, the same person pulls a gun on the cashier. The dependent variable was recognition of that person; it was measured by a twenty-item multiple-choice questionnaire. Participants were also shown 12 photos in random sequence and asked to rate how confident they were of their identification on a scale of 1-6 (1 = guess, 6 = very sure).
Results:
Answers to the questionnaire about the slide show showed no significant difference between the two groups. In the control condition (cheque), 38.9% made a correct identification, in the experimental condition (gun) it was only 11.1%. Eye fixation data showed an average fixation time of 3.72 seconds on the gun, compared to 2.44 seconds on the cheque.
Conclusions:
The participants spent longer looking at the weapon and therefore had more difficulty in picking the suspect from the line-up.

5. In Psychology, you will be expected to think critically. One way to do this is to contrast the findings of research studies. Read the following:

Yuille & Cutshall (1986) carried out a study to demonstrate the reliability of memory that challenged the findings of Loftus & Palmer (1974). The study aimed to determine whether leading questions would affect the memory of eyewitnesses at a real crime scene. In other words, the aim was the same as Loftus & Palmer's (1974) study, but in this case, the event that they observed **was real and had an emotional impact on those who observed it**.

In Vancouver, a thief entered a gun shop and tied up the owner before stealing money from the shop. The owner freed himself and, thinking the thief had escaped, went outside the shop. But the thief was still there and shot him twice. Police were called, there was gunfire, and the thief was killed. As the incident occurred in front of the shop, there were eyewitnesses - 21 were interviewed by the police.

Yuille and Cutshall (1986) chose this incident to study because there were enough witnesses and police records to confirm the eyewitnesses' stories.

The researchers contacted the eyewitnesses four months after the event. 13 of the eyewitnesses agreed to be interviewed as part of a study. They gave their account of the incident before the researchers asked questions. Half the group was asked if they saw **"a" broken headlight** on the getaway car. The other half were asked if they saw **"the" broken headlight**. There was no broken headlight. In addition, half the group was asked if they saw **"the" yellow panel on the car**, and the other half was asked if they saw **"a" yellow panel on the car (the panel was blue)**. They were also asked to rate their stress on the day of the event on a seven-point scale.

It was found that **eyewitnesses were very reliable**. They recalled a large amount of accurate detail that the original police reports could confirm. They also did not make many errors due to the leading questions. 10 out of 13 said there was no broken headlight or yellow quarter panel, or that they had not noticed those particular details.

The researchers found that the accuracy of the witnesses compared to the original police reports was between 79% and 84%. This research appears to contradict the study by Loftus & Palmer (1974). *But does it?*

Using AI appropriately in Psychology: Go to <https://www.perplexity.ai/> and ask the question:

'To what extent is eyewitness testimony reliable?'

Using sources 1-5 (and AI response), answer the question 'To what extent is eyewitness testimony reliable?' on a Word/Google Doc in no more than 750 words. You **MUST write the final answer in your own words. You **MUST NOT** exceed 750 words. You **MUST NOT** copy and paste the AI response!**

2. Psychological Concepts Definitions

In your own words, write a brief definition in your own words for each concept (no more than one paragraph for each definition):

Concept	Definition
Perspective	
Causality	
Change	
Measurement	
Bias	
Responsibility	

3. Behaviourism Poster Brief

Create an informative and visually engaging poster (digital or hand-drawn) on the **Psychology of Behaviourism**. Your poster must demonstrate your understanding of the key concepts and their relevance in modern society. Your poster must include:

1. What is Behaviourism?

Provide a brief definition of Behaviourism as a psychological approach.

2. Classical Conditioning

Define classical conditioning.

Identify and include information about Pavlov.

Provide one real-life example of classical conditioning in modern society.

3. Operant Conditioning

Define operant conditioning.

Identify and include information about Skinner.

Provide one real-life example of operant conditioning in modern society.

4. Visuals and Design

Use diagrams, illustrations, or images to help explain the concepts. Make your poster visually appealing, clear, and well-organised.

Presentation:

Be prepared to share your poster with others.

Canva https://www.canva.com/en_gb/ has some great templates.

Assessment Criteria:

Accurate definitions and explanations

Correct identification and description of Pavlov and Skinner

Relevant and clear real-life examples for both types of conditioning

Creative and visually appealing design

Clarity and organisation of information

Further information:

IB Assessments are graded 0-7 (7 =highest)

You will use an outstanding online textbook, which requires a small one-time payment, which we will collect in the first half-term. Although you won't have access to the full site yet, please take a look [Psychology | InThinking](#)

Extension: Sign up for weekly emails on the latest Psychology news [Research Digest, free weekly email](#)