

## **Two-Day Lesson Plan**

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### **Context**

These two lessons are intended to be used the first two days of school for AP Psychology, but could also work for any introduction course. The first day lesson is an opportunity to introduce course material (syllabus, textbook, etc.) while incorporating psychological principles. The second day is intended as the first lesson of the introduction to the course. I teach on an A/B block schedule with approximately 85-minute periods that meet every other day.

### **Day One: First Day of Class**

This plan addresses the following content standards from the National Standards for High School Psychology:

Cognition Domain

Standard Area: Memory

Content Standards

*After concluding this lesson, students understand:*

1. Encoding of memory
2. Storage of memory
3. Retrieval of memory

Performance Standards

*After concluding this lesson, students are able to:*

- 1.3 Discuss strategies for improving the encoding of memory
- 2.3 Discuss strategies for improving the storage of memory
- 3.3 Discuss strategies for improving the retrieval of memory

### **Lesson Plan for Day One**

1. Begin the class with introductions and explain the purpose of the lesson. I usually tell students that the objective for the first day of class is to convince them that Psychology is more than just a course of content to learn, it is a discipline that can make their lives better. This lesson will show them how Psychology can make them better students. *(10 minutes)*

2. [I use a slide show](#) to go over several concepts from Cognitive Psychology that relate to particular course requirements and academics in general. *(60 minutes)*

● **Section One : Metacognition** *(20 minutes)*

- After defining the term, students are asked to share ways they can improve their own metacognition. The first activity is introduced as an activity in metacognition.

- Students are given about two minutes to write down all of the words or ideas that they associate with “Psychology.”
  - Then students form pairs and combine their lists.
  - After making the new list, pairs form foursomes and begin categorizing their terms and concepts. I give them markers and paper to create a mock table of contents for a textbook on Psychology.
  - While students are working, I distribute textbooks and after groups are finished, they compare their work with the actual table of contents, making notes about anything they missed or items they included that aren’t in the text, and we debrief as a whole class.
  - I close this with a few words about how to best use the textbook by thinking about what they already know and what they need to find out.
- **Section Two: Shallow versus Deep processing. (20 minutes)**
    - I emphasize to students that how they study is more important than how much. The classroom is split into two halves and I use the [“Slippery Snakes”](#) exercise. (the link provided is from the Teaching High School Psychology blog which provides and describes this exercise)
    - At the end of this exercise, students raise their hands based on how many questions they got correct and we debrief.
- **Section Three: Spaced Practice and Retrieval Practice. (10 minutes)**
    - During this section, I simply describe the differences in spaced versus massed practice, the benefits of retrieval practice and research supporting this.
    - I then distribute my [quarterly schedule with the daily reading plan](#), homework due dates, and test dates. I explain to students that the reading schedule is a tool to help them distribute their work throughout the course and avoid massed practice, and the homework provides opportunities for retrieval practice.
- **Section Four: Sleep (10 minutes)**
    - I begin the final section with a quick poll of students about their sleep habits and talk to them about the effects of sleep on performance.
3. Closure (10-15 minutes)
- If time permits, I conclude this day’s lesson by viewing episode one of Dr. Stephen Chew’s [“How to Study”](#) video series and provide students with a guided assignment for watching each of the other episodes over the next two weeks with the final video “So I Bombed the Test...Now What?” scheduled as homework following the first test of the quarter.
  - The assigned reading for the night comes from the introduction/prologue chapter of the textbook.

## **Day Two: Psychology as a Science and Perspectives**

This plan addresses the following content standards from the National Standards for High School Psychology:

Scientific Inquiry Domain

Standard Area: Perspectives in Psychological Science

Content Standards

*After concluding this lesson, students understand:*

1. Development of Psychology as an empirical science

Performance Standards

*After concluding this lesson, students are able to:*

- 1.1 Define psychology as a discipline and identify its goals as a science.
- 1.2 Describe the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline.
- 1.3 Describe perspectives employed to understand behavior and mental processes.
- 1.4 Explain how psychology evolved as a scientific discipline.

### **Lesson Plan for Day Two**

1. I begin with a review of the night's reading with a brief lecture on the definition and history of Psychology. *(15 minutes)*

2. Students take a brief quiz on the reading and introductory lecture. *(10 minutes)*

3. After the quiz, students are placed in groups for [team based activities](#). These activities are described briefly below, and with greater detail (and a copy of the quiz) in this [document](#).

- The first exercise is a review of the quiz. Groups are allowed to keep their individual quizzes, and each group is given a blank copy to retake together. I circulate around the room to answer any questions that groups may have and to check for understanding. *(15 minutes)*
- After the quiz, teams complete the activities on Psychology as a science.
  - The first activity has students discuss whether Psychology is more closely related to the disciplines of Philosophy and Art or Chemistry and Physics. *(5 minutes)*

- The second activity asks students to choose from a set of questions which ones are most appropriately answered by Psychology and which ones belong in the domain of other disciplines. *(10 minutes)*
- The third activity directs students to discuss whether and how one of the particular questions from the previous activity could be empirically tested. *(10 minutes)*

4. In the same groups, students are provided a copy of statements that can describe different perspectives of Psychology. These statements are taken from *Activity 2* in the TOPSS lesson plan “Perspectives in Psychological Science.” *(15 minutes)*

- Student groups identify the appropriate perspectives for each statement.
- Take time to answer any questions that groups may have.
- Review answers as a class and allow discussion for any statements that groups disagree on

5. Closure *(5 minutes)*

- Give students the opportunity to clarify any questions from the day’s lessons
- Direct students to the reading schedule and briefly preview the assignment for the night.