



**Test Prep and Admissions**

## For AP Psychology Teachers: How to Use This Book in Your Classroom

*Kaplan's AP Psychology 2006 Edition* is an invaluable tool for students, but you, the teacher, can also use it to understand the test format and to cover the expansive amount of content covered in the AP Psychology course. Inside, you will find the basics of AP exam, scoring rubrics, and tips on test-taking strategies and stress management to share with your students, along with an extensive review and sample questions and tests.

The book will not serve as a substitute for an introductory psychology text, nor will it serve as a substitute for a well-taught AP Psychology course. Its goal is to provide guidance, direction, and assistance to the student. If used well, the material we present here will reinforce the information acquired from the text and the class. Psychologists know that multiple exposures to material increases our ability to remember information.

Incorporating the book's contents into your coursework is not difficult; in fact, one chapter can be covered for each lesson in your course.

### STRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND ATTITUDE

Research in cognitive psychology has clearly shown that the best strategy for reviewing for an exam is to do the following:

- Start with a general overview of the material. This can be done by reading the chapter titles in this book.
- Read the material in small chunks. First, read the material in your introductory course textbook, and then read the material in this book. That will reinforce the key points.
- Take a brief quiz on a limited amount of material. The quizzes can come from the review questions in this book as well as questions from the textbook.
- Take the Diagnostic test so you can identify any weak areas.
- Re-read the sections in the introductory text and this book to reinforce the material again.
- Take additional practice questions (from both books).
- Review the key points in the glossary to make sure each point is clearly understood.
- Quiz yourself on the glossary terms.
- Take the first practice exam.
- Identify weaknesses.
- Review specific areas needed.
- Take the second practice exam.
- Identify weaknesses.
- Review again.

Such a process seems daunting, and in fact, it is a lot of work to prepare for the AP exam. But by sharing the importance of such steps with your students, you will be helping them to achieve maximum preparation for the exam. To help you, the teacher, we recommend that you read this book and take the quizzes as well to make sure you're familiar with the type of questions that are going to be asked. In addition, we strongly recommend that you go to AP Central ([www.apcentral.com/psychology](http://www.apcentral.com/psychology)) to review old free-response exams, rubrics, and sample responses.

Finally, we recommend you contact your local college or university to request materials to augment your course. Many colleges and universities have faculty who are more than willing to provide support for the development of an AP course and will provide you with valuable materials and perhaps support for your course. There is a list of faculty on the APA website that have expressed such an interest ([www.apa.org/TOPSS](http://www.apa.org/TOPSS)).

Part One of the book provides a basic overview of test structure and scoring. It explains the set-up of the question types and, for the free-response questions, the basic features of a proper and complete answer. It concludes with stress management tips, invaluable for students taking a standardized test.

## THE DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Part Two is a Diagnostic test, which will help to gauge student strengths and weaknesses. This short, 20-question sampling of test-like questions should be given to your students as a starting-off point, to pinpoint areas in which they need work.

Have your students take the test, then tally their results. Perhaps you can then divide your students into study groups depending on the areas in which they're having trouble. Or you can mix students up so that those who scored well on certain sections of the Diagnostic can help those who didn't score as well.

If the entire class seems to need work on a certain section, you can dedicate one day to studying that particular topic. Simply have students read over the corresponding review chapter, along with related study material. Afterward, have them take a full-length test or create some of your own study questions concerning the topics they were shaky on. This Diagnostic is a great way to determine general trends of student performance and to create a focus for future lesson plans.

## THE REVIEW SECTION

Part Three, the Review section, is composed of chapters containing all of the topics covered on the AP Psychology exam. Each chapter can be integrated into a lesson plan you have already created for the topic, or it can be used as the basic framework of a lesson plan. This review section is an ideal guide for framing some of the "big picture" concepts that are important for the course.

Have students read through the chapter material, either in the classroom or for homework, and discuss the major concepts in each chapter. Students should answer study questions at the end of each chapter, and review the answer explanations so that they understand not only why the correct answer is right, but why the wrong answers are wrong. It might be useful to contrast various question types and discuss which ways of approaching a problem are likely to be successful. Understanding the right way to approach a problem is often central to answering it correctly. It is fundamentally important that students understand why a specific answer is the right choice; they must also learn the cues that help them attack the problem efficiently.

Free-response portions of the review are set aside so that students understand the concepts involved in writing essay responses for broader sections. These portions of the review do not reiterate content for a section, rather they review concepts that students should understand in order to write a thorough, cohesive essay.

Rather than simply being drilled on the review material, students should read, study, and incorporate the concepts of this review book into their broad understanding of the material. While some subject matter is pure memorization, a large part of the AP exam requires concepts students have learned to concrete situations. Students should take a genuine understanding of concepts and themes from this review section, not a jumbled heap of facts and definitions.

## TAKING THE TESTS

The two full-length practice tests at the end of the book are some of the most valuable tools that your students have at their disposal before taking the actual AP exam. The tests are made to be taken in the same time limit as the actual test, with test-like questions and the same number of questions as the actual exam.

If you have sufficient class time to devote to a full test, set aside one class period that mimics the actual time limit of the test. If not, try to set up a special session for students to take a mock exam outside of class. Have students come in, take the test during the allotted time limit, and hand in their papers. This should be done about one month to two weeks before the actual exam—after all of the review material has been covered in class, but not right before they are scheduled to take the exam. Grade the practice tests using the answer key at the end of each test. If students get more than 30% of the exam incorrect, they still have a lot of studying to do before they can expect to get a good score on the exam.

Remember, all themes of the AP course are covered within these practice exams. When everyone's tests have been graded, have students identify what areas of study they still need to work on, then focus on those areas for each student. Hold study sessions; have students integrate and incorporate AP exam topics into the daily lessons leading up to exam day. Students should study the answer explanations for questions they got incorrect until they understand why each correct answer is right.

Have your students take the second full-length practice test, and have each individual figure out the best method of study from there. If students are well-prepared for the AP exam, they will be less likely to cram material into their brains at the last minute and more likely to get a good night's rest before the exam. Taking tests that mirror the actual AP exam will make students familiar with the timing and format well in advance, giving them a great advantage on Test Day.

It is important to **be** well-prepared and to **feel** well-prepared. Careful study and practice over time, as outlined above, builds confidence and a deeper content knowledge. Students who prepare this way are less likely to spend the nights before the exam desperately trying to cram test material into their brains. Using this book is one step in giving your students the best possible preparation for the AP Psychology exam.

Best of luck to you and your students!