

Resources/Advice to Help Your Student be Successful in A.P. Psychology

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Many students tend to struggle at first on AP tests and quizzes. This is often the case in an AP level course where the test questions are no longer just repeating the word for word definition but instead seeing if you can apply the term to a unique situation or example. These types of questions show a deeper understanding of the concept. I strongly encourage my students to continue trying new ways to study and prepare for their tests and quizzes. There are a variety of methods and resources available to help but it is up to them to find the one that will work best for them. The research on studying is clear; cramming the night before by simply reading or rereading notes does not work. There is simply too much information to remember and the brain doesn't learn well in long marathon sessions of studying. It's important we improve test taking skills now as your student will have the chance at getting college credit for this course in May by passing an AP Exam for the College Board. All of our tests and quizzes are designed to be similar to this end of the year exam. Learning how to successfully study for our class tests and quizzes will ensure success on the AP Exam in May for college credit. Below is a list of suggestions that you and your student use as you work on improving their study skills and overall grade.

- READ, READ, READ the Textbook – Almost every night there is a reading assignment from our textbook. Just like in college, time is limited in class and not all of the information on the test will be able to be talked about in class. It is expected that each student reads carefully and takes notes (a notes outline for each chapter is always provided online) on what they read and review each night along with their class notes so they are not cramming for the test.
- Class Website: www.portengaclass.com- Ever ask your student what they did in class today and get no answer? You can check it out yourself at our classroom website. Simply click on the class and scroll down to see what we are doing that week and what's coming up in the future (always refresh your browser to be sure you are getting the most recent postings). Copies of my lecture power point notes, videos, review links, practice tests and assignments can be found here as well. If your student is absent, they can see what they missed and make it up before they return. Linked to a drop down menu on the upper left side of the website is a collection of helpful resources and links to other websites that can assist them in preparing for tests.
- [How to Get the Most Out of Your Studying](#) – This 5 part video series found at the top of our AP website explains to students what research has shown on how to study successfully for a college level class. Each part is short (average is 7 minutes) and helps students see that simply cramming the night before by rereading your notes is not going to get them the “A” they want. Also check out the link, Make Things Memorable for more help with study methods that work. If test anxiety is an issue, there is also a link to an article with ways to combat it at the top of the AP Psych page.
- Online Study Resources: Under a drop down menu called Class Resources on the upper left side of the A.P. class website are links to pages that can help your student study:
 - [Psych Web Links](#) - A multitude of websites that provide a variety of ways to review and learn key concepts. Flashcards, practice tests and quizzes, class PowerPoint notes, crossword puzzles, simulations, AP exam reviews, video clips and tutorials are available at the click of a button.
 - [Psych Happens](#) – A site that provides students with the learning objectives for each chapter, my own PowerPoint notes from class and PowerPoint flashcards on key terms and concepts for each chapter.
 - [Quia Review Site](#) – A site where I've created review games from key terms and concepts for students to use to review each chapter.
 - [Textbook Website](#) – This site contains video tutorials of key concepts, flashcards, quizzes and interactive demonstrations that will help students review and learn material for their tests and quizzes.

- Buy a Copy of the Textbook and/or Study Guide – Some students like to highlight or take notes in the margin of their textbook. Others like to write directly into their studyguides. If your student is like this, you can purchase either book. It's expensive to buy them from the school (\$124 for textbook, checks payable to GHAPS). A better way is to search for one online using either Amazon.com or an online college textbook store. These are often cheaper than the price the school can give you. We are using the [Meyers Psychology for AP 2nd edition](#).
- Study with a Buddy – I have found that students often are the best tutors for each other because they can often put things into a perspective that their peers will understand. Study partners are always welcome to come study in my room before or after school or during lunch. I encourage students to share mnemonic memory devices they've created with each other and to share their study methods to help each other out. Our class Facebook Page: Mr. Portenga's AP Psychology Class is a great place for students to share ideas on how to remember material or get questions answered by their peers. This site is monitored by me so I always help out if I see a common question people are struggling with understanding.
- Rewrite/Edit, Reread, Repeat – Students who go back over that day's class notes and rewrite or edit their notes to reflect examples and ideas discussed in class then study it will find that this extra effort can go a long way to getting a better grade on the test. Always study and quiz yourself over previous days' notes before moving on to new material. For instance, if I have 3 sections/topics of notes to learn, I would first study section 1. When I'm comfortable with that material, I would go on to section 2. Before moving on to section 3, I would quiz myself over sections 1 and 2, spending extra time on the areas I struggled remembering. If you get into this habit, you will have reviewed material 6-7 times before test day! It is way more effective than a three hour study session the night before.
- Think Like a Teacher – When reading over notes or assignments for class, ask the question, "How would Mr. Portenga ask this on a test?" It rarely will come in the word for word form of your notes or textbook. Whenever possible, the test questions ask the test taker to apply the term to a situation or example so think of situations and examples for each term or concept you study.
- Come see the Teacher! – If your student is struggling and needs more explanation on something we're learning, they can see me to set up a time before or after school or during lunch where I can assist them. My emails and phone numbers are available at the top of this page. Please contact me with concerns or questions or to set up a time for after school help.

Our goal in AP Psychology is to not just prepare your student to pass the AP Exam in May but to also make them the best student they can be for when they move on to college. Learning how to prepare/study successfully for college level tests and quizzes will give them the skills they'll need to be successful at the next level. Please remember that 60% of your student's grade is determined by test scores with the final 40% being made up from quizzes (15%) and homework (15%), online review quizzes (5%), and in-class work (5%). This is similar to most college level classes and is designed to encourage your student to take test days seriously and study for them! Our tests are designed to be like the A.P. Test in May, which they can take for a \$110 fee to earn college credit for an introductory psychology course. Students that take the class seriously and learn to study and perform often find that they are able to score a 3 or better on the A.P. Test and thus save themselves or you money by not having to take an introductory psychology class in college. We've been incredibly successful in our students passing this test – see AP Psych Exam Statistics sheet for specific data.