STUDY GUIDE: UNIT II – RESEARCH METHODS
AP Psychology

In addition to the information in this study guide, you are also responsible for all of the content in textbook (Modules 4-8), all information from class notes/discussions, all handouts and graphic organizers. It’s AP – it’s all fair game 😊

Terms & Concepts

All T&C from Modules 4-8, listed on the back of the September calendar.

Module 4
4-1 Science-based answers vs. intuition and common sense
✓ Why aren’t intuition and common sense enough to provide information about people’s thoughts and behaviors?
✓ What are hindsight and overconfidence?

4-2 Scientific attitude and critical thinking
✓ What are 3 main components of the scientific attitude?
✓ Who is James Randi?
✓ What is critical thinking?

Module 5
5-1 Science-based answers vs. intuition and common sense
✓ How do theories advance psychological science?
✓ What is the scientific method? Why do psychologists use it?
✓ What are operational definitions? What role do they play in psychological experimentation?
✓ What is replication? Why is it important in psychological research?

5-2 How do psychologists observe and describe behavior?
✓ What are the three descriptive methods used by psychologists? Be able to define and provide examples of each.
✓ How can wording affect survey results?
✓ What is a random sample? Why is it important in psychological research?
Module 6
6-1 What are positive and negative correlations, and why do they enable prediction but not cause-effect explanation?
- What is a scatterplot? Why is it important in psychological research?
- Understand and know the difference between a positive correlation, a negative correlation, and no correlation.
- Can correlation determine causation?
6-2 What are illusory correlations?
- Why do people often perceive order in random events?
6-3 How do experiments, powered by random assignment, clarify cause and effect?
- What role do experiments play in psychological research?
- What are double-blind procedures and random assignment? Why is they important in psychological research?
- Understand the difference between an independent variable and a dependent variable, and be able to identify each in a given example.

Module 7
7-1 How can we describe data with measures of central tendency and variation?
- What are the three measures of central tendency?
- What are the two measures of variation?
- What is a normal curve?
7-2 What principles can guide our making generalizations from samples and deciding whether differences are significant?

Module 8
8-1 Can laboratory experiments illuminate everyday life?
8-2 Does behavior depend on one’s culture and gender?
8-3 Why do psychologists study animals, and is it ethical to experiment on animals?
8-4 Is it ethical to experiment on people?
- What was the Stanford Prison Experiment? Why was it unethical?
- What are the APA’s guidelines for ethical research?
8-5 Is psychology free of value judgments?