

Unit 4: Social Psychology and Personality

Unit 4 covers how other people shape what we do and what stays consistent in who we are, including attribution, influence, relationships, personality theories, motivation, and emotion.

AP Psychology

Unit 4 - Social Psychology and Personality

15-25% of the exam

About 14 minutes to read

How to use this guide

Work through the guide in order. Each section gives you a definition, an example, and a note about a common test trap. Try the quick-check at the end without looking back, then review what you missed. If an idea appears twice, that is because Unit 4 often asks you to connect ideas. The free-response practice follows the current exam format, with one Article Analysis Question and one Evidence-Based Question instead of the older apply-a-list-of-terms prompt.

What this unit is worth. Unit 4 carries 15 to 25 percent of the multiple-choice section, the same as every other unit. Social psychology tends to be scenario-heavy; personality tends to be theory-comparison heavy.

Unit 4 at a glance

BLOCK	TOPICS	ROUGH AP WEIGHT
Social psychology	Attribution, attitudes, conformity, obedience, group behavior, prejudice, helping, attraction	15-25% of the multiple-choice section. In the Fall 2024 Course and Exam Description every unit carries the same 15-25% range. Social psychology tends to be scenario-heavy; personality tends to be theory-comparison heavy.
Personality	Psychodynamic, humanistic, trait, social-cognitive theories; assessment	
Motivation and emotion	Why behavior starts and persists; what emotion is and how theories order arousal, labeling, and feeling (Topics 4.6-4.7)	

The big picture

Units 1 through 3 mostly focus on what happens inside one person. Unit 4 focuses on how the presence of other people, real, imagined, or implied, changes what we think and do, and on what stays stable in a person across time and situations.

Social psychology studies the first question, and personality psychology studies the second. A strong situation can lead many people to conform or obey, while a stable trait such as extraversion can help predict behavior across situations.

Attribution, explaining why people do what they do

An **attribution** is the explanation you give for behavior. A **dispositional attribution** points to something inside the person, for example saying she is late because she is careless. A **situational attribution** points to something outside the person, for example saying she is late because the bus broke down. People use both kinds of attributions, but they do not use them equally in every situation.

The **fundamental attribution error** is the tendency to overestimate dispositional causes and underestimate situational causes when we judge other people. For example, if a student trips in the hallway, we may decide the student is clumsy, but if we trip ourselves, we are more likely to notice that the floor was wet. This pattern happens in part because we can see the other person clearly, while we often do not notice all the situational factors that affected that person.

We are less likely to make that same error when we judge ourselves. The **self-serving bias** is the tendency to make attributions that protect our self-image. We tend to credit our successes to ourselves, for example by pointing to how much we studied or to our ability, and we tend to blame failures on the situation, such as saying a test was unfair or that we were sick that day. The **just-world phenomenon** is the tendency to assume the world is fair. That assumption can lead us to blame victims for their misfortune, because it can feel more comfortable to believe that bad things happen to people who deserve them than to believe that bad things can happen at random.

A common trap on the test involves culture and whose behavior is being explained. Individualist cultures tend to favor dispositional attributions, and collectivist cultures tend to favor situational attributions. The fundamental attribution error refers to how we explain *other people*. If a scenario describes someone explaining their own outcomes mainly by pointing to the situation, that is not the fundamental attribution error, and it is closer to the self-serving bias. When you read a scenario, check whose behavior is being explained and who is giving the explanation.

The attribution traps in that box are in the Social Psychology and Personality deck in Rycal as flashcards. Drill them in short sets and practice telling the fundamental attribution error from the self-serving bias when the scenario changes.

Attitudes and persuasion

An **attitude** is a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of something. An attitude predicts behavior best when the attitude is specific, strong, and directly relevant to the behavior in question. For example, a person can hold a generally positive attitude toward protecting the environment and still drive a car most places.

Cognitive dissonance is the discomfort you feel when your actions and your attitudes do not line up. People most often reduce that discomfort by changing the attitude, because the action has already happened and cannot be changed as easily. For example, a student who campaigns for a club they privately think is pointless may start to believe in the club, because it is uncomfortable to keep thinking, “I worked this hard for something worthless.”

The **foot-in-the-door phenomenon** works on the same principle. If you agree to a small request, such as signing a petition or wearing a pin, you become more likely to agree to a larger request later. One reason is that you have already acted like a supporter, so agreeing again feels consistent with what you have already done.

Two routes to persuasion

The **elaboration likelihood model** describes two routes to persuasion. The **central route** works through the merits of the argument itself, including evidence, logic, and quality of reasoning. Attitudes formed this way tend to last longer and resist counterarguments. The **peripheral route** works through cues around the argument, such as an attractive spokesperson, a catchy jingle, or a celebrity using the product. Attitudes formed this way tend to fade more easily.

ROUTE	WHAT CHANGES THE MIND	EXAMPLE
Central	The strength of the evidence	Choosing a laptop after comparing battery and processor specs
Peripheral	Cues around the message	Choosing a laptop because your favorite creator uses it

Advertisers often use both routes in one ad, for example by including a real statistic and having a famous person deliver it. On the test, decide which route is working by looking at whether the argument itself or the cues around it do most of the persuading.



Social influence reaches a person through layers of group pressure, from distant observers to the immediate group.

Conformity, obedience, and groups

Conformity is adjusting your behavior or thinking to match a group standard. In Solomon Asch's line studies, participants judged which of three lines matched a standard line, and the correct answer was clear. When the confederates unanimously gave the same wrong answer first, about three-quarters of participants conformed at least once, even though they could see the correct answer. We conform partly to gain information, because we may think the group knows something we do not, and partly to gain approval and avoid standing out. The first is **informational social influence** and the second is **normative social influence**. Culture, group size, and unanimity affect how often conformity occurs.

Obedience is complying with a direct order from an authority figure. Stanley Milgram told participants they were teachers who would administer shocks to a learner who got answers wrong. Two-thirds of participants went all the way to the maximum voltage, even though they heard screams and then silence. The lab coat, the prestigious setting, the small steps, and the feeling that responsibility was shared made it harder for many participants to stop, even when they felt uncomfortable. Obedience fell when the study left Yale, when the learner was in the same room, or when participants saw others refuse.

What groups do to individuals

CONCEPT	WHAT HAPPENS	EXAMPLE
Social facilitation	Presence of others improves performance on well-learned or easy tasks, hurts it on new or hard ones	An experienced runner races faster with a crowd; a beginner golfer putts worse
Social loafing	People put in less effort in a group when their individual contribution cannot be identified	One person in a group project does noticeably less
Deindividuation	Loss of self-awareness and restraint in a group, often with anonymity and arousal	Behavior in a costumed crowd no one would do alone and named
Group polarization	Discussion among like-minded people shifts the group toward a more extreme version of its starting position	A cautious group leaves more cautious; a bold group leaves bolder
Groupthink	A cohesive group suppresses dissent to keep harmony, and makes a poor decision	Advisers who have private doubts stay silent in the meeting

Students often mix up groupthink and group polarization, so it helps to keep the difference clear.

Groupthink happens when a cohesive group protects its agreement and avoids disagreement, which can lead to a poor decision. Group polarization happens when discussion moves a group toward a more extreme version of the position its members already held, and that outcome is not necessarily a poor decision. If a scenario emphasizes pressure to agree and people staying silent even though they have doubts, the better answer is groupthink. If a scenario emphasizes that the group leaves with a more extreme position than its members held at the start, the better answer is group polarization.

Social relations, prejudice, helping, and attraction

A **stereotype** is a generalized belief about a group. **Prejudice** is an attitude, usually an unjustifiable and negative attitude toward a group and its members. **Discrimination** is behavior directed toward a group or its members. These three ideas are related, but they are not the same. A stereotype is a belief, prejudice is an attitude, and discrimination is an action, and the three do not always occur together.

In-groups are the groups we identify with, and **out-groups** are the groups we do not identify with. We tend to favor our in-group, and we tend to view out-group members as more similar to each other than they really are, which is called the **out-group homogeneity effect**. Scapegoating occurs when people direct their frustration toward an out-group, because blaming that group can feel like an easy explanation when things are going badly.

The **bystander effect** is the finding that a person is less likely to help when other people are present. Two mechanisms help explain this effect. **Diffusion of responsibility** means that when several people are present, each person feels less personal responsibility to act. **Pluralistic ignorance** means that each person looks at the calm reactions of the others and concludes that the situation is probably not an emergency. A person who needs help is more likely to receive help when they make eye contact with one specific bystander and ask that person directly than when they address a whole crowd.

Altruism is unselfish concern for the welfare of others. People help for many reasons, and social norms are one influence on helping. The **reciprocity norm** is the expectation that we should return help to people who have helped us, and the **social-responsibility norm** is the expectation that we should help people who depend on us. Attraction is influenced by a few basic factors. The **mere exposure effect** means that repeated exposure to something tends to increase how much we like it. Proximity, physical attractiveness, and similarity also help predict who we end up liking.

Personality, what we are trying to explain

Personality is an individual's characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting. That definition raises an important question for this unit, which is how consistent that pattern is across time and situations. Each theory below answers that question in a different way. A psychodynamic theorist looks for hidden conflicts, a humanist looks for growth, a trait theorist describes stable dimensions, and a social-cognitive theorist looks at what the person expects and believes. For the exam, you do not need to decide which theory is best. You do need to be able to read a scenario and identify which perspective the question is using.

Psychodynamic theory, Freud and later thinkers

Sigmund Freud argued that personality comes from the interaction of three structures. The **id** is present at birth, operates on the pleasure principle, and seeks immediate satisfaction. The **ego** operates on the reality principle and negotiates between the id and the demands of the real world. The **superego** is the internalized voice of parents and society, including conscience and ideals. According to Freud, anxiety is a signal that the ego is having difficulty managing those competing demands.

When the ego is threatened by anxiety, it uses **defense mechanisms**, which are largely unconscious tactics that distort reality in order to reduce that anxiety. You should learn the definitions and examples for each mechanism in the table below, because the test often asks you to identify them in short scenarios.

MECHANISM	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Repression	Pushing threatening thoughts into the unconscious	Cannot recall a traumatic event at all
Regression	Retreating to an earlier, safer stage of behavior	A child thumb-sucking again after a sibling is born
Reaction formation	Expressing the opposite of the unacceptable impulse	Excessive friendliness toward someone you resent
Projection	Attributing your own unacceptable impulse to someone else	An unfaithful partner accusing the other of cheating
Displacement	Redirecting an impulse toward a safer target	Slamming a door after being scolded by a teacher
Denial	Refusing to acknowledge a painful reality	Insisting a serious diagnosis must be a lab error
Sublimation	Channeling an unacceptable impulse into a socially valued one	Aggressive energy turned into competitive sport

Later psychodynamic thinkers kept Freud’s idea of the unconscious but placed less emphasis on some of his other claims. Karen Horney disagreed with Freud’s views of women and emphasized social and cultural factors. Alfred Adler argued that the drive to overcome feelings of inferiority shapes personality. Carl Jung proposed a collective unconscious that is shared across humanity.

Humanistic and trait theories

Humanistic psychology rejected both Freud’s deterministic view and behaviorism’s narrower focus on observable behavior alone.

Carl Rogers argued that people grow when they receive **unconditional regard**, which means acceptance without conditions, and that problems can develop when our **self-concept**, meaning all our thoughts and feelings about ourselves, moves too far away from who we actually are. Rogers emphasized the perceived self more than any objective measurement, and he assumed that people are basically good and oriented toward growth. Critics have questioned that assumption, because it does not fit every person or every situation.

Trait theory, describing personality instead of explaining it

Trait theorists focus on describing personality patterns instead of explaining where those patterns come from. A **trait** is a characteristic pattern of behavior or a predisposition to act in a consistent way across situations. Through factor analysis, Hans Eysenck identified extraversion and neuroticism (emotional stability) as two major dimensions. The most widely used current model is the **Big Five**, which you can remember with the letters CANOE or OCEAN.

DIMENSION	HIGH END	LOW END
Conscientiousness	Organized, disciplined	Impulsive, careless
Agreeableness	Cooperative, trusting	Suspicious, antagonistic
Neuroticism	Anxious, emotionally unstable	Calm, secure
Openness	Imaginative, variety-seeking	Practical, conventional
Extraversion	Outgoing, energetic	Reserved, solitary

Big Five traits are relatively stable across adulthood, they predict real outcomes such as job performance for conscientiousness and health complaints for neuroticism, and they have been found across cultures. One limitation of trait descriptions is that they can become circular. For example, saying that someone is extraverted because they act outgoing does not explain much unless the trait also helps predict something new about that person’s behavior.

Social-cognitive theory and the self

Albert Bandura agreed that behavior matters, but he also argued that learning involves influence in more than one direction. **Reciprocal determinism** means that behavior, internal personal factors, and environmental influences all affect each other. For example, you may choose environments that fit your preferences, and those environments then affect your behavior. A quiet student may choose to study in the library, and studying in the library may make quiet studying easier.

Two concepts that involve beliefs are especially important in social-cognitive theory. **Self-efficacy** is your belief that you can succeed at a specific task. It is not general confidence, but a task-specific belief, such as believing that you can solve this kind of problem. High self-efficacy is associated with greater persistence, lower anxiety, and better performance in that area. **Locus of control**, a concept from Julian Rotter, refers to whether you believe outcomes are mainly controlled by your own actions or by outside factors. An **internal locus of control** means you tend to see outcomes as mostly up to you, and an **external locus of control** means you tend to see luck, fate, or powerful others as more in control. People with an internal locus tend to achieve more and report better health habits, although an internal locus can lead to self-blame in a situation that is truly outside a person’s control.

How personality gets measured

APPROACH	HOW IT WORKS	WATCH OUT FOR
Projective tests	Ambiguous stimuli (Rorschach inkblots, TAT pictures) invite responses the clinician interprets	Low reliability and validity; interpretation varies by clinician
Self-report inventories	Standardized true/false or scaled items, scored against norms (MMPI, Big Five inventories)	People can fake answers; social desirability bias
Behavioral observation	Watching what a person actually does in a setting	Time-intensive; behavior changes when watched

The **MMPI** (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory) is the most widely researched clinical inventory. It was developed empirically, which means items were kept because they separated groups of respondents, not simply because they sounded reasonable to the test developers. The MMPI also includes validity scales that help detect inconsistent or exaggerated responding.

Motivation, why behavior starts and keeps going

Motivation is the set of factors that energize, direct, and sustain behavior. In Topic 4.6, you need to be able to explain the same behavior, such as studying, eating, or joining a team, using several different theories, and you need to understand what each theory predicts that the others do not.

THEORY	CORE CLAIM	LOOK FOR
Instinct / evolutionary	Some behaviors are built in because they aided survival or reproduction.	A fixed, unlearned pattern seen across the species.
Drive-reduction	A physiological need creates a drive, and behavior works to restore homeostasis , the body's steady internal state.	Hunger, thirst, and temperature: need, tension, action, balance restored.
Incentive	External rewards pull behavior, even without an internal need.	Dessert after a full meal, a bonus, praise from a coach.
Optimum arousal	People seek a middle level of arousal, not zero. Performance peaks there and falls off on both sides (the Yerkes-Dodson idea).	Boredom pushes toward stimulation; overload pushes toward rest.

Intrinsic motivation means doing something for its own sake, and **extrinsic motivation** means doing something for a separate outcome, such as pay or grades. **Achievement motivation** is the desire to master a standard of excellence, and **affiliation motivation** is the desire for connection and belonging. Both types of motivation vary by person and by situation, which is one reason the same classroom can motivate one student and discourage another.

Hunger is a useful example of how biological and social factors interact. Falling glucose levels, the hormone **ghrelin**, which rises when the stomach is empty, and falling **leptin**, which signals stored energy, all provide information to the hypothalamus, which helps regulate eating. People also eat for reasons that are not only biological, such as when food is present, when the clock indicates it is lunchtime, or when other people around them are eating. Biological factors help create the urge to eat, and incentives and social norms also shape when people eat and how much they eat.

A common test question asks you to tell these theories apart. Drive-reduction theory requires an internal deficit, such as hunger or thirst. If there is no internal deficit and an external reward is motivating the behavior, the better answer is incentive theory. Optimum arousal theory describes the middle range of arousal, where performance rises to a peak and then falls, so performance can suffer when arousal is either too low because of boredom or too high because of overload.

Emotion, arousal, expression, and experience

An **emotion** is a response of the whole organism that includes three parts, **physiological** arousal such as heart rate, breathing, and adrenaline, expressive behavior such as facial expression, posture, and voice, and **cognitive** conscious experience, which is what the feeling is like and how you interpret it. Topic 4.7 focuses on how the physiological and cognitive experiences are related and whether they happen in sequence, at the same time, or only when one is present.

POSITION	ORDER	IN ONE LINE
Physiological first, then cognitive	Arousal first, feeling follows	The body changes first; the feeling is what you notice once you register those changes.
Physiological and cognitive together	Arousal and feeling at the same time	The stimulus triggers the body and the experience in parallel; neither causes the other.
Cognitive label required	Arousal plus a cognitive label	The same racing heart becomes excitement or anger depending on how you explain it to yourself.

Two related ideas describe how behavior can feed back into emotion. The **facial-feedback hypothesis** holds that holding a particular facial expression can slightly affect the feeling that goes with it, so holding a smile can slightly lift mood. The broader idea of **behavior feedback** applies the same idea to posture and movement, such as how you walk. Neither effect is large, and neither replaces the event that caused the emotion. Both only slightly change how strong the emotion feels.

Broaden-and-build is the idea that positive emotions can widen attention and thinking over time, which can help people build skills, relationships, and resources that last beyond the feeling itself. Negative emotions tend to narrow attention toward immediate action, while positive emotions tend to broaden attention and thinking.

Some facial expressions for basic emotions, including happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise, show **universality**, which means they are recognized across cultures. **Display rules** are the norms of a culture or a setting that guide when and how strongly people should show emotion, and those rules vary a great deal across cultures and settings. Because of those rules, the same feeling may be expressed very openly in one setting and shown only slightly in another. Gestures vary across cultures even more than facial expressions do, so a gesture by itself is not a reliable clue to a specific emotion.

On the test, pay close attention to how the scenario describes the order of arousal and labeling. If a scenario describes the same arousal leading to two different emotions depending on the context or on how the person explains the arousal, then the cognitive label is determining which emotion is experienced. If a scenario describes no label and the feeling simply follows the body's response, then the physiological experience is coming first. If a question emphasizes that the body response and the feeling do not occur in sequence, then the question is describing them as happening at the same time.

Four theories, one scenario

THEORY	WHY DOES MAYA PROCRASTINATE ON EVERY PROJECT?
Psychodynamic	An unconscious conflict, perhaps fear of evaluation rooted in early experience, that the ego defends against by avoiding the task
Humanistic	Her self-concept ("I am not a capable student") is at odds with her experience, and conditions of worth have made approval feel conditional on perfection
Trait	Low conscientiousness. The theory describes and predicts; it does not dig for a cause
Social-cognitive	Low self-efficacy for large projects and an external locus of control ("the teacher grades unfairly anyway") reduce her effort before she starts

You can often tell which theory a question is asking about by looking at the key words in the question. Words such as unconscious, conflicted, and defending point to a psychodynamic view. Words such as growing, actualizing, and accepted point to a humanistic view. Words such as consistent, dimension, and score point to a trait view. Words and phrases such as expects, believes she can, and learned from watching point to a social-cognitive view. In many questions, the wording of the scenario already signals which theory you should use before you even read the answer choices.

CHECK YOURSELF

Quick-check

Try to answer these questions without looking back at the guide, and then check your answers on the next page. Any term you cannot say out loud from memory needs more work. Add that term to your deck in Rycal and come back to it over the next few days.

1. A bystander does not call for help because five other people are watching and none of them look alarmed. Name both mechanisms at work.
2. A student who failed a test blames a noisy room; the same student, after acing one, credits her preparation. Which bias?
3. Signing a small petition last week makes you more likely to volunteer this week. Name the phenomenon and the principle underneath it.
4. A group of already-risk-averse investors meets and leaves even more cautious. Groupthink or group polarization?
5. A person redirects anger at a coach into aggressive play on the field. Which defense mechanism, and why is it the healthy one on the list?
6. Two students both avoid starting an essay. One has low self-efficacy for writing; the other has an external locus of control. Write one sentence of advice for each that actually differs.

Answers

1. Diffusion of responsibility and pluralistic ignorance.
2. Self-serving bias.
3. Foot-in-the-door, driven by consistency and cognitive dissonance.
4. Group polarization. There is no suppressed dissent, just a shift to an extreme.
5. Sublimation. The impulse gets expressed, not buried, and the outlet is socially valued.
6. Self-efficacy: break the essay into one paragraph she has done successfully before. Locus of control: help her see one thing about the outcome that her own choices actually determine.

If you missed a quick-check question, make a flashcard for the term you missed and drill it spaced over several days instead of reviewing it once. In Rycal, keep those cards with the Social Psychology and Personality deck so your missed items return with the other Unit 4 terms.

Free-response practice, the current format

The exam changed for Fall 2024, with the first new exam given in May 2025. The free-response section changed as part of that update. Section I now has 75 multiple-choice questions in 90 minutes. Section II lasts 70 minutes and includes exactly two questions, and each question is worth 7 points. **Question 1 is the Article Analysis Question (AAQ).** For the AAQ, you will read one summarized research study and answer six parts that cover the research method, a research variable, interpretation of a statistic, an ethical guideline, generalizability, and an argument about what the results show. **Question 2 is the Evidence-Based Question (EBQ).** For the EBQ, you will read three sources on one topic, propose a claim, and support that claim with cited evidence and psychological reasoning. Neither question asks you to apply a list of terms to a made-up scenario, so you should not prepare by practicing that older type of prompt. The next two pages give you one AAQ and one EBQ that are based on Unit 4 ideas. Plan to spend about 25 minutes on the AAQ and about 45 minutes on the EBQ, and include your reading time in those totals.

This guide is meant for review, and it does not replace your class notes. Use it together with timed practice so you can practice recalling the material under test conditions.

AAQ practice, one study, six parts

Give yourself about 25 minutes for this practice, including the time you spend reading. Answer each part in complete sentences. This study summary was written for this guide as practice, and it is not a released exam question.

Source. Researchers tested whether being individually identifiable changes effort on a group task. They recruited 96 high school students, who gave informed consent with a parent or guardian's permission and were told they could withdraw at any time. A computer randomly assigned each student to work either alone or in a group of four on a brainstorming task in which they listed as many uses as possible for a cardboard box in 10 minutes. In the alone condition, each student's ideas were counted separately. In the group condition, the four lists were merged and only the group total was recorded, so no individual's contribution could be identified. Two trained raters, who did not know which condition a list came from, counted the number of distinct ideas. The researchers' hypothesis was that students would produce fewer ideas when their individual output could not be identified.

CONDITION	MEAN DISTINCT IDEAS PER STUDENT
Working alone (identifiable)	14.2
Working in a group of four (not identifiable)	9.6

The difference between the two means was statistically significant. After the task, students were debriefed about the purpose of the study.

1. **(A)** Identify the research method used in the study.
2. **(B)** State the operational definition of effort in this study.
3. **(C)** Describe what the difference between the two means shows.
4. **(D)** Identify one ethical guideline the researchers applied, and say how they applied it.
5. **(E)** Explain how far the findings can be generalized, using specific evidence about the sample.
6. **(F)** Explain how the results support or refute the researchers' hypothesis, citing a specific result. Then connect that result to the concept of social loafing.

How the points work

Parts A through E are worth 1 point each, and Part F is worth 2 points. When a part asks you to explain or describe, naming a term alone is not enough. In part B, give the exact measure used, not only the word effort. In part C, explain what the numbers mean, not only that they differ. In part E, take a position and support it with evidence about the sample, because 96 high school students can speak to similar students better than to adults or other tasks. In part F, quote a specific result, such as 14.2 compared with 9.6, and explain how it relates to the hypothesis before you connect it to social loafing.

EBQ practice, building a claim from three sources

Give yourself about 45 minutes for this practice, including the time you spend reading. Cite every piece of evidence you use, for example by writing (Source A) after the evidence. These summaries were written for this guide as practice, and they are not released exam sources.

Question. Using the sources below, develop and justify an argument about how schools should structure group projects so that every student contributes.

Source A. In a series of rope-pulling and shouting tasks, researchers found that people working in groups each pulled or shouted less hard than people working alone, and the drop grew as group size grew. When researchers fooled participants into believing others were pulling when they were actually pulling alone, effort stayed high, which suggests the drop comes from working alongside others, not from the task itself.

Source B. A survey of college students after group projects found that students reported working harder and feeling more accountable when the instructor used individual quizzes on the shared material and brief peer ratings of each member's contribution. Students in groups graded with a single shared grade, with no individual measures, reported the most free-riding and the most resentment about it.

Source C. A professional association statement on cooperative learning advises that group work succeeds when the task genuinely needs several people, roles rotate so status does not harden, and the teacher watches for students being excluded. It warns that simply placing students together can widen gaps, because high-status students talk more and are listened to more.

1. **(A)** Propose a specific, defensible claim about how schools should structure group projects.
2. **(B)(i)** Support your claim with one specific piece of evidence from one source. Cite it. **(B)(ii)** Explain how that evidence supports your claim using a psychological concept from this unit.
3. **(C)(i)** Support your claim with a second piece of evidence, from a different source. Cite it. **(C)(ii)** Explain how it supports your claim using a *different* psychological concept than the one you used in (B)(ii).

How the points work

The claim earns 1 point, each piece of cited evidence earns 1 point, and each explanation earns 2 points, for 7 points in total. Use a specific finding from a source, not only its general topic. Use two different sources and two different concepts, because using social loafing in both explanations will limit your score. Define the concept you choose and explain why it shows that the evidence supports your claim. Social loafing, diffusion of responsibility, and social facilitation often fit this type of question well.

Exam format and unit weighting in this guide follow the College Board AP Psychology Exam page and the Fall 2024 Course and Exam Description at <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-psychology/exam>. This guide is meant for review, and it does not replace your class notes. Use it together with timed practice so you can practice recalling the material under test conditions.

Where to go next

Turn every missed item above into a flashcard and drill the cards spaced over several days rather than in one sitting. That includes quick-check misses, practice question misses, and any term you could not explain out loud.

In Rycal, this unit is the Social Psychology and Personality deck under AP Psychology. The deck covers the terms used in this guide, and the practice questions there target the same traps named in this guide. You can also set a test date in the Test Planner to spread the deck work across the days before the test, or start a session with Brain Dump to write down what you remember before you open the deck.

Key terms for this unit

Actor-observer bias, Agreeableness, Altruism, Approach-approach conflict, Approach-avoidance conflict, Arousal theory, Attribution theory, Avoidance-avoidance conflict, Belief perseverance, Belongingness (need to belong), Big Five theory, Boredom susceptibility, Broaden-and-build theory of emotion, Burnout, Bystander effect, Central route to persuasion, Cognitive dissonance, Collectivism, Confirmation bias, Conformity, Conscientiousness, Deindividuation, Denial, Diffusion of responsibility, Discrimination, Disinhibition, Displacement, Display rules, Dispositional attribution, Door-in-the-face technique, Downward social comparison, Drive-reduction theory, Eating as motivated behavior, Ego defense mechanisms, Elaboration likelihood model, Emotion (affect), Emotional stability, Ethnocentrism, Experience seeking, Explanatory style, External influences on eating, External locus of control, Extraversion, Extrinsic motivation, Facial-feedback hypothesis, Factor analysis, False consensus effect, Foot-in-the-door technique, Fundamental attribution error, Ghrelin, Group polarization, Groupthink, Halo effect, Homeostasis, Humanistic theory of personality, Hypothalamus, Implicit attitudes, In-group bias, Incentive theory, Individualism, Industrial-organizational (I/O) psychology, Informational social influence, Instincts, Internal locus of control, Intrinsic motivation, Just-world phenomenon, Leptin, Lewin's motivational conflicts theory, Locus of control, Mere exposure effect, Multiculturalism, Normative social influence, Obedience, Openness to experience, Optimistic explanatory style, Out-group homogeneity bias, Peripheral route to persuasion, Personality inventories, Persuasion, Pessimistic explanatory style, Physiological vs. cognitive theories of emotion, Prejudice, Projection, Projective tests, Psychodynamic theory of personality, Rationalization, Reaction formation, Reciprocal determinism, Regression, Relative deprivation, Repression, Self-actualizing tendency, Self-concept, Self-determination theory, Self-efficacy, Self-esteem, Self-fulfilling prophecy, Self-serving bias, Sensation-seeking theory, Situational attribution, Social-cognitive theory of personality, Social comparison, Social facilitation, Social influence theory, Social loafing, Social norms, Social reciprocity norm, Social responsibility norm, Social traps, Stereotype, Sublimation, Superordinate goals, Thrill/adventure seeking, Trait theories of personality, Unconditional regard, Unconscious processes, Ego, Person Perception, Mirror-Image Perceptions, Attitude, Social Identity, Outgroup, Ingroup, Scapegoat Theory, Other-Race Effect, Role, Culture, Tight Culture, Loose Culture, Prosocial Behavior, Social Exchange Theory, Personality, Psychoanalysis, Id, Superego, Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), Rorschach Inkblot Test, Preconscious, Unconscious, Collective Unconscious, Behavioral Approach, Self, The Spotlight Effect, Traits, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Motivation, Physiological Need, Incentives, Hormones, Glucose, Behavior-Feedback Effect, Anger, Disgust, Surprise, Fear, Sadness, Universality of emotions, Upward social comparison, Yerkes-Dodson Law.