Cognition

AP Psychology · Vocabulary in context

Word	Example
Perception /pə'sepʃn/	**Perception** is how the brain makes sense of what we sense.
Bottom-up processing /'bɒtəm ʌp 'prəʊsesɪŋ/	**Bottom-up processing** builds a picture from small details.
Top-down processing /tɒp daʊn 'prəʊsesɪŋ/	**Top-down processing** uses what you already know to understand what you see.
schema /'ski:mə/	A **schema** is a mental plan built from experience.
perceptual set /pə'septʃu:əl set/	A **perceptual set** makes you see what you expect to see.
context /'kɒntekst/	Explain the **context** of the example.
Gestalt psychology /gəʃ'ta:lt saɪ'kɒlədʒi/	**Gestalt psychology** says we see the whole, not just the parts.
closure /'kləʊʒə/	**Closure** lets us see a full circle even when part of it is missing.
figure and ground /'fɪgə ænd graʊnd/	**Figure and ground** separate an object from its background.
proximity /prɒk'sɪmɪti/	**Proximity** makes dots that are close together look like a group.
similarity /ˌsɪmɪ'lærɪti/	**Similarity** makes shapes of the same colour look like a group.

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Attention /ə'tenʃn/	**Attention** lets you focus on one thing.
Selective attention /sɪ'lektɪv ə'tenʃn/	**Selective attention** lets you listen to one friend in a noisy room.
cocktail party effect /'kɒkteɪl 'pa:ti ɪ'fekt/	The **cocktail party effect** is hearing your name across a busy room.
Inattentional blindness /ɪnə'tenʃənl 'blaɪndnəs/	**Inattentional blindness** made people miss the gorilla in the video.
change blindness /tʃeɪndʒ 'blaɪndnəs/	**Change blindness** means not noticing a big change in a picture.
depth cues /depθ kju:z/	**Depth cues** help us judge how far away things are.
Binocular cues /bɪ'nɒkjʊlə kju:z/	**Binocular cues** need both eyes.
Retinal disparity /'retɪnl dɪ'spærɪti/	**Retinal disparity** means each eye sees a slightly different picture.
Convergence /kən'vɜ:dʒəns/	**Convergence** means your eyes turn inward to look at something close.
• **Monocular cues** /mɒ'nəʊkjʊlə kju:z/	**Monocular cues** work with only one eye.
relative clarity /'relətɪv 'klærɪti/	**Relative clarity** makes hazy mountains look far away.
relative size /'relətɪv saɪz/	**Relative size** makes a small person look far away.
texture gradient /'tekstʃə 'greɪdɪənt/	A **texture gradient** makes far-away grass look smoother.

Word	Example
linear perspective /'lɪnɪə pə'spektɪv/	**Linear perspective** makes railway lines seem to meet far away.
interposition /ˌɪntəpə'zɪʃn/	**Interposition**: a tree in front of a house looks closer.
Perceptual constancy /pə'septʃu:əl 'kɒnstənsi/	**Perceptual constancy** lets you know a door is still a rectangle when it opens.
apparent movement /ə'pærənt 'mu:vmənt/	A flip book shows **apparent movement**.
Concepts /'kɒnsepts/	"Fruit" and "furniture" are **concepts**. "Fruit" "furniture"
prototype /'prəʊtəʊtaɪp/	A **prototype** is an early version of the program.
assimilation /əˌsɪmɪ'leɪʃn/	After digestion, **assimilation** turns food into the animal's own body tissue.
accommodation /əˌkɒmə'deɪʃn/	**Accommodation** means changing your ideas to fit new facts.
algorithm /'ælgərɪθəm/	An **algorithm** is a list of steps to solve a problem.
heuristic /hju:'rɪstɪk/	A **heuristic** is a good guess that saves time.
representativeness heuristic /ˌreprɪ'zentətɪvnəs hju:'rɪstɪk/	The **representativeness heuristic** judges people by how well they fit a type.
availability heuristic /əˌveɪlə'bɪlɪti hju:'rɪstɪk/	The **availability heuristic** judges by what comes to mind easily.
mental set /'mentl set/	A **mental set** makes you use an old method even when a better one exists.

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Functional fixedness /'fʌŋkʃənl 'fɪkstnəs/	**Functional fixedness** stops you seeing a coin as a screwdriver.
gambler's fallacy /'gæmbləz 'fæləsi/	The **gambler's fallacy** says red is "due" after five blacks. " "
sunk-cost fallacy /sʌŋk kɒst 'fæləsi/	The **sunk-cost fallacy** keeps you watching a bad film because you paid for it.
Executive functions /eg'zekju:tɪv 'fʌŋkʃnz/	**Executive functions** help us plan and control our actions.
Creativity /kri:ˌeɪ'tɪvɪti/	**Creativity** means having new and useful ideas.
divergent thinking /daɪ'vɜ:dʒənt 'θɪŋkɪŋ/	**Divergent thinking** finds many uses for a brick.
convergent thinking /kən'vɜ:dʒənt 'θɪŋkɪŋ/	**Convergent thinking** finds the one right answer.
Explicit memory /ek'splɪsɪt 'meməri/	**Explicit memory** is what you can consciously remember and describe.
episodic memory /ˌepɪ'sɒdɪk 'meməri/	Your last birthday party is an **episodic memory**.
semantic memory /sə'mæntɪk 'meməri/	Knowing that Paris is in France is **semantic memory**.
Implicit memory /ɪm'plɪsɪt 'meməri/	**Implicit memory** works without you thinking about it.

Word	Example
procedural memory /prəˈsiːdʒərəl ˈmeməri/	Riding a bike uses **procedural memory**.
Prospective memory /prəˈspektɪv ˈmeməri/	**Prospective memory** reminds you to buy milk on the way home.
Long-term potentiation /lɒŋ tɜːm pəˌtenʃiˈeɪʃn/	**Long-term potentiation** makes links between neurons stronger.
multi-store model /ˈmʌlti stɔː ˈmɒdl/	The **multi-store model** has sensory, short-term and long-term memory.
sensory memory /ˈsensəri ˈmeməri/	**Sensory memory** holds what you see or hear for a moment.
iconic /aɪˈkɒnɪk/	**Iconic** memory holds a picture for less than a second.
echoic /eˈkəʊɪk/	**Echoic** memory holds a sound for a few seconds.
short-term memory /ʃɔːt tɜːm ˈmeməri/	**Short-term memory** holds information for a few seconds.
long-term memory /lɒŋ tɜːm ˈmeməri/	A well-practised skill, such as riding a bike, is stored in **long-term memory** for years.
working memory model /ˈwɜːkɪŋ ˈmeməri ˈmɒdl/	The **working memory model** splits short-term memory into parts.
phonological loop /ˌfɒnəˈlɒdʒɪkl luːp/	The **phonological loop** repeats a phone number in your head.
visuospatial sketchpad /ˌvɪsjuːəˈspeɪʃl ˈsketʃpæd/	The **visuospatial sketchpad** holds pictures and places.

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central executive /ˈsentrəl eɡˈzekjuːtɪv/	The **central executive** decides what to pay attention to.
levels of processing model /ˈlevlz ɒv ˈprəʊsesɪŋ ˈmɒdl/	The **levels of processing model** says deeper thinking helps you remember.
Encoding /enˈkəʊdɪŋ/	**Encoding** puts information into memory.
Mnemonic devices /nɪˈmɒnɪk dɪˈvaɪsɪz/	**Mnemonic devices** help you remember, like “Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain”。
method of loci /ˈmeθəd ɒv ˈləʊsaɪ/	The **method of loci** links each item to a room in your house.
Chunking /ˈtʃʌŋkɪŋ/	**Chunking** turns 1-9-4-5 into the year 1945.
spacing effect /ˈspeɪsɪŋ ɪˈfekt/	The **spacing effect** says studying a little each day beats cramming.
massed practice /mæst ˈpræktɪs/	**Massed practice** means studying all at once, like cramming.
serial position effect /ˈsɪərɪəl pəˈzɪʃn ɪˈfekt/	The **serial position effect** means we remember the first and last items best.
primacy /ˈpraɪməsi/	The **primacy** effect: we remember the first items on a list.
recency /rɪˈsensi/	The **recency** effect: we remember the last items on a list.
Maintenance rehearsal /ˈmeɪntənəns rɪˈhɜːsl/	**Maintenance rehearsal** means repeating a number to keep it in mind.

Word	Example
elaborative rehearsal /ɪˈlæbrətɪv rɪˈhɜːsl/	**Elaborative rehearsal** links new facts to what you already know.
highly superior autobiographical memory /ˈhaɪli suːˈpɪərɪə ˌɔːtəʊˌbaɪəˈgræfɪkl ˈmeməri/	People with **highly superior autobiographical memory** remember almost every day of their lives.
Alzheimer's disease /ˈæltsaɪməz dɪˈziːz/	**Alzheimer's disease** slowly destroys memory.
infantile amnesia /ˈɪnfəntaɪl æmˈniːzɪə/	**Infantile amnesia** means we remember almost nothing from before age three.
recall /ˈriːkɔːl/	A fill-in-the-blank test asks you to **recall** facts.
recognition /ˌrekəgˈnɪʃn/	A multiple-choice test uses **recognition**.
Context-dependent memory /ˈkɒntekst dɪˈpendənt ˈmeməri/	**Context-dependent memory**: you remember better in the room where you learned.
state-dependent memory /steɪt dɪˈpendənt ˈmeməri/	**State-dependent memory**: you remember better in the same mood or state.
mood-congruent memory /muːd ˈkɒŋgruːənt ˈmeməri/	**Mood-congruent memory**: when you are sad, you remember sad things.
testing effect /ˈtestɪŋ ɪˈfekt/	The **testing effect** means practice tests help us remember.
forgetting curve /fəˈgetɪŋ kɜːv/	The **forgetting curve** shows we forget fast at first, then more slowly.
Encoding failure /enˈkəʊdɪŋ ˈfeɪlɪə/	**Encoding failure** means the information never got into memory.

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Word	Example
Interference /ˌɪntəˈfɪərəns/	**Interference** happens when other memories get in the way.
proactive /prəʊˈæktɪv/	**Proactive** interference: old learning blocks new learning.
retroactive /ˌretrəʊˈæktɪv/	**Retroactive** interference: new learning blocks old memories.
Retrieval failure /rɪˈtriːvl ˈfeɪlɪə/	**Retrieval failure** means you know it but cannot get it out.
tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon /tɪp ɒvðə tʌŋ fɪˈnɒmɪnən/	The **tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon** is when a word is almost there.
reconstructive /ˌriːkənˈstrʌktɪv/	Memory is **reconstructive**: we rebuild events each time we recall them.
misinformation effect /ˌmɪsɪnfəˈmeɪʃn ɪˈfekt/	The **misinformation effect** changes memories after hearing false details.
Source amnesia /sɔːs æmˈniːzɪə/	**Source amnesia** means you remember a fact but not where you learned it.
intelligence /ɪnˈtelɪdʒəns/	**Intelligence** helps us learn and solve problems.
Spearman's g /ˈspɪəmənz dʒiː/	**Spearman's g** is the idea of one general intelligence.
fluid intelligence /ˈfluːɪd ɪnˈtelɪdʒəns/	**Fluid intelligence** helps you solve new puzzles.
crystallised intelligence /ˈkrɪstəlaɪzd ɪnˈtelɪdʒəns/	**Crystallised intelligence** is the knowledge you have built up.

Word	Example
intelligence quotient (IQ) /ɪnˈtelɪdʒəns ˈkwəʊʃənt/	An **intelligence quotient (IQ)** of 100 is average.
normal curve /ˈnɔːml kɜːv/	IQ scores follow a **normal curve**, shaped like a bell.
psychometric principles /ˌsaɪkəʊˈmetrɪk ˈprɪnsɪplz/	**Psychometric principles** make sure a test is fair and accurate.
Standardization /ˌstændədaɪˈzeɪʃn/	**Standardization** means everyone takes the test the same way.
Validity /væˈlɪdɪti/	The test has good **validity**: it measures what it should.
Construct validity /ˈkɒnstrʌkt væˈlɪdɪti/	**Construct validity** asks whether the test measures what it claims to.
predictive validity /prɪˈdɪktɪv væˈlɪdɪti/	**Predictive validity** asks whether the test predicts later success.
Reliability /rɪˌlaɪəˈbɪlɪti/	A source has **reliability** if its facts can be checked and are correct.
test-retest reliability /test rɪˈtest rɪˌlaɪəˈbɪlɪti/	**Test-retest reliability** checks if you get the same score next time.
split-half reliability /splɪt hɑːf rɪˌlaɪəˈbɪlɪti/	**Split-half reliability** compares scores on two halves of a test.
Flynn effect /flɪn ɪˈfekt/	The **Flynn effect** shows IQ scores rising over the years.
stereotype threat /ˈsteriəʊtaɪp θret/	**Stereotype threat** can make students do worse when they fear a stereotype.



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achievement test	A final exam is an **achievement test**: it shows what you have learned.
aptitude test	An **aptitude test** predicts how well you can learn something new.
fixed mindset /fɪkst ˈmaɪndset/	A student with a **fixed mindset** thinks intelligence cannot change.
growth mindset /grəʊθ ˈmaɪndset/	A student with a **growth mindset** thinks practice makes you smarter.