

IB Psychology - New Syllabus (First Assessment 2027)

Content Glossary – The Cognitive Approach

Anchoring Bias Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Anchoring bias	The role of anchoring bias in decision-making.
Anchor	An initial piece of information that influences subsequent judgements.
Adjustment	The process of modifying a judgement away from the anchor (often insufficiently).
Heuristic	A mental shortcut used to simplify decision-making.

Classical Conditioning Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Classical conditioning	The process of classical conditioning and its role in behaviour.
Unconditioned stimulus (UCS)	A stimulus that naturally and automatically triggers a response without prior learning.
Unconditioned response (UCR)	An automatic, unlearned response to an unconditioned stimulus.
Neutral stimulus (NS)	A stimulus that initially does not trigger the target response.
Conditioned stimulus (CS)	A previously neutral stimulus that, after association, triggers a learned response.
Conditioned response (CR)	A learned response to the conditioned stimulus.

Cognitive Load Theory Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Cognitive load theory	The role of cognitive load theory in understanding human cognition.
Working memory	A limited-capacity system used for processing information.
Intrinsic load	The complexity inherent in the material being learned.
Extraneous load	Cognitive load caused by poor instructional design.

Cognitive Models Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Cognitive models	The role of one or more cognitive models in understanding a cognitive process or behaviours.

Model	A simplified representation of a mental process.
Information processing	The idea that the mind processes information in stages.
Representation	The way information is encoded and stored in the mind.

Confirmation Bias Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Confirmation bias	The role of confirmation bias in decision-making.
Selective attention	Focusing on information that supports existing beliefs.
Selective recall	Remembering information that confirms beliefs more easily.
Belief perseverance	Maintaining beliefs even when faced with contradictory evidence.

Dual Processing Theory Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Dual processing theory	The role of the dual processing theory in understanding decision-making.
System 1 thinking	Fast, automatic, and intuitive processing.
System 2 thinking	Slow, deliberate, and analytical processing.
Cognitive effort	The mental energy required for controlled processing.

Operant Conditioning Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Operant conditioning	The process of operant conditioning and its role in behaviour.
Reinforcement	A consequence that increases the likelihood of a behaviour.
Punishment	A consequence that decreases the likelihood of a behaviour.
Shaping	Gradually reinforcing behaviours that approximate a desired behaviour.

Schema Theory Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Schema theory	The role of schema theory in understanding a cognitive process.
Schema	A mental framework that organises knowledge and guides understanding.
Assimilation	Interpreting new information using existing schemas.
Accommodation	Modifying schemas in response to new information.

