

IB Psychology - New Syllabus (First Assessment 2027)

Concept Glossary

Bias Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Bias	A systematic tendency to think or act in a particular way that influences judgement, behaviour, or research outcomes.
Researcher bias	When a researcher's expectations, beliefs, or values influence the design, conduct, or interpretation of a study.
Participant bias	When participants change their behaviour because they are aware they are being studied or want to meet perceived expectations.
Confirmation bias	The tendency to seek, interpret, or remember information in ways that support existing beliefs.
Cultural bias	When psychological theories or research reflect the values or norms of one culture more than others.
Sampling bias	When the participants selected for a study are not representative of the target population.
Observer bias	When researchers' observations or recordings are influenced by their expectations or prior knowledge.
Demand characteristics	Cues in a research setting that suggest how participants are expected to behave.
Social desirability bias	The tendency for individuals to present themselves in a favourable way when responding to questions or tasks.
Leading questions	Questions that are phrased in a way that influences or suggests a particular response.
Ethnocentrism	Judging other cultures according to the standards and values of one's own culture.
Reflexivity	Awareness of how a researcher's own background, assumptions, and position may influence the research process.
Response bias	A general tendency for participants to respond inaccurately or falsely to measures such as questionnaires or interviews.

Change Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Change	The process through which behaviour or mental processes develop or are modified over time.
Development	Systematic psychological changes that occur across the lifespan.

Plasticity	The capacity of the brain or behaviour to be altered by experience or environmental influences.
Neuroplasticity	Structural and functional changes in the brain resulting from learning or experience.
Maturation	Biologically programmed growth and development that occurs with age.
Learning	A relatively permanent change in behaviour or knowledge resulting from experience.
Adaptation	Adjustment in behaviour or thinking in response to environmental demands.
Intervention	A planned action designed to bring about psychological or behavioural change.
Behaviour modification	The use of learning principles such as reinforcement to change behaviour.
Habituation	A decrease in response to a repeated stimulus over time.
Recovery	The return of functioning following injury, trauma, or psychological difficulty.
Resilience	The ability to cope with and adapt positively to challenges or adversity.
Longitudinal change	Change that is studied or measured over an extended period of time.

Causality Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Causality	The relationship in which one factor produces a change in another factor.
Cause-and-effect relationship	When a change in one variable directly leads to a change in another.
Direct causality	A clear and immediate relationship where one variable produces a change in another.
Indirect causality	When one variable influences another through an intermediate factor.
Bidirectional causality	When two variables influence each other.
Multicausal explanation	Behaviour explained as the result of several interacting causes.
Necessary cause	A factor that must be present for an outcome to occur.
Sufficient cause	A factor that is enough on its own to produce an outcome.
Probabilistic causality	When a factor increases the likelihood of an outcome rather than guaranteeing it.
Correlation	A relationship between variables that does not necessarily indicate causation.
Directionality problem	Difficulty determining which variable is the cause and which is the effect.
Third variable problem	When an unmeasured factor may explain an observed relationship.
Causal inference	Drawing conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships from evidence.

Measurement Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Measurement	The systematic process of observing and recording behaviour or mental processes.
Operationalisation	Defining a variable in terms of how it will be measured or manipulated in a study.
Reliability	The consistency of a measure across time, observers, or different parts of a test.
Validity	The extent to which a measure accurately assesses what it is intended to measure.
Objectivity	The extent to which measurement is free from personal bias or subjective judgement.
Standardisation	Using the same procedures and instructions for all participants to ensure consistency.
Quantitative data	Numerical information that can be analysed using statistical methods.
Qualitative data	Descriptive, non-numerical information such as words, themes, or narratives.
Self-report measure	A method of measurement in which participants provide information about themselves.
Behavioural measure	The recording of observable actions or responses.
Scale	A structured set of response options used to assign scores or categories to behaviour or attitudes.
Pilot study	A small preliminary study conducted to test procedures, materials, or measures.
Measurement error	Inaccuracy in measurement that reduces the precision or validity of results.

Perspective Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Perspective	A particular way of understanding or explaining behaviour or mental processes.
Biological perspective	Explaining behaviour in terms of brain processes, genetics, hormones, or physiology.
Cognitive perspective	Explaining behaviour by focusing on mental processes such as thinking, memory, and perception.
Sociocultural perspective	Explaining behaviour in relation to social interaction, cultural norms, and environmental influences.
Holistic approach	Understanding behaviour by considering multiple interacting factors and perspectives.
Reductionism	Explaining complex behaviour by breaking it down into simpler components.
Context	The situational, social, or cultural environment in which behaviour occurs.
Subjectivity	Interpretation influenced by personal experiences, beliefs, or values.

Theoretical framework	A structured set of ideas or assumptions used to guide explanation and research.
Interpretation	The process of assigning meaning to behaviour, data, or research findings.
Emic perspective	Understanding behaviour from within a particular cultural or social group.
Etic perspective	Understanding behaviour using external or universal criteria across cultures.
Relativism	The idea that behaviour should be understood in relation to the cultural context in which it occurs.

Responsibility Key Term Glossary

Key term	Definition
Responsibility	The obligation to consider the welfare, dignity, and rights of individuals and society when conducting or applying psychological research.
Ethical responsibility	The duty to follow moral principles and professional guidelines in psychological research and practice.
Informed consent	Participants' agreement to take part in research after receiving sufficient information about the study.
Right to withdraw	The entitlement of participants to leave a study at any time without penalty.
Confidentiality	Protecting participants' personal information and ensuring data is not disclosed without permission.
Anonymity	Ensuring that participants cannot be identified from the data collected or reported.
Protection from harm	The requirement to minimise physical or psychological risk to participants.
Debriefing	Providing participants with full information about the study after their participation.
Deception	Intentionally withholding or misleading participants about aspects of a study (must be justified and minimised).
Risk–benefit analysis	Evaluating whether the potential benefits of research outweigh possible risks to participants.
Research ethics committee	A group that reviews research proposals to ensure ethical standards are met.
Social responsibility	Considering how psychological knowledge and research may affect individuals, groups, or society.
Professional conduct	Adhering to established standards of behaviour set by psychological organisations.

