**AP Psychology Summer Assignment**

Welcome to AP Psychology! Psychology is a fascinating subject in which students study the mind and human behavior and embark on self-discovery in the process! In order to study human behavior we have to first know how the mind and body work and influence our behavior, since everything that is “psychological” is simultaneously “biological.” The following are activities to get you started and provide you with a strong foundation for our neuroscience unit. Please do all of the following over the summer.

1. **The Brain and Neural Communication:** Neurons are the basic structures that allow the brain to communicate with other parts of our bodies. Using the following websites study the parts of a neuron and the parts of the brain. Be able to explain how messages are sent through neurons and from neuron to neuron.

**Neurons** – specifically use the following links / activities

<http://learn.genetics.utah.edu/content/neuroscience/>

* Neurons Transport Messages in the Brain
* Make a Mad, Mad, Mad, Neuron
* Crossing the Divide: How Neurons Talk to Each Other

**Brain -** Use the following site to become familiar with the parts of the brain and the functions of each part listed on the attached review sheet. We will spend some time on this in class as well however this is one of the harder topics in terms of the amount of vocabulary so it is to your advantage to know the parts of the brain and their functions to the best of your ability for September.

Use this link (below) and click on the flash activity for the brain. You can then click on each of the parts and see lists of subparts. These subparts are also clickable for a better definition of function (for example click on “central core” and then a list will appear – click on “pons” to find its function and so forth.

<http://www.learner.org/series/discoveringpsychology/brain/>

Note – if any of the above websites do not work at the particular time you try them then try again another day (they are well maintained). You may also use the web to search for other sites to find the functions of the brain structures as there are hundreds that will help accomplish this task. These are my (and former students’) favorites though.

**Brain & Neurons - Key structures & terms**

Cerebral cortex

Hemisphere

Corpus callosum

Frontal lobe

Parietal lobe

Motor cortex

Sensory cortex

Occipital lobe

Temporal lobe

Prefrontal area

Frontal association area

Lower brain

Broca’s Area

Wernicke’s area

Pons

Medulla

Thalamus

Hypothalamus

Limbic system

Amygdala

Hippocampus

Cerebellum

RAS (reticular activating system)

Neurons

Dendrites

Axon

Synapse

Vesicles

Neurotransmitters

Pituitary gland

1. **Getting to know you**

Respond in a reaction paper to the following question:

“There is much debate and research in the field of psychology about whether ‘**Nature’** (biochemistry, genes, and physical traits) or ‘**Nurture’** (family, environment, culture) has the most influence on our behavior, thought processes, and personality. Discuss the ways you think nature and nurture have influenced both your everyday thoughts and behaviors as well as your life goals and ambitions”

This is to be based on **introspection** (the careful examination of your own thoughts and feelings) rather than on research. Keep in mind I will be reading these so only share what you are comfortable sharing. Your response should be 2-3 pages in length, typed and double-spaced using 12 pt. Times New Roman font and 1” margins. Use the following format for the heading:

Your Name

Summer Essay

AP Psychology

Day Month 2017

Title