Supported preparation: Levels of explanation and evidence

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Psychology · SL

Scope and prerequisites

IB Psychology, the course first assessed in 2027. This supplement goes with Topic 1, the content: the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches. The six concepts and the four contexts are in Topic 2, and the research methods in Topic 3.

Mapped preparation outcomes: ib_psychology_sl.1.1, ib_psychology_sl.1.2. Read the matching native lesson first. Actual approved choices, evidence and final learner work remain separate.

Source vocabulary

cognitive process ; **confounding variable** .

Explanation and worked method

Biological explanations concern physiological processes; cognitive explanations concern processing; sociocultural explanations concern social context. They may interact. A study needs a bounded claim, method, sample, measure and limits; an approach label is not evidence.

Original source / task evidence

Task: fictional sleep duration correlates with recall. Explain a cognitive hypothesis, a competing factor and a better comparison.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Levels of explanation and evidence

Task: fictional sleep duration correlates with recall. Explain a cognitive hypothesis, a competing factor and a better comparison.

Sleep may relate to encoding or retrieval, while stress or study time could influence both. Correlation alone cannot establish direction or mechanism. An ethically approved design with controlled task conditions and appropriate allocation can improve inference, but sample and task still limit transfer.

Independent transfer

A region is active during recall. Does this show it alone stores the memory?

Attempt independently before reading the model.

Checked original model

Activity is associated with the task under the measurement conditions. Other regions and processes may contribute, and activity may accompany retrieval rather than exclusively store memory. Converging methods and suitable comparisons can refine the claim, but the scan alone cannot establish exclusive function.

These are authored formative expectations, not official IB descriptors. Accept other justified arguments with evidence and material limits.

Source and task holds

This supplement teaches the method for this part of the course. The full assessment criteria and any texts your school chooses come from your teacher.

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