VCE Psychology at Melbourne Museum

## VCE Psychology: Unit 1 Provocations for The Mind Exhibition

# Information for teachers

Each of the unit-linked resources provides themed provocations for student-led enquiry. They do not represent a comprehensive coverage of all of the material relevant to each unit in the galleries, but a selection of those exhibits most relevant.

The Mind exhibition provides a unique first-person perspective through immersive experiences, artworks, and historical psychiatric objects. Keep in mind that it has been designed for general public audiences, and should not be considered as an exhaustive resource with regards to furthering scientific understanding. The gallery instead provides a launch-pad for exploring the themes outlined, and can be an excellent primary resource for collecting video, photographic or audio data in an affective, thought-provoking environment.

Students can share their research with their classmates or other community members through a variety of self-directed modes, for example:

* Video
* Digital book – eg ibook
* Podcast
* Presentation or lecture
* Article – informative, opinion, interview
* Journal

We recommend familiarising yourself with the trail prior to your class excursion. Visiting the galleries before the excursion will also assist you in directing your students.

**VIT registered teachers can get into Melbourne Museum free of charge by subscribing to MV teachers:** <https://museumsvictoria.com.au/learning/mv-teachers-network/>

# Student provocations

The unit-by-unit resources can be used in many ways. Students may wish to choose a topic to investigate that relates to a particular area of interest or is linked to another project. Some teachers prefer to allocate the provocations, either distributing them evenly or creating a whole class focus that may form an assessment task. The provocations can be explored individually or in small groups (2-3 students is ideal).

Each resource provides student explorations within The Mind exhibition that covers content relevant from each unit of VCE Psychology:

#### Unit 1

**Area of Study 1 – How does the brain function?**

• Role of the brain in mental processes and behaviour

• Brain plasticity and brain damage

**Area of Study 2 – What influences psychological development?**

• Atypical psychological development

**Area of Study 3 – Student directed research investigation**

Many of the themes in area of study three in the VCE Psychology 16-21 study design lend themselves to exploration within The Mind exhibition. Students may use the exhibition to investigate their pre-chosen topic, or could use the gallery and boarder museum as inspiration for exploring a research topic of their own devising.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of major themes within the exhibition that fall within those outlined in the study design.

Topic 1: Biospsychology

* Drug and Alcohol and their effect on the brain
* Structures and development of the brain
* Brain plasticity, pruning and ‘circuitry’

Topic 3: Cognition

* Art creation and art therapy
* Learning and memory
* Levels of consciousness

Topic 4: Psychological development

* Personality development and testing
* Freud’s theories on psychoanalysis

Topic 5: Mental Health and disorder

* Historical perspectives of mental illness including changing attitudes, treatments and diagnoses
* Abnormal vs normal behaviour

Topic 6: Changing thoughts, feelings and behaviour

* Emotional responses and emotional empathy
* Art therapy as a strategy for expressing and treating mental disorder

# Psychology Unit 1 – Choose **only** **one** or **two** provocations for deep inquiry:

1. Watch the emotions video. Find locations in the Mind gallery that evoke those same emotions in you (happiness, fear, disgust, sadness, anger, surprise) and explain what the mechanisms are that result in this reaction.
	* Start here: Emotions video (purple section).Try to watch it from start to end (not half way through) for full impact.
2. Use exhibits in the gallery to create an “Introduction to brain chemistry” resource. Include topics such as neurotransmitters, illicit drugs and anaesthetics
	* Start here: Multimedia displays just inside entrance to Mind exhibition (black section)
3. A network of twinkling lights greats you as you enter the Mind exhibition. How effectively does this model the human nervous system? Use information from displays in The Mind gallery that cover concepts such as neuron structure and function, brain growth and development, and neural pathways to explore this.
	* Start here: entrance to mind gallery, and interactives and media on brain function upon entering the gallery (black section)
4. How has our knowledge and treatment of psychology changed over time, and how has that influenced the perception of people with mental illness? Choose five objects or displays in the gallery to illustrate key shifts in understanding.
	* Start here: the timeline (light box) at the entrance of the gallery gives a good overview which may help with the choice of your objects.
5. Dream state: Use the experience of the ‘dream couches’ as a starting point to explore the senses. Do you feel different or ‘strange’ after this experience? Consider which senses are involved, how sensory information is received and transmitted and what sections of the brain are involved.
	* Start here: Dream couches (blue section). Throughout the gallery you will find more information about that may help illustrate and reinforce your understanding (eg neural pathways and cross sections of human brains)
6. Grow baby grow – the brain undergoes an amazing transformation from foetus to adult with rapid changes in structure and function. What are the most active periods of change, and what is occurring during these times? Does this explain behaviours at certain ages? Find examples of this in the exhibition to illustrate.
	* Start here: Upon entering the Mind gallery (black section), panels and videos explain developmental stages and processes such as pruning. Go deeper into the gallery find case studies involving people of these various age brackets.
7. What is ‘normal’? Do some people have normal brains while others are abnormal, or is it more of a continuum? Find examples of normality and abnormality in the gallery to illustrate your thoughts on this.
	* Start here: What is normal? – information panel near entrance to gallery (black section)
8. The Mind gallery features many mental health case studies. Choose two of the major categories of psychological disorder - addiction, anxiety, mood, personality or psychotic disorders - and find examples of these. How are the two categories diagnosed? What are the salient features you can recognise in the case studies?
	* Start here: the video pods in Being: identity and interactions (red section) are a good starting point – listen to the stories presented in them.

