**Test yourself: how’s it going so far?**

**Testing your grasp on the material**

What’s the best way to learn, or to test how well you’ve learned the material you’re studying? Keen to do well in exams, this is the first question most students ask.

**Preparing for multiple choice questions**

You may well have a multiple choice exam. There are websites offering tutorials on how best to address this form of assessment:

* [This video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACB2B2EdiXs) offers advice on multiple choice tests and how to handle them.

If you want to practice quizzing yourself on multiple choice tests, then ask Google for ‘multiple choice developmental psychology’ – and in among the hits you’ll find a number of sites offering free multiple choice quizzes which auto-score and offer correct answers where you went wrong. These won’t exactly match either your course or this book perfectly, but will cover much of the same ground – and because there are many of them, they offer the possibility of testing yourself over and over on different questions.

**Testing your understanding**

Multiple choice quizzes are the most common exam for introductory courses. Some lecturers swear by them, others swear at them. Whether they provide an easy measure of learning or not, they tap recognition memory – which is far less challenging than the kind of learning which allows us to recall knowledge from memory in a useful way. How can you embed material in your mind in a way which will allow you to recall it in useful, functional ways?

* Understand it. What we truly understand doesn’t need to be chanted by rote to force it into our minds
* Besides which, what you are aiming at in studying developmental psychology is not the memorising of facts. It’s the understanding of issues.
* Does it all make sense? If not, you need to go over the material again, read more about it, talk to others until it does
* The acid test for whether you understand what you’ve read is – can you explain it coherently to someone else who doesn’t study psychology? This means explaining the background, the issues and the research without jargon and without assuming that anything can be taken for granted

**Planning your revision**

* This research suggests that timing your revision may be the key to successful retention of material - [Rohrer and Pashler (2007).](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2007.00500.x)
* Use the revision summaries at the end of each chapter to test whether you can recall the key points in each topic.

**The ultimate exam test: the third year dissertation**

* Most University departments require students to submit an empirical dissertation as an exam exercise.
* In many ways, this is the most important form of assessment: it’s generally what matters most, for example, if you want to go on to a postgraduate career in Psychology which will involve doing or appraising empirical research.
* It’s also the most challenging exam exercise – in recognition of which the British Psychological Society have produced a book designed to give you detailed support for your dissertation:
  + M. Forshaw (2004) Your Undergraduate Psychology Project: A BPS Guide (Blackwell)
* How to select a good topic for the dissertation? Working towards your 3rd year dissertation (or later on a masters or PhD degree) is a long process often involving designing studies (which may go through many failed attempts), collecting data (which may take more or less time depending on how compliant the study participants are), data analysis (stats!) and writing up. The only way to keep going through this is to choose a research question that you find interesting and that you will still find interesting despite all the hurdles mentioned earlier. It is good to have your dissertation in mind from year 1, so that you can look for that question that sparks your imagination throughout your 1st ad 2nd year. Sometimes it will not be a question but a particular lecturer that you enjoy listening to and you think you may work well with who shapes your choice