

Psychology at Fortismere

Exam board AQA (A)

What is Psychology and why study it at Advanced level?

Simply put, psychology is the study of people, behaviour and the mind. It has been classified as a science subject, and this is reflected in the A level curriculum. It is a broad subject, with many different areas and a number of different approaches towards explaining behaviour. Not all psychologists agree with each other! Psychologists observe human behaviour, create theories to explain the behaviour, and then carry out research to test these theories. Psychology is a challenging subject, requiring commitment and hard work. Ultimately though, the hard work is rewarded with a deeper understanding of people and society, and perhaps even yourself.

Psychology is a rigorous, academic subject, requiring good skills in English, Maths and Science. For every theory in psychology, there are many opposing theories and therefore it is a subject which requires good critical thinking and evaluative skills. You will develop strong analytical skills and will learn how to design and conduct a piece of psychological research with an awareness of ethical issues and bias. Psychology is a useful subject to study and will deepen your understanding of human behaviour whilst broadening your perspective on society. Ultimately, you will complete the course having gained greater insight into the social world.

The New Psychology AS and A Level

From September 2015 the AQA Psychology A Level will be linear. This has resulted in changes being made to the way that students will be examined. Students who wish to obtain only an AS level in Psychology will sit two exams at the end of year 12. Students who wish to take the whole A Level in Psychology will be examined on year 12 content and year 13 content at the end of their second year of study. They will sit a total of three exams at the end of year 13. This is in line with wider changes to A Levels being implemented in the next few years. Both the AS and A Level qualification will have a maths component of at least 10%.

Course content at AS – completing the AS only will give you an AS in Psychology

<u>Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology</u> This paper explores three topics of interest - social influence, memory and attachment. You will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and ability to evaluate and analyse psychological concepts, theories and studies in these areas as well as research methods and ethics in relation to the paper 1 content.	50% of AS Level 72 marks in total 1.5 hour written exam	Section A of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks) Section B of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks) Section C of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)
<u>Paper 2: Psychology in context</u> This paper looks at some of the main approaches within Psychology including the learning, cognitive and biological approach. Research methods and psychopathology is also explored and you will learn the definitions, characteristics and treatments of a number of disorders such as OCD, depression and phobias. Your knowledge, understanding, evaluation and analytical skills in relation to this content will be assessed in the exam as well as research methods.	50% of AS Level 72 marks in total 1.5 hour written exam	Section A of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks) Section B of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks) Section C of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)

Course content at A2 – completing AS and A2 will give you an A Level in Psychology

<p><u>Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology</u> This paper explores four topics of interest - social influence, memory, attachment and psychopathology. You will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge, understanding and ability to evaluate and analyse psychological concepts, theories and studies in these areas as well as research methods and ethics.</p>	<p>33.3% of A Level 96 marks in total 2 hour written exam</p>	<p>Section A of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section B of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section C of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section D of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p>									
<p><u>Paper 2: Psychology in context</u> This paper looks at some of the main approaches within Psychology including the learning, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic and humanistic approach. Research methods and biopsychology is also explored and amongst other things, you will learn about the divisions of the nervous system and localisation of function in the brain.</p>	<p>33.3% of A Level 96 marks in total 2 hour written exam</p>	<p>Section A of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section B of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section C of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section D of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p>									
<p><u>Paper 3: Issues and options in Psychology</u> For this paper you will need to know about issues and debates in Psychology such as the nature vs nurture debate and free will and determinism. Various forms of bias in research will be considered and you will study three option areas in Psychology in detail (option areas to be confirmed but will be one from each of the blocks below)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="97 1406 544 1570"> <tr> <td>Relationships</td> <td>Schizophrenia</td> <td>Aggression</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td>Eating behaviour</td> <td>Forensic Psychology</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cognition & Development</td> <td>Stress</td> <td>Addiction</td> </tr> </table>	Relationships	Schizophrenia	Aggression	Gender	Eating behaviour	Forensic Psychology	Cognition & Development	Stress	Addiction	<p>33.3% of A Level 96 marks in total 2 hour written exam</p>	<p>Section A of exam: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section B of exam: one topic from option 1, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section C of exam: one topic from option 2, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p> <p>Section D of exam: one topic from option 3, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing (24 marks)</p>
Relationships	Schizophrenia	Aggression									
Gender	Eating behaviour	Forensic Psychology									
Cognition & Development	Stress	Addiction									

Assessment

The AS specification is designed to be taken over one or two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course. The A-level specification is designed to be taken over two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course.

Assessments and certification for the AS specification are available for the first time in May/June 2016 and then every May/June for the life of the specification. Assessments and certification for the A-level specification are available for the first time in May/June

2017 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

These are linear qualifications. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all exams in

May/June in a single year. All assessments must be taken in the same series.

All materials are available in English only.

AS

Assessment in AS Psychology includes questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their skills, knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

For example, section A of Paper 1 contains an extended response question. An 'extended response' is evidence of sufficient length generated to allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

A-level

Our assessment in A-level Psychology includes questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their skills, knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

For example, sections B, C and D of Paper 3 contain extended response questions. An 'extended response' is evidence of sufficient length generated to allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

Aims of the course

Courses based on these specifications must encourage students to:

- develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the subject and how they relate to each other
- develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills

- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society.

Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level Psychology specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:
 - in a theoretical context
 - in a practical context
 - when handling qualitative data
 - when handling quantitative data.
- AO3: Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:
 - make judgements and reach conclusions
 - develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Personalised check list for year 12 – Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology

	confident	developing	With difficulty
Assessment Objectives			
AO1 – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures			
AO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a theoretical context • In a practical context • When handling qualitative data • When handling quantitative data 			
AO3 – Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make judgements and reach conclusions • Develop and refine practical design and procedures 			

Personalised check list for year 12 – Paper 2: Psychology in Context

	confident	developing	With difficulty
Assessment Objectives			
AO1 – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures			
AO2 – Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a theoretical context • In a practical context • When handling qualitative data • When handling quantitative data 			
AO3 – Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make judgements and reach conclusions Develop and refine practical design and procedures			

Exam Skills

It is essential that you are aware of effective exam technique in order to optimise your marks in psychology. There are three assessment objectives which you might be asked about in the exam.

Assessment objective 1 – A01 is where you demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding

This means that you must recall key terms and points central to theories/ research in relation to an exam question. Knowledge should be accurate and detailed. Elaboration should be employed effectively and systematically in order to illustrate points. This might include utilising examples where appropriate.

You might be presented Ao1 in the context of a scenario. In order to answer these successfully knowledge must be applied to new situations. This means that theory must be fully contextualised. To successfully achieve this students should refer to the scenario throughout answers.

Assessment objective 2 – A02 is where you analyse, evaluate and present an argument.

In order to evaluate effectively you should state a clear evaluative point. This should signpost the line of argument you are making. You should then elaborate exactly what you mean- explaining key terminology where necessary. You should then use evidence to demonstrate your point. Finally you should link back to the question before making a judgement about the psychology in question.

Successful evaluation draws upon a breadth of sources- including both strengths and weaknesses, Ao3 and IDAs.

Assessment objective 3- A03 is where you demonstrate knowledge of research methods.

This means that you should apply knowledge of the scientific and data collection process to exam style questions. These might be straight-forward 'define' questions... or they might be more complex questions. The same technique for Ao1/Ao2 also applies. The only difference with this object is the content matter is solely focused on research methods.

Answering Extended response questions

Style guide - academic discourse in Psychology A Level essays.

For your A2 units the expectation is that you will be able to successfully discuss and present ideas in an academic essay. You will need to draw on your existing knowledge of essay writing from English Literature GCSE but to develop and improve it. Your aim is to be simple but effective. You do not want to sound as though you have swallowed a Thesaurus. Instead your aim should be clarity and succinctness. As well as knowing your texts well, you will also need to be a confident writer. Your teacher will model good writing practice and support your efforts to improve. This short guide exemplifies the key language features of academic discourse that you must learn to embed in your essays.

Use this style guide when you are writing essays to help you develop your written discourse.

1. Discourse markers. They introduce a topic, move an argument forward, signal comparison and contrast and draw an argument to a close. They can be used at the start of paragraphs as well as in the body of your text. Examples of discourse markers are:

However

Moreover

Furthermore

Additionally

Likewise

Another point is

Significantly

Similarly

Comparatively

Contrastingly

Finally

In conclusion

2. Connective phrases ('lexical bundles'): these are phrases that link your quotes to your analysis and explorations of the text, enabling you to succinctly move between text and your comments

which suggests that

which implies that

this evokes an image of

the fact that

the impact of this is

from which we can infer that

the impact of this is

which conveys that

which demonstrates that

which evokes an image of

which contrasts with

which depicts that

3. Higher level verbs/verb phrases: at primary school you show and tell, but you need to draw on a more sophisticated range of verbs to signal explanation, analysis and evaluation of a quotation or example.

Be careful about what word you use: do not say a word or technique "shows" something unless it definitely does. For example, an onomatopoeia rarely "shows" anything.

suggests; implies; depicts; illustrates; denotes; infer; evokes; emphasizes; conveys; explores
expresses

4. Comparative language: you will need to be able to draw comparisons and contrasts between different theories in Year 13. Effectively used comparative language enables you to do this clearly and fluently not only...but also; in contrast; whereas

5. Passive voice – the use of the passive voice creates a detached, academic tone in your writing, suggesting an exploration of different critical or analytical viewpoints rather than personal viewpoint.

It can be suggested that...

It has been implied that...

It was described as...

It can be inferred from this...

6. Modal verbs: these suggest possibility, that something *could* or *might* be true but that there are a range of interpretations. It's useful to use modal verbs when you are exploring different readings of a text, either language analysis, or critical reading.

could; can; should; might

7. Complex sentences, with subordinate clauses to support the development of an analytical, non-narrative writing style. Complex sentences enable you to develop and explore ideas in detail.

You might notice that this guide is similar to some of your other subjects. This is because what makes an effective essay is relatively standardized across the subjects. The difference with a psychology essay is the expectation that it will feature a sound knowledge of psychological terminology. Secondly the focus will be on empirical evidence as opposed to literary.

Further sources:

Memory	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLdHIN5lckw
Obedience (book)	The social basis of obedience and revolt (Barrington Moore, JR).
America's medicated children	http://www.disclose.tv/action/viewvideo/135154/Louis_Theroux__Americas_Medicated_Kids_BBC_Documentary/
Developmental psychology (neglect)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cymZq1VblU0 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmdycJQi4QA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF3j5UVCSCA
NHS online article. News analysis: Controversial mental health guide DSM-5	http://www.nhs.uk/news/2013/08august/pages/controversy-mental-health-diagnosis-and-treatment-dsm5.aspx
Battle of the sexes	http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/technology-science/science/men-versus-women-whos-best-2880581
Video games	http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/gaming/mad-bad-and-dangerous-to-play-are-video-games-really-more-dangerous-than-class-a-drugs-2190268.html
BBC Radio programme: Evolutionary psychology	http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546xr
BBC Radio programme: the doors of mental illness	http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00h2dks (in fact all of this series would be relevant)
University of Oxford lecture series: How Do People Interact with Virtual Environments?	https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/how-do-people-interact-virtual-environments
University of Oxford lecture series: Partner compatibility and online dating	https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/partner-compatibility-and-online-dating-sites https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/partner-compatibility-and-online-dating-sites-0