

SUBJECT GUIDE:

Exam Board - AQA 'A'
AS Level - Year 1
A Level - Year 1 and Year 2

WHY CHOOSE PSYCHOLOGY

The term Psychology is derived from the Greek words psyche and logos, meaning study of the mind, but modern definitions include behaviour. This subject has expanded and evolved since it became an independent discipline in 1879 and now encompasses numerous specialisations. Psychology is relevant to all individuals and to most aspects of our daily lives. It provides a fascinating insight into human behaviour, motivation and reasoning, allowing us to examine both the psychological and biological processes involved. We are still learning about the infinite possibilities of the brain and new discoveries are constantly emerging, making this an exciting and dynamic subject.

HOW WE STUDY PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is a research based science and therefore focuses on evidence supporting or refuting current theories and paradigms. This requires critical evaluation and students will learn how to objectively examine studies and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology employed. They will also participate in class-based research projects in order to gain a first-hand understanding of the practical applications of theories studied.

LEARNING SKILLS REQUIRED

Students will be expected to conduct independent research on the internet to find

current articles and studies and must therefore possess adequate computer skills. Research methods are a vital aspect of Psychology, requiring analysis and interpretation of data and the ability to perform basic statistical tests with instruction. Therefore, numeracy is important, along with a good standard of written English to answer questions and clearly demonstrate an understanding of the subject.

WHAT WE STUDY: AS LEVEL - YEAR 1 AS

Subject content

- 1 Social influence
- 2 Memory
- 3 Attachment
- 4 Approaches in Psychology
- 5 Psychopathology
- 6 Research methods

Assessments

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 1–3 above
Assessed written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
72 marks in total
50% of AS

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

PLUS

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed

Compulsory content 4–6 above
Assessed written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
72 marks in total
50% of AS

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

WHAT WE STUDY: A LEVEL (YEAR 1 AND 2)

Subject content

Compulsory content

- 1 Social influence
- 2 Memory
- 3 Attachment
- 4 Psychopathology
- 5 Approaches in Psychology
- 6 Biopsychology
- 7 Research methods
- 8 Issues and debates in Psychology

Optional

Option 1

- 9 Relationships
- 10 Gender
- 11 Cognition and development

Option 2

- 12 Schizophrenia
- 13 Eating behaviour
- 14 Stress

Option 3

- 15 Aggression
- 16 Forensic Psychology
- 17 Addiction

Assessments

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 1–4 above
Assessed written exam: 2 hours
96 marks in total
33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section D: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

PLUS

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed

Compulsory content 5–7 above
Assessed written exam: 2 hours
96 marks in total
33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 48 marks

PLUS

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 8 above
Optional content, one from option 1, 9–11, one from option 2, 12–14, one from option 3, 15–17 above

Assessed written exam: 2 hours
96 marks in total
33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: one topic from option 1, 9–11 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: one topic from option 2, 12–14 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section D: one topic from option 3, 15–17 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

COURSE READING LIST

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS
Cara Flanagan et al, Illuminate Publishing 2015

AQA Psychology for A level Year 2, Cara Flanagan et al, Illuminate Publishing 2016 2012

EXTERNAL TRIPS

The Psychology department often takes students on trips to listen to external lectures and attends exam revision classes run by the exam board. Students have in the past attended AQA Psychology conferences covering various related topics areas.

PROGRESS PATHS

The majority of students taking A-level Psychology go on to study related subjects at degree level. Areas include Psychology, Criminal Psychology and Early Childhood Behaviour. These lead to careers in Psychiatry, Law Enforcement, Teaching and Counselling.

THE PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Premila Patel, BA (Hons) Applied Sociology (University of East London), MSc in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management (with CIPD) (London School of Economics). Premila has extensive teaching experience (16 years) both in the independent and the state sector. She has previously held the position of Head of Psychology and Sociology and carried out the roles of UCAS and Personal Tutor.