

# A Level Psychology



Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour in humans. It is a fascinating subject as it seeks to understand why people behave as they do and the complex workings of the human mind. Studying Psychology should help you to understand yourself as well as increasing your ability to tolerate and understand others. Psychology is a subject which combines well with most A level courses. It is regarded as a science subject by most universities but works alongside any humanities options. We follow AQA specification.

## Course Content

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| PAPER 1 –<br>INTRODUCTORY<br>TOPICS IN<br>PSYCHOLOGY | Social Influence – including conformity, obedience and the impact of minority influence on social change.<br>Memory - models of memory, explanations for forgetting and factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.<br>Attachment - theories of attachment, the “Strange Situation” and cultural variations in attachment. The influence of early childhood on adult relationships.<br>Clinical Psychology and Mental Health – definitions of abnormality, characteristics of phobias, depression and OCD. Cognitive, behavioural and biological therapies. |
| PAPER 2 –<br>PSYCHOLOGY IN<br>CONTEXT                | Biopsychology – the structure and divisions of the nervous and endocrine system. Brain localisation and hemispheric lateralisation. Split brain research. Ways of studying the brain. Research Methods – Inferential Statistics. Approaches in psychology – The origins of psychology. Basic assumptions of the Learning, Cognitive and Biological approaches.<br>Research Methods – different research methods, scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis.                                                                                     |
| PAPER 3 – ISSUES AND<br>OPTIONS IN<br>PSYCHOLOGY     | Issues and Debates in Psychology – Gender and Cultural bias, Ethics, nature – nurture. Free will and determinism. Holism and reductionism.<br>Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.<br>3 Options from the following:<br>Relationships, Gender, Cognition and Development. Schizophrenia, Eating Behaviour and Stress. Aggression, Forensic Psychology and Addiction.                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Examination time for<br>papers 1,2 and 3             | Each include 2-hour examinations– composing of multiple choice, short answer questions and extended writing. Each paper is worth 96 marks and all carry equal weighting of 33.3% of the total marks.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

## Requirements

The successful Psychology student pays attention to detail and has a genuine interest in human behaviour. As the new syllabus contains 10% of questions requiring mathematical understanding and the A level examinations require extended writing, and a great deal of terminology to learn, students are expected to have gained a good level in both GCSE Mathematics and English Language.

## Where does it lead?

Psychology is a broadly based subject that combines well with any other subject, either science or arts, and aids the development of critical thinking and analysis. Many students have gone on to study Psychology at university. It can also form part of degrees in sports science, medicine, nursing, forensic science, law and teaching. Some knowledge of psychology is an asset in careers as diverse as marketing, the police, human resources, sports and drama.

