

Psychology A Level

Board: AQA, Specification 7182



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What is Psychology?

Psychology is the study of the mind, behaviour and experience. It considers what it is that makes us the person we are: our personality, intelligence and behaviour. During the course we consider the thought-provoking and, often controversial, theories of psychologists such as Skinner, Freud, Bowlby and Rogers.

- Why do we obey and conform?
- How do we define or classify abnormal behaviour?
- Why might eyewitness testimonies be inaccurate?
- Is behaviour genetically determined or learned?
- Are some people more likely than others to become depressed or addicted?
- How do we develop morality and self-awareness?
- Why do some people develop eating disorders?
- How do we develop gender behaviour?

Because psychology underpins just about everything we do throughout our lives, it is both a fascinating and a demanding subject. However, the A Level course will take a more academic route towards an understanding of the various theoretical perspectives and the different methods of studying behaviour.

We examine many psychological concepts, theories and related research, in an attempt to find the best explanation for a particular kind of behaviour. Crucial to this process is the development of analysis and evaluation, providing support and criticism (either methodological or ethical), therefore presenting a balanced viewpoint.

Course Content and Assessment

Teacher explanations are combined with a variety of other activities including discussions, presentations, videos, paired problem solving and group

work. Psychology is an ideal subject for the development of thinking skills, analysis and evaluation of theoretical research and construction of balanced arguments, substantiated by appropriate evidence. These skills can be transferred to other subjects and used throughout life.

Year 12

- Social Influence: conformity, obedience and social change
- Cognitive psychology: memory, forgetting and eye witness testimony
- Developmental psychology: attachments in development.
- Research methods including basic maths
- Psychopathology: explanations and treatments of various disorders including depression, phobias and OCD
- Approaches: perspectives used by psychologists to explain human behaviour

Year 13

- Biological psychology builds on the Approaches topic of year twelve and considers the brain and nervous system and the role of biological rhythms.
- Eating behaviour will consider biological and psychological explanations of anorexia nervosa and of obesity.
- Gender will look at biological and other influences that determine our gender identity.
- Issues: A synoptic section that revisits many of the issues common to all topics in psychology such as the extent to which behaviour is determined by nature and nurture.
- Addiction looks at risk factors in developing addictive behaviour and focuses on smoking and gambling addictions.
- Research methods and statistical analysis builds on the work covered in year twelve and introduces students to a variety of statistical tests designed to measure statistical significance.

All three examinations will be taken at the end of Year 13. All papers will be two hours in duration.

Where next?

Careers in Psychology

Psychology leads into a number of professions:

- Teaching
- Educational psychology
- Clinical psychology
- Occupational psychology
- Forensic or legal psychology
- Sports psychology
- Media and advertising
- Nursery or childcare
- Counselling

It is especially relevant to any professions that involve working with people (e.g. medicine, teaching, social work, personnel management, police etc.) or to anyone with a general interest in people and their behaviour.

A Level psychology is also accepted as an entry qualification to most professions (eg accountancy, law etc) as well as to Higher Education courses, which could eventually lead to pure (academic) or applied research.

