PSYCHOLOGY

Pupil handbook 2020-2022

Name: ……

Course title:

AQA A level Psychology 7182

Core textbooks:

Illuminate Publishing AQA Psychology for A level

Exam dates:

Paper 1: ……

Paper 2: ……

Paper 3: ……

Course details

The exam board for your Psychology course is AQA. You can find out some more information about this in detail by visiting the AQA website.

All of you are studying the full A level in Psychology which is a two year course.

You will all sit an internal assessment at the end of your first year (end of L6) to determine your progress so far, which will be A level paper 1 (7182/1).

The official exams will all be sat in summer 2019:

Paper 1 – Introductory Topics in Psychology
Social, memory, attachment and psychopathology.
2 hours, 96 marks in total. Each section is worth 24 marks. 33.3% of total A level mark

Paper 2 – Psychology in Context
Approaches (24 marks), Biopsychology (24 marks), Research Methods (48 marks)
2 hours, 96 marks in total. 33.3% of total A level mark

Paper 3 – Issues & Options in Psychology
Issues and debates, and 3 topics from option blocks (Gender, Schizophrenia and Forensic).
2 hours, 96 marks in total. Each section is worth 24 marks. 33.3% of total A level mark

Further details can be found on the next pages.

Expectations

Organisation

- You must bring your folder and booklets/textbook with you to each lesson and keep all of your notes/worksheets and hand outs in here. You must also bring your exercise book to every lesson.

Homework

- You will be set homework each week by each teacher. This will usually be in the format of short answer exam questions. These will be self/peer/teacher marked on rotation.

Assessment

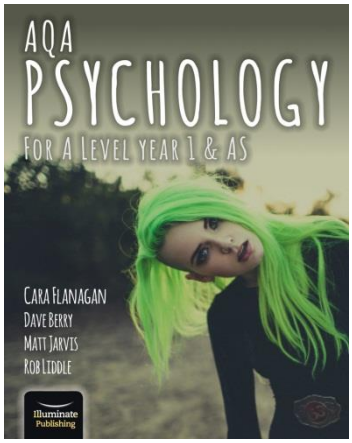
- You will sit an end of unit assessment for all topics and these grades will be recorded. You will be told in advance when these assessments will be and are expected to revise thoroughly for them.
- You will also complete two timed essays for each topic in class (without notes). These will be marked by your teacher and you will be set clear targets for improvement.

Enjoyment

- We want you to enjoy the subject! Psychology is a broad and fascinating subject and requires you to think about what you are hearing. Be ready to get involved with group work and give your opinion, and to ask questions.

Essential Resources

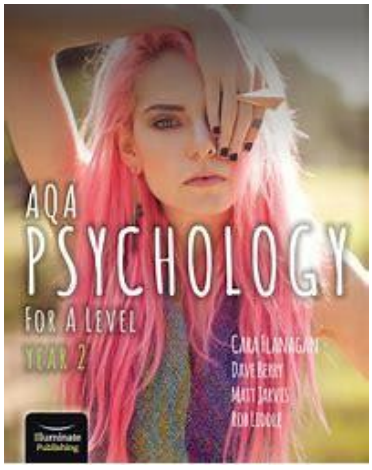
Textbooks



Year 12 textbook

We have bought online access to this textbook for all pupils.
You can access it here:

https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych1/
Username: SSUTTON
Password: STUDENT

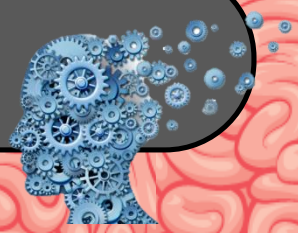


Year 13 textbook

You can also access the Year 2 textbook online here:

https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych2/
Username: SSUTTON2
Password: STUDENT2

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology



This unit is designed to introduce to some of the most influential areas of Psychology. In all topics you will study theories and research. These topics will all be studied in your first year.

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

Topics:
Social Influence
Memory
Attachment
Psychopathology
All studied in year 1

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

This unit is designed to enable you to apply concepts we have learned so far to real life. Research methods are very important in psychological research and you will study these across the two year course.

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

Topics:

Research Methods (Studied in year 1 and year 2)
Bio psychology (Studied in year 1)
Approaches (studied in year 1)

Paper 3 – Issues and Options in Psychology

This Unit is the most advanced of all of the units and is taught in year 2. This paper covers a range of optional topics. It also requires you to take a wider outlook on the topics studied by considering the different issues, debates and approaches.

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

Issues and debates (studied in year 2)

Three Option Topics (all studied in year 2):

Gender

Schizophrenia

Forensic psychology

Subject content – AQA A-level Psychology

Across the next pages you will find a full list of the A level specification

Paper 1 (Introductory topics in Psychology)

- **Social influence**
- • Types of conformity: internalisation, identification and compliance. Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence, and variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.
- • Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo.
- • Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform. Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality.
- • Explanations of resistance to social influence, including social support and locus of control.
- • Minority influence including reference to consistency, commitment and flexibility.
- • The role of social influence processes in social change.

- **Memory**
- • The multi-store model of memory: sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory. Features of each store: coding, capacity and duration.
- • Types of long-term memory: episodic, semantic, procedural.
- • The working memory model: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. Features of the model: coding and capacity.
- • Explanations for forgetting: proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues.
- • Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony: misleading information, including leading questions and post-event discussion; anxiety.
- • Improving the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, including the use of the cognitive interview.

- **Attachment**
- • Caregiver-infant interactions in humans: reciprocity and interactional synchrony. Stages of attachment identified by Schaffer. Multiple attachments and the role of the father.
- • Animal studies of attachment: Lorenz and Harlow.
- • Explanations of attachment: learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory. The concepts of a critical period and an internal working model.
- • Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation'. Types of attachment: secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant. Cultural variations in attachment, including van Ijzendoorn.
- • Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Romanian orphan studies: effects of institutionalisation.
- • The influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the role of an internal working model.

- **Psychopathology**
- • Definitions of abnormality, including deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency and deviation from ideal mental health.
- • The behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).
- • The behavioural approach to explaining and treating phobias: the two-process model, including classical and operant conditioning; systematic desensitisation, including relaxation and use of hierarchy; flooding.
- • The cognitive approach to explaining and treating depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model; cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including challenging irrational thoughts.
- • The biological approach to explaining and treating OCD: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy

Paper 2: Psychology in context

- **Approaches in Psychology**
- •Origins of Psychology: Wundt, introspection and the emergence of Psychology as a science.
- The basic assumptions of the following approaches:
- • Learning approaches: i) the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research; social learning theory including imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research.
- • The cognitive approach: the study of internal mental processes, the role of schema, the use of theoretical and computer models to explain and make inferences about mental processes. The emergence of cognitive neuroscience.
- • The biological approach: the influence of genes, biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour. Genotype and phenotype, genetic basis of behaviour, evolution and behaviour.
- • The psychodynamic approach: the role of the unconscious, the structure of personality, that is Id, Ego and Superego, defence mechanisms including repression, denial and displacement, psychosexual stages.
- • Humanistic Psychology: free will, self-actualisation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, focus on the self, congruence, the role of conditions of worth. The influence on counselling Psychology.
- • Comparison of approaches.

- **Biopsychology**
- • The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic).
- • The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, including reference to neurotransmitters, excitation and inhibition.
- • The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones.
- • The fight or flight response including the role of adrenaline.
- • Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma.
- • Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI); electroencephalogram (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); postmortem examinations.
- • Biological rhythms: circadian, infradian and ultradian and the difference between these rhythms. The effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle.

Paper 2 continued

- **Research methods (worth 25% of overall grade)**
- • Experimental method. Types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi-experiments.
- • Observational techniques. Types of observation: naturalistic and controlled observation; covert and overt observation; participant and non-participant observation.
- • Self-report techniques. Questionnaires; interviews, structured and unstructured.
- • Correlations. Analysis of the relationship between co-variables. The difference between correlations and experiments. Content analysis. Case studies.
- Scientific processes
- • Aims: stating aims, the difference between aims and hypotheses.
- • Hypotheses: directional and non-directional.
- • Sampling: the difference between population and sample; sampling techniques including:
- random, systematic, stratified, opportunity and volunteer; implications of sampling
- techniques, including bias and generalisation.
- • Pilot studies and the aims of piloting. Experimental designs: repeated measures, independent groups, matched pairs. Observational design: behavioural categories; event sampling; time sampling. Questionnaire construction, including use of open and closed questions; design of interviews.
- • Variables: manipulation and control of variables, including independent, dependent, extraneous, confounding; operationalisation of variables. Control: random allocation and counterbalancing, randomisation and standardisation. Demand characteristics and investigator effects.
- • Ethics, including the role of the British Psychological Society's code of ethics; ethical issues in the design and conduct of psychological studies; dealing with ethical issues in research.
- • The role of peer review in the scientific process. The implications of psychological research for the economy.
- • Reliability across all methods of investigation. Ways of assessing reliability: test-retest and inter-observer; improving reliability.
- • Types of validity across all methods of investigation: face validity, concurrent validity, ecological validity and temporal validity. Assessment of validity. Improving validity.
- • Features of science: objectivity and the empirical method; replicability and falsifiability; theory construction and hypothesis testing; paradigms and paradigm shifts.
- • Reporting psychological investigations. Sections of a scientific report: abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion and referencing.
- Data handling and analysis
- • Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data
- collection techniques. Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis.
- • Descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency – mean, median, mode; calculation of
- mean, median and mode; measures of dispersion; range and standard deviation; calculation
- of range; calculation of percentages; positive, negative and zero correlations.
- • Presentation and display of quantitative data: graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts, histograms.
- • Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.
- • Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients.
- • Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval.
- • Content analysis and coding. Thematic analysis.
- • Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. When to use the sign test; calculation of the sign test.
- • Probability and significance: use of statistical tables and critical values in interpretation of significance; Type I and Type II errors.
- • Factors affecting the choice of statistical test, including level of measurement and experimental design. When to use the following tests: Spearman's rho, Pearson's r, Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney, related t-test, unrelated t-test and Chi-Squared test.

Paper 3

- **Issues and debates in Psychology**
- • Gender and culture in Psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- • Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations.
- • The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach.
- • Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in Psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism.
- • Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.
- • Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity

- **Gender**
- • Sex and gender. Sex-role stereotypes. Androgyny and measuring androgyny including the Bem Sex Role Inventory.
- • The role of chromosomes and hormones (testosterone, oestrogen and oxytocin) in sex and gender. Atypical sex chromosome patterns: Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome.
- • Cognitive explanations of gender development, Kohlberg's theory, gender identity, gender stability and gender constancy; gender schema theory.
- • Psychodynamic explanation of gender development, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Oedipus complex; Electra complex; identification and internalisation.
- • Social learning theory as applied to gender development. The influence of culture and media on gender roles.
- • Atypical gender development: gender dysphoria; biological and social explanations for gender dysphoria.

- **Schizophrenia**
- • Classification of schizophrenia. Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition.
- • Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia, including reference toco-morbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap.
- • Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis.
- • Psychological explanations for schizophrenia: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations, including dysfunctional thought processing.
- • Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics.
- • Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy as used in the treatment of schizophrenia. Token economies as used in the management of schizophrenia.
- • The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the
- diathesis-stress model.

- **Forensic Psychology**
- • Offender profiling: the top-down approach, including organised and disorganised types of offender; the bottom-up approach, including investigative Psychology; geographical profiling.
- • Biological explanations of offending behaviour: an historical approach (atavistic form); genetics and neural explanations.
- • Psychological explanations of offending behaviour: Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality; cognitive explanations; level of moral reasoning and cognitive distortions, including hostile attribution bias and minimalisation; differential association theory; psychodynamic explanations.
- • Dealing with offending behaviour: the aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Recidivism. Behaviour modification in custody. Anger management and restorative justice programmes

Exam Questions and Assessment Objectives

You will be required to answer a range of exam questions both in lessons and for homework.

At A Level exam questions include multiple choice, short answer and extended answer (essay) questions worth up to 16 marks.

In year 2 you are expected to show greater insight of issues, debates and approaches in Psychology, as well as more developed evaluation.

How will I be assessed? What are the skills I will need?

You will be assessed using three key assessment objectives (AO's). These also detail the skills you will need to perfect whilst on the Psychology course.

AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding: You can do this in an exam by describing or outlining studies or theories in detail using key terms. By doing this you are showing you know and understand!

AO2 – Application: In an exam situation you might be given a scenario or stimulus to apply your psychological knowledge to. To do this you have to really interpret theories, concepts and studies and select the most appropriate ones to talk about, linking back to the scenario you are given.

AO3 – Analysis & Evaluation: In an exam this is the critical thinking assessment objective. To achieve this you need to discuss strengths and weaknesses of Psychological theories and studies. You may also make comparisons by considering which theories/studies support or oppose each other.

Theories vs Studies

- As psychology is a completely new subject, you will come across a lot of new terminology. Two things that are often confused is a theory and a study.
- **An explanation of each is:**
- **Theory**: In psychology, a theory is based upon a hypothesis and evidence. A theory is used to explain behaviour, and often will have a researcher's name with it. For example 'Milgram's agency theory'. Theories are very often based on research evidence which comes from a research study.
- **Study**: A study is a piece of research which involves testing or observing participants in some way. It can take different forms; the most often one being an experiment. Psychologists use the scientific method, so an experiment may have controlled variables in an artificial setting (laboratory experiment). There are also a number of other research methods you will come across, and you will also hear these referred to as 'a study'. For example, an observation or a case study (which usually only has one participant).
- **Using the Milgram example, a good way to remember this may be:**
- Milgram conducted a **STUDY** into obedience, which involved participants believing they were giving electric shocks to other people.
- Based on the evidence from this **STUDY**, Milgram formulated the agency **THEORY** to explain the behaviour he saw.
- You will be expected to be able to evaluate both theories and studies in psychology. See the next pages for some guidance on this.

How do I evaluate?

- You will be taught how to evaluate during lessons but the following techniques are very useful to know and practice:

- **Point-** Make a point such as 'A limitation of the theory is that it is based on research evidence that may not be valid'
- **Explain**- Explain your point, i.e. explain what you mean by validity
- **Evidence/Example:** Back up your point with research evidence from or study, or if you don't have this then support it with an example
- **Link-** Link your point back to the question i.e clarify why your point is a strength or a limitation and why this is important

- Th further you study psychology, the more this skill will be developed. You will find that you may bring in 'counter arguments' to your point. This is a good thing to do as it shows you have considered both sides of the argument.

Points to use in evaluation

- Supporting evidence
- Opposing evidence
- Different theories
- Application to real life

- **The above points could guide your PEEL paragraph structure when evaluating. I.e. you could base a PEEL paragraph around each of the above 4 points if applicable.**