

PSYCHOLOGY

Exam board: AQA

Assessment methods: 100% Examination

Length of exams: 3 x 2 hour papers

Breakdown of units

Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology

- **Social influence:** Types and explanations of conformity as researched by Asch and Zimbardo. Explanations for obedience and situational variables affecting obedience. Explanations of resistance to social influence and minority influence with reference to social change.
- **Memory:** The Multi-Store and Working Memory models. Types of long-term memory, and explanations for forgetting. Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, including leading questions and anxiety.
- **Attachment:** Caregiver-infant interactions and the stages of attachment. Explanations as to why we form attachment and the use of animal research in studying attachment.
- **Psychopathology:** Definitions of psychological abnormality. The behavioural, cognitive and biological approaches to explaining phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression.

Paper 2: Psychology in context

- **Approaches in psychology:** The use of various approaches to describe human behaviour, along with their relative strengths and limitations: biological; cognitive; humanistic; psychodynamic; and humanistic.
- **Biopsychology:** The divisions of the nervous system; including the structure and function of sensory, relay, and motor neurons. Localisation of function in the brain, including ways of studying the brain, and functional recovery of the brain after trauma. Biological rhythms – circadian, ultradian and infradian, and the effect of internal and external factors on these.
- **Research Methods:** Methods used by psychologists to study human behaviour, including experimental and observational methods. The main features of science, and the appreciation of ethical issues when studying human and non-human animals. The use of quantitative and qualitative data to analysis behaviour scientifically.

Paper 3: Issues and options in psychology

- **Issues and debates in psychology:** Gender and culture bias within research. Free will and determinism; nature-nurture debate; and holism-reductionism. Idiographic and nomothetic approaches and ethical implications of research studies and theory.
- **Cognition and development:** Theories of cognitive development, including the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Baillargeon. The development of social cognition and role of Theory of Mind with reference to autism.
- **Eating behaviour:** Evolutionary and cultural food preferences. Neural and hormonal mechanisms involved in the control of eating behaviour. Biological and psychological explanations for the development of anorexia nervosa and obesity.
- **Aggression:** Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression and the evolutionary explanation of aggression. Institutional aggression in the context of prisons & media influences on aggression.

Overlap with other subjects

Due to the variety of content and skills learnt in Psychology, the course fits well with a wide variety of subject combinations, for example Biology, English, Philosophy, History, P.E. and Maths.