

**A-Level Psychology Guide**

**How Psychology will be taught:**

* Whole class discussions
* Small group tasks and discussions
* Note taking and essay writing
* Research in class and independently
* Recreations of some psychological experiments will be done
* At the end of each unit an assessment will happen in class, you will be expected to revise for this and there will be time to go through any issues after if required.

**Working expectations:**

* Attend all lessons and be on time
* Complete organised and neat notes
* Complete all tasks to the best of your ability
* Ask for help if required
* Work well independently and with others
* Be willing to share ideas
* Meet set deadlines

**What 100% effort in this subject looks like:**

* Full concentration and participation in lesson activities
* Seeking additional essay questions, doing them as practice and handing them in.
* Making your own revision resources
* Reading about the wider context, such as what lead psychologists to conduct their particular study
* Marking work, correcting errors in green pen and then acting on feedback given
* Seeking help when you are struggling and not leaving questions in exercises incomplete.

**Folder Policy:**

Your folder should have:

* Clear notes on each separate topic
* Separate sections for each unit of work

You will also have an assessment folder which will include:

* Sample essays and other revision materials in the back of the folder
* Guidance and essay writing frames
* Marked essays to show progress
* Marked end of unit assessments
* Your green pen responses to feedback

**What marking looks like:**

* Class notes are not marked
* Research homework will be marked visually but not graded
* All essays/practice exam questions will be marked with comments and a numbered mark

**What homework looks like:**

* Reading and comprehension tasks
* Research
* Exam questions
* Essays

**Specification at a glance:**

**Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology**

Written exam: 2 hours – 96 marks in total

33.3% of A-level

Section A: Memory (24 marks)

Section B: Social Influence (24 marks)

Section C: Attachment (24 marks)

Section D: Psychopathology (24 marks)

All sections include: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing

**Paper 2: Psychology in Context**

Written exam: 2 hours – 96 marks in total

33.3% of A-level

Section A: Approaches (24 marks)

Section B: Biopsychology (24 marks)

Section C: Research Methods (48 marks)

All sections include: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing

**Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology**

Written exam: 2 hours – 96 marks in total

33.3% of A-level

Section A: Issues and debates (24 marks)

Section B: Relationships (24 marks)

Section C: Schizophrenia (24 marks)

Section D: Aggression (24 marks)

All sections include: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing

**Summer preparation tasks**

The purpose of giving you a summer bridging task is:

1. To provide a bridge from level 2 to level 3 study, and lead into the early stages of the course.
2. To engage you in independent learning which is required at level 3.
3. To encourage you to develop your work ethic and commitment to study.
4. To measure your suitability for the course and assess your initial levels of achievement.

**ACTIVITY 1**

There are a number of key terms that crop up throughout the two-year course. It is important that you are aware what the meaning is of these terms.

Define the following key terms:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Validity | Reliability | Ethics | Correlation | Unconscious processes | Ethnocentrism | Nature-Nurture |
| Representativeness | Independent variable | Dependant variable | Hypothesis | Determinism | Reductionism | Cognition |

**Further Tasks:**

**Please complete the following tasks. They can be done in any order:**

Psychology is a subject that investigates us as human beings. It is a subject that requires a broad range of skills from scientific planning and investigation to reading and critically evaluating, to statistical analysis of data. These activities are designed to show you each aspect of Psychology to prepare you for the A Level.

**Consolidation of GCSE studies:**

Although you have not studied Psychology at GCSE you could prepare for the A level by:

* Reviewing your lessons and notes from Biology on the nervous system as this is relevant to Psychology.
* Making sure your maths skills are up to speed (particularly % increase and % decrease, mean, median, mode and range, ratios and probability, all charts and graphs and scattergrams). You will need all these.

**ACTIVITY 2 - RESEARCH**

Psychology is a subject that relates to ‘real-life’. Keep a scrapbook (digital or paper) of articles in the news that are linked to how people behave, how they think, what motivates them etc. Annotate each article with a summary of the main points and create a glossary of terms that are new to you. You should find (if possible) at least one article per week.

Use the following sources:  
[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/)                                                             [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com/)  
[www.thetimes.co.uk](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/)                                                    [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk/)

Searches in the science, health, family and business sections may be useful or use the search box and enter ‘psychology’. I recently found an article on ‘The Psychology of Panic Buying’!

**ACTIVITY 3 - The different approaches in Psychology**

See what you can find out about the following approaches that are used in psychology.

**THE BIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

How does the biological approach attempt to explain the causes of human behaviour? (depression, OCD, Schizophrenia)

Identify how the biological approach suggests psychological conditions should be treated.

The biological approach can be accused of being deterministic – what does this mean?

What does genotype and phenotype mean?

**THE BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH**

Who are the main founders of the behavioural approach?

When did this approach develop?

Identify the main study from each of the founders (they should both be using animals – rats/dogs)

Identify the main assumptions of this approach

What kinds of research methods do the behaviourists use?

Identify how this approach might explain phobias.

**THE COGNITIVE APPROACH**

What are the main assumptions of the cognitive approach?

Identify some areas in psychology that use the cognitive approach?

How does the cognitive approach explain human behaviour?

What therapy does the cognitive approach use – briefly explain it.

**ACTIVITY 4 - Researching a key study**

Your task is to research one of the key studies that we use in psychology. Make some notes about what you found out.

Select **one** from the following:

* Milgrams Study of obedience
* Zimbardo’s Stanford Prison Experiment
* Asch’s study of conformity - Ainsworth’s strange situation
* Van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg’s cross cultural study of attachment
* Bowlby’s 44 thieves study

Just type the name of the researcher into google to find out the information – simply psychology or tutor2u have some good information. You will also find some original footage of these studies on YouTube.

You should produce a **fact sheet** based on one of these key studies above to include:

- The aim of the study

- The research methodology and procedures

- What type of experiment, participants, what did they actually do in the study?

- What were their findings / results.

- What conclusions can be drawn from this experiment – i.e. what does this mean (any theories it supports)

- Any strengths or weaknesses from this experiment/study.

**Please bring your work with you to your first lesson.**

**Potentially useful websites:**

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/> - very detailed explanations of the key topics

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology> - has a good blog and some useful resources – practice questions etc.

<https://studywise.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/AS-Psychology-Unit-1-and-2-notes.pdf> - notes on some of the units

**Link to the Specification:**

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/psychology/specifications/AQA-7181-7182-SP-2015.PDF>