



# PSYCHOLOGY

A Level Subject Information



# Psychology A Level

## Examining Board AQA

### Aims and Objectives

The course aims to provide a general introduction to psychological theory, research and application. Students will look at the diversity, applications and limitations of psychological knowledge and also learn how to design, carry out and evaluate a range of psychological investigations.

### Syllabus Content

The syllabus described below outlines the expectations of the 2 year A level programme of study:

#### Unit 1 – Introductory topics in Psychology

**Cognitive psychology** – The study of thought processes – memory, forgetting, and its implications for eye witness testimony.

**Developmental psychology** – Learning about the development of childhood attachments.

**Social influence** – The study of obedience and conformity, understand how and why people conform to group pressure or obey orders even if they know them to be wrong.

**Psychopathology** – A detailed look at the characteristics, explanations and treatment of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Depression and Phobias.

#### Unit 2 – Psychology in context

**Approaches in psychology** – An overview of the different psychological perspectives, including; behaviourism, biological theories, cognitive theories, psychodynamic theories and humanistic theories of explaining human behaviour.

**Biopsychology** – A detailed insight into the ways in which a person's physiology can affect their behaviour. We look at the structure and function of the nervous systems and how the brain is specialised for different functions.

**Research methods** – The study of how psychologists conduct their research, looking at the pros and cons of the differing methodologies and how they affect the outcome of the results of a study.

#### Unit 3 – Issues and options in Psychology

**Issues and debates in psychology** – Students will be able to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of research studies, as well as overall psychological theories. They should also be able to debate the relative effectiveness and moral considerations of a range of psychological treatments such as ECT and drug therapies.

#### **Additional topic areas –**

- The study of the development and dissolution of **human relationships** and why relationships are necessary for survival.
- The topic of **stress** explores the physiology of stress and the sources of stress in everyday life. We also examine various **stress management techniques** that enable people to cope.
- The study of **addictive behaviour**, including both biological and psychological explanations of a range of addictions including smoking and gambling, as well as recognised treatment methods.

## Method of Assessment

The A level course will be assessed at the end of the Year 13 via 3 examinations, each lasting 2 hours and comprising of 33.3% of the student's final A level grade.

## Is Psychology the right choice at A level?

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and experience. Students will need a good command of English, a willingness to carry out wide background reading and at least a **good** understanding of Mathematics and a Science subject.

During the course, students will investigate how Psychologists study people, animals, and processes within us and will evaluate research which has been carried out in different areas of Psychology. This theoretical knowledge will be consolidated with practical experiences as students are required to carry out psychological investigations over the two years, involving experimentation.

The inclusion of biopsychology and other key skills on this new syllabus is designed to make the subject a recognised science by universities. As such, students should be prepared for some challenging human biology as part of their studies.

As Psychology concerns people; an interest in people as well as an enquiring mind is required.

## Career Opportunities

Students will learn the fundamentals of Psychology and develop skills valued by Higher Education and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. These are all skills valued in the following careers (to name a few):

Clinical Psychologist	Criminal Psychologist
Educational Psychologist	Environmental Psychologist
Health Psychologist	Occupational Psychologist
Sports Psychologist	Media Presenter
Therapist	Social Worker
Teacher	Solicitor/Litigation
Forensics	Armed Forces
Human Resources	Physiotherapy
Medicine	Dentistry
Midwifery	Counselling
The World of Advertising & Media	Journalism

## Getting ready to study Psychology

There is no prerequisite for GCSE Psychology. You do not need to complete the GCSE course to study A level as we cover different topic areas. However, it would be useful to familiarise yourself with some Psychological Literature.

## Find out more by:

- Talking to current Psychology students
- Looking at the AQA specification  
<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/introduction>
- Looking at course books in the library
- Talking to Mrs Jonas and Mrs Green