Psychology

A level, first year

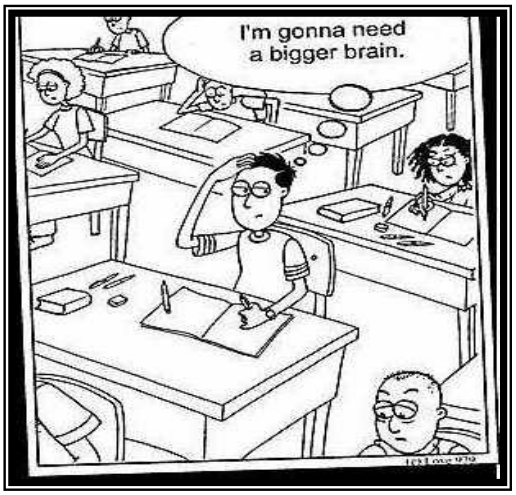
Student Handbook

Guildford County School

Introduction

Studying at A level is quite different from what you have experienced at GCSE. You will be expected to work more independently and take charge of your own learning. I would hope that everyone on the Psychology course would support and help each other through the year, ensuring that you all succeed.

I hope you will all show enthusiasm at working in the class. I encourage discussion in the class where we can all exchange views and ideas. You will also be working in small groups from time to time. I hope we will be able to bring real life situations into the classroom – let me know if you see anything on television or in the newspapers.



I expect all students to attend *all their lessons,* make notes both in class and on their own, to do background reading and to complete work set. I also expect good behaviour in the classroom. If you miss a lesson it is up to you to find out what work you have missed. *It is never acceptable to use absence as an excuse for not doing a piece of work.* If you know you are going to be away in advance (e.g. university visits, fieldwork courses, etc.) you must find out in advance what work you are going to miss and negotiate with me or Miss Stewart when you will complete it.

If you are having difficulties with a piece of work or some aspect of the course please come and ask for help: at the end of a lesson is usually a good time, and if your query needs a lot of time we can arrange a time to meet in a lunch hour or after school. Remember: the deadline is too late!

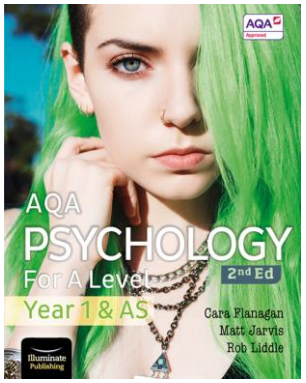
Psychology is a science and uses scientific methods of investigation. Research is a very important part of psychology, which means that anyone studying psychology must be fully conversant in the use of research methodology. Because of this you will be learning about how to do research throughout the course. This will entail you conducting a number of small research studies. You will also need to have a good grasp of basic mathematics as this is also integral to psychology. There is also a requirement for student to be competent in basic mathematics skills, applied to research. Overall, at least 10% of the marks in assessments will require the use of mathematical skills.

There are some major changes to the structure of the A level. The psychology A level has now changed to a 2-year linear qualification. What this means is that you will study the course for 2 years and sit ***all of your exams at the end of the second year.***

All students will be required to obtain a textbook for the course. These can be purchased through the school or you can buy your own copy separately. Books bought through the school should be at a slightly discounted price. If you purchase a book through the school, we will buy back your copy at the end of the course at half-cost if it is in good condition.

The textbook that we will be using is:

AQA Psychology for A level year 1 and AS Student Book: 2nd Ed, by Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle and published by Illuminate Publishing. ISBN 978-1-912820-42-9



You will also be given a link to an electronic version of the textbook.

Psychology A level, year 1 scheme of work

Below is the scheme of work for the A level, year 1 Psychology course. The course is taught by Mr Garside and Miss Stewart.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">A Level, Year 1 – Introduction to Psychology</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>Mr Garside</th><th>Miss Stewart</th><th rowspan="7">Research Methods</th></tr>
<tr><td>Autumn Term 1</td><td>Approaches in Psychology (Inc. Biopsychology)
- Learning Approach
- Cognitive Approach
- Biological Approach
- Psychodynamic Approach
- Humanistic Approach</td><td rowspan="3">Social Influence
- Conformity
- Obedience
- Resistance to Social Influence
- Minority influence
- Social influence and social change</td></tr>
<tr><td>Autumn Term 2</td><td>Biopsychology
- The nervous system and endocrine system
- Neurons and synaptic transmission
Memory
- Multi-store model of memory
- Working memory model</td></tr>
<tr><td>Spring Term 1</td><td>Memory
- Types of long-term memory
- Factors affecting forgetting
- Eyewitness testimony</td></tr>
<tr><td>Spring Term 2</td><td>Psychopathology
- Definitions of abnormality
- Phobias
- Depression
- OCD</td><td rowspan="3">Attachment
- Schaffer’s stages of attachment
- Animal studies of attachment
- Explanations of attachment
- Learning theory
- Bowlby’s theory
- Ainsworth’s strange situation
- Cultural variations
- Influence of early attachment on later relationships</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summer Term 1</td><td>Issues and Debates
- Gender and culture bias
- Free will and determinism
- The nature-nurture debate</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summer Term 2</td><td>Issues and Debates
- Holism and reductionism
- Ideographic and nomothetic approaches to research
- Ethical implications of research studies</td></tr>
</table>

Course Specification

AQA Specification GCE A Level Psychology, year 1 (7182)

Aims

The course is designed to encourage students to:

- develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of the psychology and how they relate to each other
- develop and demonstrate a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- develop competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for psychology, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with psychology
- understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society.

Assessment Objectives (AOs)

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level Psychology specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- **AO1:** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.
- **AO2:** Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:
    - in a theoretical context
    - in a practical context
    - when handling qualitative data
    - when handling quantitative data.
- **AO3:** Analyse, interpret, and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:
    - make judgments and reach conclusions
    - develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level Psychology

Assessment objectives (AOs)	component weightings (approx %)			overall weighting (approx %)
	paper 1	paper 2	paper 3	
AO1	11–14	7–10	9–12	30–33
AO2	6–9	16–19	5–8	30–33
AO3	12–14	7–9	15–17	36–38
Overall weighting of components	33.3	33.3	33.3	100

At least 10% of the overall assessment of psychology will contain mathematical skills equivalent to Level 2 or above.

At least 25–30% of the overall assessment will assess skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research methods.

Subject Content – A level, year 1

Paper 1 - Introductory topics in psychology

Students will be expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, research methods and ethical issues in relation to the specified Paper 1 content
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 1 content in a range of contexts
- analyse, interpret and evaluate psychological concepts, theories, research studies and research methods in relation to the specified Paper 1 content
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Knowledge and understanding of research methods, practical research skills and mathematical skills will be assessed in Paper 1.

These skills should be developed through study of the specification content and through ethical practical research activities, involving:

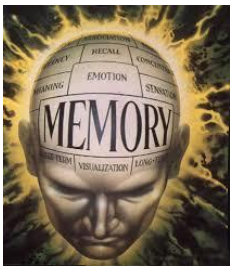
- designing research
- conducting research
- analysing and interpreting data.

In carrying out practical research activities, students will manage associated risks and use information and communication technology (ICT).

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, location and uniform, as investigated by Milgram. 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.

Paper 2 - Psychology in context

Students will be expected to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, research methods and ethical issues in relation to the specified Paper 2 content
- apply psychological knowledge and understanding of the specified Paper 2 content in a range of contexts
- analyse, interpret and evaluate psychological concepts, theories, research studies and research methods in relation to the specified Paper 2 content
- evaluate therapies and treatments including in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Knowledge and understanding of research methods, practical research skills and mathematical skills will be assessed in Paper 2. These skills should be developed through study of the specification content and through ethical practical research activities, involving:

- designing research
- conducting research
- analysing and interpreting data.

In carrying out practical research activities, students will manage associated risks and use information and communication technology (ICT).

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**: 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); post-mortem 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.

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.

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.

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.
- Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.
- Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test.

Mathematical Skills

In order to be able to develop your skills, knowledge and understanding in psychology, you need to have acquired competence in the appropriate areas of mathematics as indicated in the table of coverage below.

Overall, at least 10% of the marks in assessments for psychology will require the use of mathematical skills. These skills will be applied in the context of AS Psychology and will be at least the standard of higher tier GCSE mathematics.

The following tables illustrate where these mathematical skills may be developed during teaching or could be assessed.

This list of examples is not exhaustive. These skills could be developed in other areas of specification content. Other areas where these skills could be developed have been exemplified throughout the specification.

See the following pages for a more detailed breakdown of the skills needed.

Mathematical skills	Exemplification of mathematical skill in the context of As psychology
Arithmetic and numerical computation	
Recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form.	For example, converting data in standard form from a results table into decimal form in order to construct a pie chart.
Use ratios, fractions and percentages.	For example, calculating the percentages of cases that fall into different categories in an observation study.
Estimate results.	For example, commenting on the spread of scores for a set of data, which would require estimating the range.
Handling data	
Use an appropriate number of significant figures.	For example, expressing a correlation coefficient to two or three significant figures.

Find arithmetic means.	For example, calculating the means for two conditions using raw data from a class experiment.
Construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms.	For example, selecting and sketching an appropriate form of data display for a given set of data.
Understand simple probability.	For example, explaining the difference between the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance.
Understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.	For example, explaining how a random or stratiied sample could be obtained from a target population.
Understand the terms mean, median and mode.	For example, explaining the differences between the mean, median and mode and selecting which measure of central tendency is most appropriate for a given set of data. Calculate standard deviation.
Use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables.	For example, plotting two variables from an investigation on a scatter diagram and identifying the pattern as a positive correlation, a negative correlation or no correlation.
Use a statistical test.	For example, calculating a non-parametric test of differences using the data from a given experiment.
Make order of magnitude calculations.	For example, estimating the mean test score for a large number of participants on the basis of the total overall score.
Know the characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.	For example, being presented with a set of scores from an experiment and being asked to indicate the position of the mean (or median, or mode).
Understand measures of dispersion, including standard deviation and range.	For example, explaining why the standard deviation might be a more useful measure of dispersion for a given set of scores, eg where there is an outlying score.
Understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data.	For example, explaining how a given qualitative measure (for example, an interview transcript) might be converted into quantitative data.
Understand the difference between primary and secondary data.	For example, stating whether data collected by a researcher dealing directly with participants is primary or secondary data.
Select an appropriate statistical test.	For example, selecting a suitable inferential test for a given practical investigation and explaining why the chosen test is appropriate.
Use statistical tables to determine significance.	For example, using an extract from statistical tables to say whether or not a given observed value is significant at the 0.05 level of significance for a one-tailed test.

Algebra

Understand and use the symbols: =, <, <<, >>, ⩾ ∝ ~	For example, expressing the outcome of an inferential test in the conventional form by stating the level of significance at the 0.05 level or 0.01 level by using

Substitute numerical values into algebraic equations using appropriate units for physical quantities.	For example, inserting the appropriate values from a given set of data into the formula for a statistical test, eg inserting the N value (for the number of scores) into the Chi Square formula.
Solve simple algebraic equations.	For example, calculating the degrees of freedom for a Chi Square test.

Graphs

Translate information between graphical, numerical and algebraic forms.	For example, using a set of numerical data (a set of scores) from a record sheet to construct a bar graph.
Plot two variables from experimental or other data.	For example, sketching a scatter diagram using two sets of data from a correlational investigation.

Assessment Procedures

Internal Assessment

You will be tested at the end of each topic and at other times throughout the course. This will be done to ensure that you have fully understood the concepts that have been covered. Internal assessment will take on a number of different formats. You will encounter tests, quizzes, marked homework essays, timed in-class essays and presentations. These will be marked by your teacher, fellow students and through self-assessment.

The purpose of the assessment procedure is to give feedback to you in the form of guidance, awareness and to help with your motivation.

There will be strict deadlines for work to be handed in. There are no excuses for late submission of work. Offenders will have their parents informed. Marked work will normally be returned to you within two weeks.

There will be formal mock exams where you will be examined on all aspects of paper 1 and 2.

External Scheme of Assessment

The A-level specification is designed to be taken over two years with all assessments taken at the end of the course.

A-level

Assessment in A-level Psychology includes questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their skills, knowledge and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

For example, sections B, C and D of Paper 3 contain extended response questions. An 'extended response' is evidence of sufficient length generated to allow students to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning which is coherent, relevant, substantiated and logically structured.

A level psychology will be examined in June of year 13 and will consist of 3 papers each of 2 hours. The three papers are equally weighted.

The Exam

Exam for A level Psychology are all taken at the end of the course, during May and June of year 13. The exam consists of 3 papers, each of 3 hours and all equally weighted. Content that is examined in each paper is as follows:

Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology
What's Assessed - Section A: Social Influence - Section B: Memory - Section C: Attachment - Section D: Psychopathology
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

Paper 2: Psychology in context
What's Assessed - Section A: Approaches in Psychology - Section B: Biopsychology - Section C: Research methods
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, 48 marks

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology
What's Assessed - Section A: Issues and Debates in Psychology - Section B: Relationships - Section C: Schizophrenia - Section D: Aggression
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

Resources

You will be required to buy a textbook that covers the entire A level course. This is your personal copy for you to keep through the course.

You will also be given a workbook for most topics. You will need to bring the workbook to lessons for the relevant topic as there are a number of exercises that you will have to complete in class. These workbooks will then form the core of your revision notes.

There are also a number of other textbooks that can be found in B14 for you to borrow. These will give a slightly different perspective on aspects of course. I am also endeavouring to increase the number of books held in the library.

Another excellent resource that is available to you is the Surrey University Library. You cannot take books out from there but you can use the library freely and photocopy from books or journal articles as needed.

You will also be given the opportunity to purchase the 'PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW'. This is a Psychology journal that is written specifically for A level students and the articles will all have direct relevance to your course.

Internet Resources

Below are several website addresses that you may find useful.

http://www.apa.org/monitor/ This is an online journal published by the American Psychological Association.

http://psychology.about.com/?once=true& A very good general psychology site with lots of good links

http://www.psychlotron.org.uk/newresources.html A great site with loads of stuff specifically for A-level Psychology students.

http://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/psychology A great site for revision materials

There are many other Internet resources available. The above list should be a good starting point.

The following list is of books that you may find interesting. I am not suggesting that you buy any of these but if you have an interest in psychology and would like to do some additional reading these would be a good starting point.

Supporting Texts

Cardwell, M. and Flanagan, C. (2015) Psychology A level year 1 and AS, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Green, S., Lewis, R., Willerton, J. (2015) Oxford AQA Psychology A level year 1 and AS. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Memory

Baddeley, A.D. (1999) Essentials of human memory. Hove: Psychology Press.

Groeger, J.A. (1997) Memory and remembering: Everyday memory in context. Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.

Henderson, J. (1999) Memory and forgetting. London: Routledge

Attachments in Development

Schaffer, H.R. (1998) Making decisions about children, Oxford: Blackwell.

Smith, P.K., Cowie, H. & Blades, M. (1998) Understanding children's development. (3rd edn), Oxford: Blackwell

Physiological Psychology

Carlson, N.R., (2013) Physiology of behaviour (11th edn). Boston: Pearson.

Cox, T. (1978) Stress. London: MacMillan

Sarafino, E.P., (1999) health psychology (3rd edn). New York: Wiley.

Individual Differences: Abnormality

Comer, R.J.,(1997). Abnormal psychology. New York: Freeman.

Davison, G.C. & Neale, J.M., (2001). Abnormal Psychology (8th edn). New York: Wiley

Tyrer, P. & Steinberg, D., (1993) models for mental disorders. Chichester: John Wiley.

Social Influence

Baron, R.A. & Byrne, D., (1997). Social psychology: Understanding human interaction (7th edn), Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Pennington, D.C., Gillan, K. & Hill, P., (1999). Social psychology. London: Arnold.

Eysenck, M.W. (1994) Perspectives on psychology. Hove: Psychology Press.

Research Methods

Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M. & Tindall, C. (1994) Qualitative methods in psychology: A research guide, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Coolican, H. (2006) Introduction to research methods and statistics in psychology (3rd edn), London: Hodder Education.

Coolican, H. (2004) Research methods and statistics in psychology (4th edn), London: Hodder Education.

Gross, R.D. (2012) Key studies in psychology (6th edn), London: Hachette UK.