

Arrangement of Lessons

AS level

Module One: Introducing Psychology

- 1 What is Psychology?
TMA A
- 2 Research Methods
- 3 Representing Data and Descriptive Statistics
- 4 Ethical Issues
TMA B
- 5 The Biological Approach
- 6 Gender
TMA C

Module Two: Social Psychology

- 7 Attitudes
- 8 Social Influence
TMA D
- 9 Social Cognition (optional)
- 10 Social Psychology of Sport (optional)
TMA E

Module Three: Cognitive Psychology

- 11 Perception and Attention
- 12 Remembering and Forgetting
TMA F
- 13 Cognition and Law (optional)
- 14 Language and Thinking (optional)
TMA G

Module Four: Coursework

- 15 Planning and Implementation
TMA H
- 16 Results
- 17 Introduction and Discussion

A2 level

Module Five: Child Development

- 18 Social Development
- 19 Cognitive Development
- TMA I**
- 20 Moral Development (optional)
- 21 Exceptional Development (optional)
- TMA J**

Module Six: Atypical Behaviour

- 22 The Definition and Diagnosis of Atypical Behaviour (optional)
- 23 Anxiety and Eating Disorders (optional)
- TMA K**
- 24 Mood Disorders
- 25 Treatments of Atypical Behaviour
- TMA L**

Module Seven: Perspectives, Methods and Debates

- 26 Approaches and Debates
- TMA M**
- 27 Inferential Statistics
- TMA N**

Module Eight: Coursework and Revision

- 28 Coursework
- TMA O**
- 29 Revision and Examination Technique

Textbooks

There are many different types of psychology book available for use. This course is designed to complement textbooks that have been written to meet the needs of students following AQA's Psychology B specification. You may also wish to purchase a book of research methods and statistical tests.

The following textbooks are essential:

At AS Level:

Introducing Psychology: Approaches, Topics & Methods, Pennington et al, Hodder & Stoughton (2002). ISBN: 0 340 84778 6

At A2 Level:

Advanced Psychology: Child Development, Perspectives & Methods, Pennington et al, Hodder & Stoughton (2003). ISBN: 0 340 85934 2
Advanced Psychology: Atypical Behaviour, Lynda Turner, Hodder & Stoughton (2003). ISBN: 0 340 85933 4

Supplementary Reading

The following textbooks are also recommended:

Active Psychology, Edited by Irene Taylor. This is published by Longman and covers all the key requirements of the AS and A2 syllabuses (ISBN: 0-582-05195-9).

Introducing Psychological Research, by Philip Banyard & Andrew Grayson, published by Palgrave, 2000, ISBN 0-333-91251-9.

This is a book describing key studies in Psychology. The AQA syllabuses draw heavily from psychological research and you are expected to be able to give details of individual studies in the examination. This is therefore an extremely useful (and easily readable) book.

Other general textbooks you *may* wish to consult include:

Introductory Psychology, by Tony Malim & Ann Birch, published by Palgrave, (1998). This is a very clear, easily readable textbook, making good use of colour and graphics. ISBN 0-333-66852-9

Foundations of Psychology, by Nicky Hayes, published by Thomson Learning, 2000, ISBN 1-861-52589-3.

Using the Course Materials

Tutor-Marked Assignments

Tutor-marked Assignments (TMAs) are designed to help you and your tutor to assess your progress throughout the course and, at the same time, to give you practice in answering examination questions. TMAs do not count towards your final examination result. You should aim to complete a TMA soon after reaching the end of the section, so that the topics are still at the forefront of your mind. **You are not expected to do them from memory**, although if you wish to do them this way, this is fine.

The Mark Scheme for each TMA is roughly the equivalent of the examination Mark Scheme. Questions worth 8 marks or more are banded, or tiered. Students who provide an exceptional answer will be given a mark in the top band, students providing an average answer a mark in the middle band, and a weak answer a mark in the bottom band. More details will be provided of what is required in each answer when the TMA is returned to you. Your tutor will mark your work against the Mark Scheme and give you feedback on the quality of your work. If you have any questions or queries your tutor will be able to advise.

How much to Write

You will see that most questions are split into three or four sections and they will be worth varying marks. This is deliberate as the examination paper follows this format. In the examination you will only have half an hour to write each answer, so you are not encouraged to write long essays. If a question is worth over 8 marks, it should have an essay structure, with a beginning, middle and end; it should also refer to theory and a study. Below this threshold you can provide a more general answer, but be careful that you do not give what is called a “common-sense” answer. These are answers which could be written from experience and do not have any theoretical background. It is very easy to fall into this trap in psychology.

When you are working on an Assignment, the best way to approach it is to prepare all the material and have your notes in front of you. Having worked out what you need to include in your answer, construct a simple essay / answer plan and then write for half an hour on each question.

Calculator

You will need a calculator for the statistical calculations. Don't worry if you find the prospect of using statistics a little daunting. This is not intended to be a maths course, just an introduction to

methods of psychological research. The main thing to remember is — don't panic!

The 'AS' Level and A Level System

Students should be aware that the 'A' level system in the UK was changed in 2000. As a result, all the awarding bodies, including AQA (which brought together the old AEB and NEAB exam groups) introduced new Advanced Subsidiary (AS) as well as revised Advanced ('A') level specifications and examinations across the full subject range.

The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses may be used in one of two ways:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

The Advanced Level (AS + A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) - 50% of the total award;
A second examination, called A2 - 50% of the total award

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced level courses are modular. The AS level normally comprises three teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further three teaching and learning modules. These modules generally match the Units of Assessment (or Exam Papers).

Examination Flexibility

The new style 'A' levels allow for more flexibility in the taking of exams. The two most popular options are:

- AS is completed at the end of one year and A2 at the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 are completed at the end of the same year.

Both of these options are open to students following this course as it is divided into two halves and follows the same modular sequence as the specification.

Grading and Shelf-Life

The **grading system** has not changed much from the old 'A' level system. For both AS level and the full 'A' level qualification, there is a 5-grade scale: A, B, C, D and E. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for Grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified).

The **shelf-life** of the results, prior to the award of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification. As long as the specification stays in its present form, grades can therefore be carried forward indefinitely.

The Examination Structure

This information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change. Prior to the examination, students should contact the exam board for the latest information.

AS Examination

The exam consists of two written papers of 1 hour 30 minutes each and a coursework module.

Unit 1 (Written Paper)

Marks: 35% of the total AS marks
17.5% of the total 'A' level marks
Subject Content: Module 1 of your course materials
Structure: There are three sections, A, B and C.

Section A – Approaches (choice of two structured questions)

Section B – Research Methods

Section C – Gender (choice of two structured questions)

Candidates answer three questions; one from A, one from C and the compulsory methods/descriptive statistics question in Section B.

Unit 2 (Written paper)

Marks: 35% of the total AS marks
17.5% of the total 'A' level marks
Subject Content: Modules 2 and 3 of your course materials
Structure: There are two sections, A and B.

Section A – Social Psychology (four structured questions)

Section B – Cognitive Psychology (four structured questions)

Candidates answer three questions, one from A, one from B and a third from either section.

Unit 3 (Practical Investigation)

Marks: 30% of the total AS marks
15% of the total 'A' level marks

Candidates are required to complete a practical investigation report, of approximately 1,500 words (excluding appendices). Reports must be submitted to AQA by the specified date. All candidates have their investigation marked by the exam board.

A2 Examination

The exam consists of two written papers of 1 hour 30 minutes each and a coursework module.

Unit 4 (Written Paper)

Marks: 17.5% of the total 'A' level marks
Subject Content: Modules 5 and 6 of your course materials
Structure: There are two sections, A and B.

Section A – Child Development (four structured questions)

Section B (options) - Psychology of Atypical Behaviour (four structured questions)

Candidates answer three questions; one from A, one from B and a third from either section.

Note that on the exam paper, under the options offered in Section B, you should look for the questions relating to Atypical Behaviour.

Unit 5 (Written paper)

Marks: 17.5% of the total 'A' level marks
Subject Content: Module 7 of your course materials, plus subject content from earlier modules
Structure: There are three sections, A, B and C.

Section A – Perspectives (two structured questions)

Section B – Debates (two structured questions)

Section C -Methods

Candidates answer three questions, one from A, one from B and the compulsory Methods question.

Note that this is a synoptic unit and you be expected to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding from all modules.

Unit 6 (Practical Investigation)

Marks: 15% of the total 'A' level marks

Candidates are required to complete a practical investigation report, of approximately 2,000 words (excluding appendices). Reports must be submitted to AQA by the specified date. Private candidates **only** have their investigation marked by the exam board.

Studying the Syllabus

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the AQA Publications Dept or from the website www.aqa.org.uk.

The syllabus can be purchased from

Publications,
AQA, Aldon House,
39, Heald Grove,
Rusholme,
Manchester
M14 4NA (tel: 0161-953-1170)

or downloaded from www.aqa.org.uk/qual/pdf/AQA6186WSP.pdf.

We advise that you obtain a copy of the syllabus so that you can assess which topics you have covered in the most detail and which ones you will feel happiest about in the exam. AQA can also provide advice booklets on your course, including 'Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates'. As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from AQA.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

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