

PSYCHOLOGY TERM BY TERM CURRICULUM

[Specification link - AQA Psychology A level](#)



January 2023

YEAR 12

TERM	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
1	<p>Exam skills: practice short-answer questions, planning and writing possible essay questions, end of topic tests and mock exams</p> <p>Research Methods (Paper 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Psychology as a science • Experimental methods - types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi-experiments. • Non-experimental methods – observations, interviews, questionnaires, correlations. • Analysis of data – quantitative and qualitative data, primary and secondary data, descriptive statistics. • Presentation of data - graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts. 	<p>Exam skills: practice short-answer questions, planning and writing possible essay questions, end of topic tests and mock exams</p> <p>Approaches in Psychology (Paper 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins of Psychology - Wundt, introspection and the emergence of Psychology as a science. • Learning Approaches - i) the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research; ii) social learning theory including imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research. • 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. • Biological Approach - the influence of genes, biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour. Genotype and phenotype, genetic basis of behaviour, evolution and behaviour.

Psychopathology (Paper 1)

- 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.

Attachment (Paper 1)

- Caregiver-infant interactions in humans: reciprocity and interactional synchrony. Stages of attachment – Schaffer & Emerson. 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.

Social influence (Paper 1)

- Types of conformity – compliance, identification, internalisation. Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence and variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty.
- Conformity to social roles – Zimbardo.
- Explanations for obedience – agentic state and legitimacy of authority, situational variables affecting obedience including proximity, location and uniform. Dispositional explanation for obedience – Authoritarian personality
- Explanations of resistance to social influence – social support and locus of control.
- Minority influence – commitment, consistency, flexibility
- The role of social influence processes on social change.

3	<p>Memory (Paper 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features of long-term and short-term memory. • Types of long-term memory - episodic, semantic, procedural. • Models of memory – multi store model and Working memory model. • Explanations of Forgetting - proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues. • Factors affecting 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. 	
4	<p>Research Methods part 2 (Paper 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Methods recap • Reliability and Validity • Choosing a statistical test - Spearman's rho, Pearson's r, Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney, related t-test, unrelated t-test and Chi-Squared test. • Probability and significance. • Tests of difference. • Tests of association. • Tests of correlation. • Features of science - objectivity and the empirical method; replicability and falsifiability; theory construction and hypothesis testing; paradigms and paradigm shifts. • Reporting psychological investigations - Sections of a scientific report: abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion and referencing. • Ethical issues in psychological research and dealing with ethical issues in research. 	

5	Biopsychology (Paper 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
6	Year 12 Mocks Revision of the year and preparation for year 13	Year 12 Mocks Revision of the year and preparation for year 13

YEAR 13

TERM	Teacher 1	Teacher 2
	Exam skills: practice short-answer questions, planning and writing possible essay questions, end of topic tests and mock exams	Exam skills: practice short-answer questions, planning and writing possible essay questions, end of topic tests and mock exams
1	Issues and debates (Paper 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and culture in Psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. • Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations. • The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach. • Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in Psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism. • Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation. • Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity. 	Biopsychology (Paper 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localisation of brain function 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 investigating 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.

2	<p>Relationships (Paper 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, including the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour. • Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity. • Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model of commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment. Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases. • Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships. • Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation 	<p>Schizophrenia (Paper 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of schizophrenia. Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition. Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia, including reference to co-morbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap. • Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis. • Psychological explanations for schizophrenia: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations, including dysfunctional thought processing. • Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics. • Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy as used in the treatment of schizophrenia. Token economies as used in the management of schizophrenia. • The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model.
3		<p>Aggression (Paper 3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression, including the roles of the limbic system, serotonin and testosterone • Genetic factors including the MAOA gene. • Ethological explanation of aggression, including reference to innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns • Evolutionary explanations of human aggression. • Social psychological explanations of human aggression, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis, social learning theory as applied to human aggression, and de-individuation • Institutional aggression in the context of prisons: dispositional and situational explanations. • Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer games. The role of desensitisation, disinhibition and cognitive priming. <p>Year 13 Mocks</p>
4	<p>Revision for final exams</p> <p>Re-visiting Year 12 topics for consolidation, prioritising based on student feedback.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches • Memory • Research methods Part 2 <p>Year 13 Mocks</p>	
5		<p>Revision for final exams</p>
6	<p>Final Exams</p>	<p>Final Exams</p>