



# **Teddington Sixth Form**

## **A Level Psychology**

**Course Details & Transition Tasks**  
**2020-2022**

## A level Psychology Exam Board – AQA

You will learn about the fundamentals of the subject, including key approaches and methods to studying human behaviour, and develop skills valued by Higher Education (HE) and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research.

This booklet is designed to give you all the information you need before starting the A level Psychology course. Your course will consist of three units:

### Unit 7182/1: *Introductory Topics in Psychology*

#### Social Influence

- Conformity: Types, explanations and factors affecting conformity; conformity to social roles.
- Obedience: Explanations for obedience inc. situational variables investigated by Milgram & Dispositional explanation i.e. authoritarian personality.
- Resistance to social influence: Explanations inc. social support and locus of control.
- Minority Influence: consistency, commitment and flexibility.
- Social Change: The role of social influence processes.

#### Memory

- 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 and procedural.
- Working memory model of memory: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. Features of the model: coding and capacity.
- Explanations of forgetting (interference and retrieval failure)
- Eyewitness Testimony: Factors affecting the accuracy inc. misleading information, including leading questions and post-event discussion; anxiety; improving the accuracy of EWT inc. 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: Lorenz and Harlow
- Explanations of attachment: Learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory
- Ainsworth's strange situation: Types of attachment; cultural variations inc. Van Ijzendoorn.
- Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Romanian orphan studies: effects of institutionalisation.
- Influence of early attachment on adult relationships: including the role of the internal working model.

#### Psychopathology

- Definitions of abnormality: including deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency and deviation from ideal mental health.
- Characteristics (behavioural, emotional and cognitive) of phobias, depression and obsessive compulsive disorder

- [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.
- [Cognitive approach](#) to explaining and treating depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model; cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including challenging irrational thoughts
- [Biological approach](#) to explaining and treating obsessive compulsive disorder: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy

## Unit 7182/2: Psychology in Context

### Approaches in Psychology

- Origins of psychology: Wundt, introspection and the emergence of psychology as a science.
- Knowledge & analysis of assumptions, methods, research studies & associated therapies 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
  - [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.
- [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 approach](#): 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\*

- Divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic)
- Neurons and synaptic transmission
- Endocrine system
- Fight or flight response
- Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation; plasticity and functional recovery after trauma
- Ways of studying the brain
- Biological rhythms; the effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle.

**\*See Specification for detailed breakdown**

## Research Methods

- Experimental method: Types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi-experiments.
- Observational techniques: Types of observation: naturalistic and controlled observation; covert and overt observation; participant and non-participant observation.
- Self report techniques: Questionnaires; interviews, structured and unstructured.
- Correlations: Analysis of the relationship between co-variables. The difference between correlations and experiments.
- Content analysis
- Case Studies
- General scientific processes\*: reliability and ways of assessing reliability; types of validity across all methods of investigation inc. assessment of validity; features of science' reporting psychological investigations.
- Data handling and analysis\*: levels of measurement; content analysis and coding inc. thematic analysis
- Inferential testing: the sign test: probability and significance; factors affecting choice of statistical test

**\*See Specification for detailed breakdown**

## Unit 7182/3: Issues and Options in Psychology

### Issues and Debates in Psychology

- Gender and culture in society: 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
- Ethical implications of research studies and theory inc. social sensitivity

### Gender

- Sex and gender: Sex-role stereotypes. Androgyny and measuring androgyny including the Bem Sex Role Inventory.
- Role of chromosomes and hormones: (testosterone, oestrogen and oxytocin) in sex and gender. Atypical sex chromosome patterns: Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome
- Cognitive explanations of gender development: Kohlberg's theory, gender identity, gender stability and gender constancy; gender schema theory.
- Psychodynamic explanations of gender development: Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Oedipus complex; Electra complex; identification and internalisation.
- Social learning theory applied to gender development: The influence of culture and media on gender roles.
- Atypical gender development: gender identity disorder; biological and social explanations for gender identity disorder.

## Schizophrenia

- 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, the dopamine hypothesis and neural correlates. •
- 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 diathesisstress model.

## Forensic Psychology

- Problems in defining crime. Ways of measuring crime, including official statistics, victim surveys and offender surveys.
- Offender profiling: the top-down approach, including organised and disorganised types of offender; the bottom-up approach, including investigative Psychology; geographical profiling.
- Biological explanations of offending behaviour: atavistic form (historical); genetics and neural explanations: an historical approach (atavistic form); genetics and neural explanations.
- Psychological explanations of offending behaviour: Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality; cognitive explanations; level of moral reasoning and cognitive distortions, including hostile attribution bias and minimalisation; differential association theory; psychodynamic explanations.
- Dealing with offending behaviour: the aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Recidivism. Behaviour modification in custody. Anger management and restorative justice programmes.

## Assessments

Paper 1: Introductory Topics (Unit 7182/1)	Paper 2: Psychology in Context (Unit 7182/2)	Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology (Unit 7182/3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Written exam: 2 hours</b></li> <li>• <b>96 marks in total</b></li> <li>• <b>33% of A level</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Written exam: 2 hours</b></li> <li>• <b>96 marks in total</b></li> <li>• <b>33% of A level</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Written exam: 2 hours</b></li> <li>• <b>96 marks in total</b></li> <li>• <b>33% of A level</b></li> </ul>
<i>Consists of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.</i>	<i>Consists of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.</i>	<i>Consists of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.</i>

## Assessment Objectives

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:

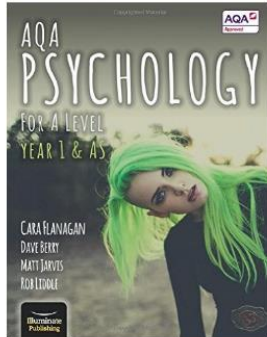
- make judgements and reach conclusions
- develop and refine practical design and procedures.

## Command words typically used in Assessment

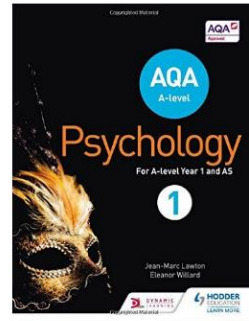
Command Term	Definition
Analyse	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.
Calculate	Work out the value of something.
Choose	Select from a range of alternatives.
Comment	Present an informed opinion.
Compare	Identify similarities and/or differences.
Complete	Finish a task by adding to given information.
Consider	Review and respond to given information.
Describe	Give an account of.
Design	Set out how something will be done.
Discuss	Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.
Distinguish	Explain ways in which two things differ. Provide detail of characteristic that enable a person to know the difference between ...
Draw	Produce a diagram.
Evaluate	Judge from available evidence.
Explain	Set out purposes or reasons.
Explain how	Give a detailed account of a process or way of doing something.
Explain why	Give a detailed account of reasons in relation to a particular situation.
Identify	Name or otherwise characterise.
Give	Produce an answer from recall or from given information.
Justify	Provide reasons, reasoned argument to support, possibly provide evidence.
Label	Provide appropriate names on a diagram.
Name	Identify using a recognised technical term.
Outline	Set out main characteristics.
Select	Choose or pick out from alternatives.
State	Express in clear terms.
Suggest	Present a possible case/solution.
Which is	Select from alternatives.
What is meant by	Give a definition.
Write	Provide information in verbatim form.

## Textbooks and Resources Required

### Year 1 (Year 12)



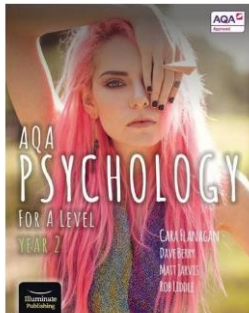
AND/OR



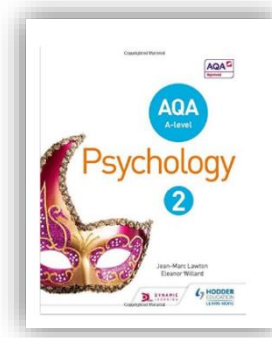
Authors: Cara Flanagan, Dave Berry, Matt Jarvis, Rob Liddle  
Publisher: Illuminate Publishing  
ISBN-13: 978-1-908682-40-6

Authors: Jean-Marc Lawton and Eleanor Willard  
Publisher: Hodder Education  
ISBN-13: 978-1-4718-3488

### Year 2 (Year 13)



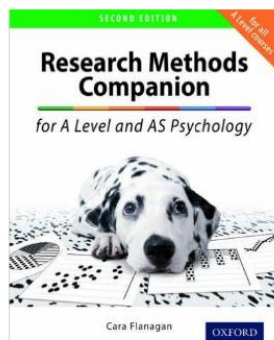
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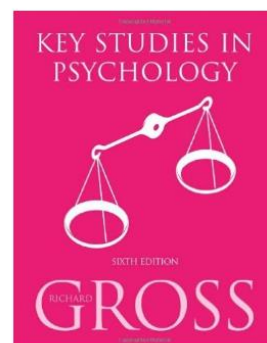
Authors: Cara Flanagan, Dave Berry, Matt Jarvis, Rob Liddle  
Publisher: Illuminate Publishing  
ISBN-13: 978-1-908682-41-3

Authors: Jean-Marc Lawton and Eleanor Willard  
Publisher: Hodder Education  
ISBN-13: 978-1-4718-3537-7

## Expected and Essential Wider Reading for Year 1 and Year 2 Psychology:



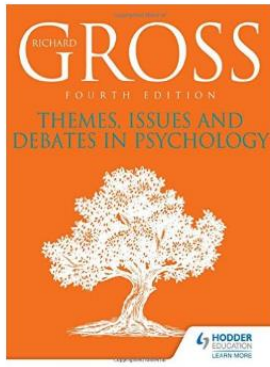
Authors: Cara Flanagan  
Publisher: OUP Oxford; 2nd Revised edition edition



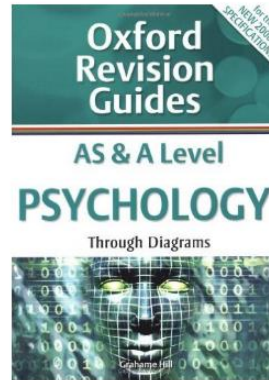
(10 Sept. 2015)  
ISBN-13: 978-0198356134  
Authors: Richard Gross

Publisher: Hodder Education; 6 edition (29 Jun. 2012)

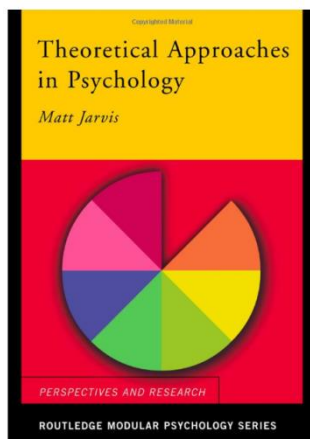
ISBN-13: 978-1444156102



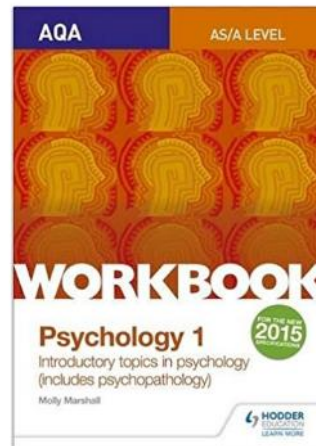
Authors: Richard Gross  
Publisher: Hodder Education; 4th Revised edition  
edition (27 Jun. 2014)  
ISBN-13: 978-1471804076



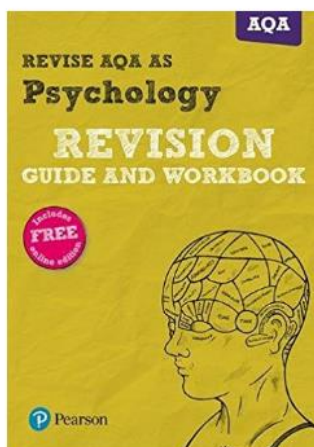
Authors: Grahame Hill  
Publisher: OUP Oxford (15 Jan. 2009)  
ISBN-13: 978-0199180943



Authors: Matt Jarvis  
Publisher: Routledge (6 July 2000)  
ISBN-13: 978-0415191081



Authors: Molly Marshall  
Publisher: Hodder Education  
ISBN-13: 978-1471845178  
(NOTE: Books available for paper 2 & 3 also)



Authors: Sarah Middleton, Susan Harty, Anna Cave and Sally  
Publisher: Pearson Education (28 Feb. 2017)  
ISBN-13: 978-1292111216  
(Note: Workbook available for A-level also)



## Psychology Transition Tasks

This booklet contains a number of tasks that need to be completed in order to prepare yourself for the A Level Psychology course (if you take information from the internet, it must be written in your own words and not pasted from other documents).

Task 1 - Websites: Begin understanding the key components of psychology by exploring these websites. Produce a bullet-point list of 10-15 key pieces of knowledge you have gained about what psychology is and the purpose of it as a subject:

Topic	Web Address	Useful for?
AQA	<a href="http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182">http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182</a>	Links to psychology specification including 'assessment' materials (exemplar and past paper questions with mark schemes)
Various	<a href="http://www.simplypsychology.org/">http://www.simplypsychology.org/</a>	Offers a nice simple overview of the approaches with key studies and one or two ideas for critically discussing the approach.
Various	<a href="http://www.psychotron.org.uk/newResources/perspCognitive.html">http://www.psychotron.org.uk/newResources/perspCognitive.html</a>	This is a website targeted at teachers but is very accessible to students with handouts and power points on various topics.  Teaching resources are mapped to old specifications, but many are still useful.
Ted Talks (various)	<a href="https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=newest&amp;q=psychology">https://www.ted.com/talks?sort=newest&amp;q=psychology</a>	Offers links to engaging speakers talking about a range of topics.

## Task 2:

To give you an understanding of the aims and assumptions of key psychological approaches in psychology read the case study of 'Mark' below. Then, using the case study and your own research, match up the approaches with their key assumptions below.

*Mark has recently begun jogging in his forties and discovered that he has a talent for it. He is about to enter the London Marathon and despite having never been interested in sport until recently, is tipped to do very well. As the day approaches, Mark trains harder and harder, spending most of his free time running. The only thing stopping Mark being completely happy is that he is mourning for his best friend who recently died from a sudden heart attack.*

From a *behavioural* perspective, the more Mark trains the better he gets at running. He can see this in the faster times he is achieving and in the fact that he is becoming less tired after each run. Mark is also receiving many admiring comments from his workmates. He has lost weight and believes he is becoming more attractive to women. All these factors are rewarding or *reinforcing* Mark's running and encouraging him to continue.

A psychologist adopting a psychodynamic approach might instead focus attention on the fact that Mark's friend has recently died, and wonder whether Mark's new healthy behaviour is a response (of which he is not thinking because it would be too painful to do so) to his fear that he too might die young. A psychodynamic approach would also consider the possible significance of the *nature* of the health-enhancing strategy Mark has chosen. Mark's running could be interpreted as his symbolically running away from his own mortality.

From a *humanistic* perspective, Mark has discovered in his talent for running a way in which he can fulfil his potential as a person. The fact that he is beginning to do this is gaining him positive regard from others, which boosts his self-esteem. With this new found self-esteem Mito continue trying to achieve all he can as a runner.

From a *biological* perspective, Mark's behaviour could be interpreted in physiological terms. Whenever Mark runs his brain produces chemicals called endorphins, which are chemically quite similar to drugs like heroin. This give's him a 'runner's high'. One reason Mark is running more and more is to enjoy his fix of endorphins!

A psychologist adopting a *cognitive* approach might differ from others in crediting Mark with making a logical decision to improve his fitness following the realisation that he is now at an age when not keeping fit is seriously endangering his health. A social approach might emphasise Mark's new social identity as an athlete and the fact that we all see some types of social identity – such as that of an athlete – in a positive light and other identities less positively. (Jarvis, 2000, p. 3-4)

[Reference: Jarvis, M. (2000). *Theoretical approaches in psychology*. London: Routledge.]

Match the Psychological Approaches, below, with their Key Assumptions

- Biological Approach
- Learning Theory: Behaviourism
- Learning Theory: Social learning theory
- Cognitive Approach
- Psychodynamic Approach
- Humanistic Approach

Key Assumption	Approach
Internal mental processes can be studied scientifically to explain human behaviour.	
All behaviour can be learned from experience. For example the positive reinforcement of receiving a reward increases the likelihood the behaviour will be repeated.	
Unconscious mental processes motivate our behaviour and feelings.	
Much behaviour is learned from experience, particularly through the observation and imitation of others.	
Biological structures and processes within the body, such as genes and neurochemistry and the nervous system, can explain human behaviour.	
People have an innate drive to make themselves and the world better.	

Task 3:

Schools of thought in Psychology:

Design a presentation on two of the psychological approaches. Your aim is to present a brief overview to someone who has never studied psychology before. Your presentation should have an accompanying hand-out with a summary of the main points. Refer to the resources listed earlier in this handbook to support you.

In your presentation include the following:

- Distinguishing features of the theories
- Any supporting evidence
- Applications of the theories to real life e.g. to phobias, depression and OCD.
- Any strengths/criticisms of the approach

#### Task 4:

Refer back to the work completed in task 3. Consider how your chosen two approaches compare. Can you identify any similarities or differences in their approach to explaining human behaviour? Write these up in an appropriate format for your learning. Some ideas for consideration are below:

- Are we born a particular way or does the environment influence us? (Nature versus nurture)
- Scientific or unscientific (i.e. with regard to the methods of investigation used)
- Does the approach represent humans as in control of their behaviour or is behaviour determined by forces outside of the person's control e.g. genetic influences?
- Does the approach explain development over a lifespan or is it limited to childhood?
- Is the approach very simplistic in its explanation of human behaviour or does it

#### Task 5:

1. What are the causes of stress during long periods of restricted activities in a national emergency where non-essential travel is restricted?
2. What are the different ways in which stress can be reduced?
3. Produce your findings in a mind map or another visual presentation method of your choosing.

#### Task 6:

1. Outline one or more explanations for obedience.
2. Evaluate explanations for obedience, including the agentic state and the legitimacy of authority in your answer.
3. How would the theories on obedience be applied in society during a lockdown caused by a pandemic?

#### Task 7:

There are a range of excellent introductory activities on <https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/learning-activities>. Work your way through them and then explain to someone in your household three of your key findings about what psychology is, based on these activities.