

Psychology

Exam Board: AQA

Subject Leader: Mrs A Sandhal

What do I need?

Psychology is only taught in the sixth form, therefore ideas and concepts will be unfamiliar. Since 2009 Psychology has been designated as a science subject, therefore students need to be able to tackle scientific concepts and use analytical skills. The course includes aspects of Science (particularly Biology) and Maths in topics such as research methods. Students should be self-motivated, disciplined and ready to explore new and stimulating ideas.

You should be confident in Maths, Science and English as the qualification has:

- **Rigorous scientific subject – same assessment objectives used as Biology, Chemistry and Physics from 2016.**
- **25% of the A level assessment consists of research methods, 15% of assessment is on Mathematics.**
- **Essay writing and analytical skills: all exam papers include essay questions requiring scientific knowledge to be thoroughly described and analysed using facts and evidence to structure arguments.**

You should be able to work independently. You should be a confident reader able to read textbooks for information and write detailed but concise answers in exams. You will need to develop the ability to present ideas, supported by evidence, in structured, effective essays and you will need good time management skills.

What will I learn?

Students study material which is examined in three papers:

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

This covers four of the major areas of psychology, namely social influence (which covers topics such as obedience and conformity), memory, attachment (which covers the relationship between a child, its mother and other caregivers, such as the impact upon the child of attending nursery) and psychopathology (which covers the application of psychological theory to the explanation and treatment of mental health problems).

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

This covers the major approaches in psychology (for example the work of the behaviourists, Freudian psychology, etc). It also covers the importance of biopsychological ideas to explaining human behaviour. The research methods commonly used in psychology is also a focus of this paper, although students should note that the theme of research runs through all areas of the course.

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

This covers issues and debates in psychology, such as the nature v nurture debate and the gender / cultural biases present in psychological research and theory. It also covers three option topics of Forensic Psychology, Relationships and Schizophrenia.

How will I be assessed?

All three examination papers are 2 hours in duration and use a range of question styles, including multiple choice, short answer questions and extended writing.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Psychology is taught as a Science and as such is a useful subject to combine with other Science subjects such as Biology. It can also fit well with any of the other Social Science subjects; Sociology and Health and Social Care. A-level Psychology can lead to a wide range of career possibilities including careers in Medicine, Clinical Psychology, Criminal Psychology, Business Management, Education, Health, Sports and Research.