



# Psychology

## GCSE

# General Introduction

Have you ever watched a week-old baby apparently studying intently the people and objects around them and wondered what on earth they make of their new world and just what thoughts, if any, might be going through their mind?

Have you ever wondered why the happy nine-month-old baby who always used to greet you with smiles and laughs has suddenly started crying as soon as you approach?

Have you ever found out why you are afraid of spiders, and what you can do to cure yourself?

Have you ever despaired of the fact that there is so much prejudice and discrimination in the world and wondered what can be done about it?

Have you ever watched in horror as a six-year-old watches the latest blood-thirsty 'cops and robbers' programme on the television and then immediately starts thumping and shooting everybody, and wondered just what effects such violent television programmes might have on a child?

If you have answered 'yes' to one or more of these questions, then you'll find this course a source of constant fascination as we examine a wide range of psychological topics and answer all of these questions.



# The Sequence of Lessons

The course is divided up into ten modules, as follows:

## Unit One: Making Sense of Other People

### Module One: Introduction

- Lesson 1     What is Psychology?
- Lesson 2     Different Approaches to Psychology
- Lesson 3     Research in Psychology  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment A*

### Module Two: Memory

- Lesson 4     Memory
- Lesson 5     Forgetting and Eyewitness Testimony  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment B*

### Module Three: Non-verbal Communication

- Lesson 6     Non-verbal Communication
- Lesson 7     Body Language  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment C*

### Module Four: Development of Personality

- Lesson 8     Personality Development
- Lesson 9     Anti-social Personality Disorder  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment D*

### Module Five: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination

- Lesson 10    Forming Impressions
- Lesson 11    Prejudice  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment E*

## Unit Two: Understanding Other People

### Module Six: Learning

- Lesson 12    Conditioning  
Lesson 13    Applications of Learning Theory  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment F*

### Module Seven: Aggression

- Lesson 14    Explanations of Aggression  
Lesson 15    Reducing Aggression  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment G*

### Module Eight: Social Influence

- Lesson 16    Conformity, Obedience, Social Loafing and  
                  Deindividuation  
Lesson 17    Bystander Intervention  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment H*

### Module Nine: Sex and Gender

- Lesson 18    Sex and Gender  
Lesson 19    Gender Rôles  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment I*

### Module Ten: Research Methods

- Lesson 20    Methods of Investigation  
Lesson 21    Methods of Control  
Lesson 22    Ethical Considerations  
*Tutor-Marked Assignment J*  
  
*Practice Examination (TMA K)*

## AQA Aims

The aims of this course are the same as the aims listed in the AQA specification. Please refer to the AQA website for full details. The stated aims for this subject are for the student to:

- engage in the process of psychological enquiry to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds
- develop an awareness of why psychology matters

- acquire knowledge and understanding of how psychology works and its essential role in society
- develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and social, cultural, scientific and contemporary issues and its impact on everyday life
- develop an understanding of ethical issues in psychology
- develop an understanding of the contribution of psychology to individual, social and cultural diversity
- develop a critical approach to scientific evidence and methods.

But you do not need to worry about any of these aims at this stage!

## Accompanying Textbooks

No accompanying textbook is required. All the topics named in the syllabus are covered to the level of detail required for the top grades.

Nevertheless, in any subject, the successful student is generally the one who reads around the subject as widely as possible. This helps you to get different perspectives and fill in the gaps in your knowledge. If you want extra reading, the following is a good GCSE-level textbook:

Barbara Woods, Victoria Carrington & Nigel Holt: *AQA Psychology for GCSE: Understanding Psychology* (Hodder Arnold, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) ISBN: 978-0340985311

The AQA syllabus requires you to know and be able to describe studies in the examination. The following text gives an easy-to-read description of 70 studies that have shaped psychology, and which would be very useful to your studies:

Phil Banyard & Andrew Grayson: *Introducing Psychological Research* (Macmillan Press) ISBN 978-0333912515

One easy way to purchase supporting texts is through the OOL website ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)). You'll find other useful books in your library or bookshop. But beware! There are many important psychology topics not included in your syllabus, and unless you have time to spare, it would probably be a mistake to spend time on such topics. If a topic is not in this course, it is not required by the syllabus and can be ignored.

## The AQA 4180 Specification

This course is mainly linked to the new specification (syllabus) set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA), numbered AQA 4180. 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](http://www.aqa.org.uk).

The syllabus can be purchased from AQA Publications, Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way, Trafford Park, Manchester M17 1EH (tel: 0870-410-1036) or downloaded from <http://store.aqa.org.uk/qual/newgcse/pdf/AQA-4180-W-SP-10.PDF>.

AQA syllabus 4180 contains a single tier of Assessment, covering all the possible grades from G-A\*).

### **Psychology (Short Course) 4181**

*Unit 1: Making Sense of Other People (41801)*  
Written Paper – 1 hour 30 mins  
80 marks – 100% Candidates answer all Questions.

### **Psychology (Full Course) 4182**

*Unit 1: Making Sense of Other People (41801)*  
Written Paper – 1 hour 30 mins  
80 marks – 50% Candidates answer all questions

*and*

*Unit 2: Understanding Other People (41802)*  
Written Paper – 1 hour 30 mins  
80 marks – 50% Candidates answer all questions

This course is designed primarily for students aiming for the Full specification. If you are aiming for the Short Course, you will need to be clear which topics are required for the Short Course and which are not.

## Subject Content

Students should have experience of designing and conducting informal classroom research using a variety of methods. They will be expected to analyse data collected in investigations at a descriptive level and draw conclusions based on research findings. They will be required to draw on these experiences to answer questions in the examination for these units. In the delivery of these units, it is expected that teachers will seek out contemporary examples of theories and research to develop their candidates' understanding of the subject content.

### Unit 1 Making Sense of other People

#### Memory

Processes of encoding, storage and retrieval

The multi-store, reconstructive and levels of processing explanations of memory.

Description and evaluation of studies to investigate explanations of memory.

Explanations and studies of forgetting including interference, context and brain damage (retrograde and anterograde amnesia).

Eyewitness testimony

Description and evaluation of studies of factors which affect the reliability of eyewitnesses' accounts of people and incidents, including the research by Loftus (1974), Bruce and Young (1998).

Contemporary practical applications derived from the explanations of memory and forgetting and their benefits and drawbacks.

#### Non-Verbal Communication

Distinctions between non-verbal communication and verbal communication, including paralinguistics (the vocal features that accompany speech, including tone of voice, emphasis and intonation).

Types of non-verbal communication, including; functions of eye contact (Argyle 1975); regulating the flow of information in conversation, providing feedback and expressing emotions, including pupil dilation.

Facial expression; categories of facial expression (surprise, happiness, fear, anger, sadness, interest, disgust). Facial expressions and the hemispheres of the brain Sackeim (1978).

body language; posture (including postural echo, open and closed postures), gestures, touch.

Description and evaluation of studies of non-verbal communication and verbal communication, for example the work of Argyle, Alkema and Gilmore (1971).

Personal space: factors which affect personal space, including cultural norms, sex differences, individual differences and status.

Description and evaluation of studies of factors which affect personal space.

Contemporary practical implications of studies of non-verbal communication and their benefits and drawbacks.

### **Development of Personality**

Definition of personality, including temperament.

Description and evaluation of studies of temperament, including the work of Thomas (1977), Buss & Plomin (1984), and Kagan (1991).

Eysenck's type theory (1952); extraversion, introversion, neuroticism.

Personality scales, including EPI (1964) & EPQ (1975).

Evaluation of Eysenck's type theory.

Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD); characteristics of APD (DSM IV 2008) causes of APD; biological: the role of the amygdala, including the work of Raine (2000). situational: including the work of Farrington (1995), and Elander (2000).

Description and evaluation of studies of the causes of APD. implications of research into APD.

### **Stereotyping, Prejudice and Discrimination**

Definitions of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

Stereotyping as oversimplification, leading to positive and negative evaluations.

Description and evaluation of studies of prejudice and of discrimination, including the work of Adorno (authoritarian personality, including the F-scale), Tajfel (in-groups and out-groups) and Sherif (robbers' Cave) and inter-group conflict.

Explanations of prejudice and discrimination.

Ways of reducing prejudice and discrimination, using evidence from studies including the work of Sherif (1961), Aronson (1978), Elliott (1977) and Harwood (2003).

Evaluation of these ways of reducing prejudice and discrimination.

Contemporary practical implications of research into stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination and their benefits and drawbacks.

**Research Methods**

This section will be examined through questions focusing on the specification content. It is not to be seen as an entirely separate area of the specification. Centres are advised that methods of investigation should be taught at appropriate places in the course, with particular topics being selected to illustrate not only the theoretical material but also methodology.

**Methods of Investigation**

The use of scientific methods and techniques which aim for objectivity.

Formulation of testable hypotheses to promote enquiry.

Procedures for the experimental method of investigation: independent and dependent variables.

Advantages and disadvantages of this method of investigation (including ecological validity).

**Methods of Control, Data Analysis and Data Presentation**

Target populations, samples and sampling methods:

- random;
- opportunity;
- systematic;
- stratified.

Correlation, including an understanding of association between two variables, and of correlation relationship (without computation of formulae). Advantages and limitations of using correlations.

Calculations, including mean, mode, median, range and percentages.

Anomalous results and their possible effects.

Graphical representations, including bar charts and scatter graphs

**Ethical Considerations**

Candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: ethical issues in psychological research as outlined in the British Psychological Society guidelines ways of dealing with each of these issues.

## Unit 2 Understanding other People

### Learning

Principles of Classical Conditioning

Unconditioned stimulus; unconditioned response; conditioned stimulus; conditioned response; extinction; spontaneous recovery; generalisation; discrimination; the contributions of Pavlov.

Principles of operant conditioning:

Thorndike's Law of Effect and the contributions of Skinner.

Behaviour shaping; the distinction between positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement and punishment.

Descriptions and evaluation of attempts to apply conditioning procedures to the treatment of phobias (including, flooding and systematic desensitisation) and to change unwanted behaviour (including aversion therapy and token economy). The ethical implications of such attempts.

### Aggression

Explanations of aggression:

- biological, including the role of hormones, brain disease and chromosomal abnormality.
- psychodynamic, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis.
- social learning, including modelling, punishment and monitoring.

Description and evaluation of studies of the development of aggressive behaviour.

Ways of reducing aggression, based on these explanations.

Evaluation of these ways of reducing aggression.

### Social Influence

Definitions of conformity, obedience, social loafing and deindividuation.

Description and evaluation of studies of conformity, obedience, social loafing and deindividuation.

Explanation of factors affecting conformity, obedience, social loafing and deindividuation.

Explanation of factors affecting bystander intervention.

Description and evaluation of studies of bystander intervention, including those of Latané and Darley (1968), Bateson (1983), Piliavin (1969), and Schroeder (1995).

Contemporary practical implications of studies of research into social influence and their benefits and drawbacks.

### Sex and Gender

Definitions of sex identity and gender identity

The biological differences between females and males (chromosomes and hormones).

The distinction between the concepts of sex identity and gender identity.

Three theories of gender development:

- psychodynamic theory, including the oedipus and Electra complexes;
- social learning theory, including imitation, modelling and vicarious reinforcement
- gender schema theory.

Evaluation of these three theories of gender development.

### **Methods of Control, Data Analysis and Data Presentation**

Experimental designs: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs.

Advantages and disadvantages of each experimental design.

Target populations, samples and sampling methods: random; opportunity; systematic; stratified.

Advantages and limitations of each sampling method.

The use of standardised procedures, identification and control of extraneous variables, instructions to participants.

Random allocation, counterbalancing and randomisation.

Calculations, including mean, mode, median, range and percentages.

Anomalous results and their possible effects.

Graphical representations, including bar charts.

Research in natural and experimental settings, including advantages and limitations of each.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: ethical issues in psychological research as outlined in the British Psychological Society guidelines ways of dealing with each of these issues.

## **Research Methods**

One important aspect of psychology is the ability to do your own psychological research and conduct experiments. There is no coursework in this specification but you will be required to show evidence of these skills in your exam. This course helps you develop this skill in various lessons, notably in the last module.

You will be expected to understand the necessity of formulating precise hypotheses to promote inquiry and the

use of scientific methods and techniques that aim for objectivity.

You will learn about the distinction between dependent, independent and controlled variables.

You will study the following methods of control: population sampling, randomisation, counterbalancing and matching; the use of standardised procedures, instructions to participants; and objective methods of observation, recording and measurement.

There are many experimental and field methods; you will learn the advantages and disadvantages of each type of method. You will also need to understand experimental control, the construction of treatment groups, archival data, unobtrusive measures, surveys and interviews – including an understanding of the principles of construction and administration.

You will observe people in naturalistic and experimental settings. You will learn about the association between two variables and understand correlational relationships (no computation of formulae is required).

There are also a number of **ethical considerations**. Care must be exercised with regard to the invasion of personal privacy and keep in mind at all times the necessity of minimising pain and stress to individuals participating in studies by the minimal use of deliberate deception, the preferred use of informed consent and the debriefing of participants.

## Private Candidates and Examination Centres

You are responsible for making the necessary arrangements to take the examination at a centre that is registered with AQA. If you are not already linked to a school or college, you are advised to contact local schools or colleges to request accommodation for the examination well in advance of making your entry in case difficulties arise. You must obtain the permission of the head of the centre to sit the examination at that centre, and the head must sign your *Registration Certificate*.

## Study Technique

There is no single study technique that is right for this course. Indeed, there are as many different ways of studying as there are learners. So you will have to find the methods which are right for you in your own personal situation. However, the following tips represent some of the best advice for the majority of 'open' learners.

**Discipline** is undoubtedly the key. You must set aside a specific period each day or definite times each week and stick to it! Don't let yourself make excuses for not getting down to work. Set yourself definite targets – not just the date of your examination but the date when you are going to submit your first assignment and so on. Break your study up into small 'bite-sized' pieces.

Don't just skip over the bits that don't make sense to you. In a subject like psychology, all the topics are closely linked together, and if you don't understand part of one lesson, it is going to affect your ability to study other lessons as well. So go over the difficult section until it begins to make sense. If the lesson materials are not clear to you, look at the way the same ideas are covered in your supplementary reading. If you're still not sure, it should be possible for you to contact your tutor (by phone or post). Don't be shy about doing that!

Don't underestimate the amount of study that is needed to gain the top grades. Simply memorising all the ideas in the lessons may not be enough. You should be studying even when you are not studying! Television, radio, newspapers and magazines give you a picture of how the world around you is changing and provide you with valuable up-to-date examples. So keep a look-out for programmes or articles that might be useful to your studies. Study the behaviour of those around you. What are the rules of conduct within your own family or at your place of work or education? Why and how do these patterns change? If you already have an enquiring and critical mind, you are well placed to succeed.

**Study the syllabus.** This will tell you not just what you need to study but what the underlying objectives are – *why* you are studying these things. A brief analysis of the syllabus is given below, but we strongly advise you to get hold of the complete syllabus and work out which parts of the course will help you with which sections of the syllabus, and so on. Get hold of practice examination papers as well, if you can. These will

show you what sorts of question you are likely to face and what kinds of skill you will need to demonstrate.

**Make full use of your tutor.** They are paid to help you, after all! Take advantage of any opportunities for tutorials and other practical help. Make sure you submit all your Tutor-Marked Assignments for marking. Your tutor will spend quite a bit of time on the marking, so you should take full note of whatever comments you get. The comments are usually more important than the marks because they are designed to show you ways in which you can improve.

**Do all the tests.** Just because you think you understand something, you should not skip over the tests. They are there to reinforce the ideas and plant them firmly in you memory. A fuller description of the assessment structure of the course is given below.

## Self-Assessment Tests and Activities

The Self-Assessment Tests (SATs) are a crucial element of the course. You will find a number of these in every lesson. Usually, they consist of quite straightforward questions that test your memory and understanding of the material that you have just worked through. Often they will consist of one-word answers. But do not just skip over them. Check in the answers at the end of the lesson that you have got them right; if you have not, it is a sure sign that you should go back over the preceding section until the point is clear.

The Self-Assessment Tests are also designed as a useful revision aid. They are clearly marked off from the main body of the lesson, so when you come to a Tutor-Marked Assignment or to your examination, you can go back over the Self-Assessment Tests at a rapid pace. This will tell you what has stayed in your memory and what has drifted away. Keep going over these tests until you can get them all right because between them they contain just about all the essential ideas that you will need for your examination.

Some of the lessons also include **Activities** sections. These are like the Self-Assessment Tests except that they do not ask specific questions and there are no answers provided. They are designed to open out your thinking and to get you to observe what is going on around you. Sometimes they will suggest something practical that you can do: a little bit of

research that would be useful, perhaps. It is important that you do not neglect these hints and suggestions.

## Making Notes

Every student will want to take their own notes as the course proceeds, to help with the learning process and to assist with examination revision. What sorts of notes should they be? How lengthy? There are no fixed answers to these questions. Some students seek reassurance in writing out elaborate reams of notes that they boil down later; others are happy to keep note-taking to a minimum by merely recording key references. Without being too dogmatic, a number of points relating to the needs of the GCSE course might be made:

- it is important to cross-reference facts, sources and conclusions as they are encountered in the course, so that knowledge and skills are not separated in revision;
- notes should be kept as brief as possible (i.e. without omitting crucial facts or concepts);
- details of individual sources should not be copied out, unless they contain crucial information; while knowledge of the major types of source for each theme and topic is obviously useful, candidates are not expected to know particular sources in advance.

It is strongly recommended that students make notes under each of the headings given throughout the text, every lesson. These may then be compared with the summary that closes each lesson. Do you feel that the summary is full enough? If not, make sure that your own notes fill in any gaps that you feel exist.

The course contains plenty of white space, particularly in the left-hand margin. This is because most students find it helpful to write notes directly on the course they are studying. This will help when you are planning essays or when you are skimming through the course later for revision.

## Tutor-Marked Assignments and Practice Tests

The course includes ten Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs), usually at the end of each module. You should treat these assignments like miniature examination papers and submit your finished papers to your tutor for marking. When the

marked assignments are returned to you, you should also receive a copy of the suggested answers. These will give you an indication of the sorts of answer that might have gained you top marks.

Around half the lessons do not finish with a TMA. Instead there is often a Practice Test, which is designed to test your understanding of the lesson. Again, you will gain most benefit if you do not refer back to earlier parts of the lesson but treat it as a mini-examination. Suggested Answers to the Practice Tests are to be found at the end of the lesson.

Do not worry if your own answers are not the same as those provided. Psychology is not an exact science, so there is plenty of room for your own ideas as long as they are well backed up with evidence. You should be able to provide examples that are more up to date than those provided with the course!

## **AQA's Special Arrangements for Private Candidates**

Private candidates should contact AQA to request the 'Supplementary Information' that is available.

## **Grade Descriptions**

The system of grading seems to change slightly each year, so you will need to check the syllabus for the year you are aiming for. Because too many students were getting a grade A, a new grade called A\* ('A starred') has been introduced that is even better than a grade A.

It is generally agreed that a grade C at GCSE is equivalent to a pass in the old 'O' level examination and the bare minimum if you want to go on to 'A' level.

## **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](http://www.aqa.org.uk)), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site ([www.ool.co.uk](http://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!

Good luck!

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