

Introduction

Welcome to your A-level Psychology course. This Introduction should provide you with all the information you need to make a successful start to your studies.

The Specification (or Syllabus)

This course has been designed to give you a full and thorough preparation for the AS level or A-level **Psychology** specification, set by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA).

The **Subject Code** for entry to the AS only award is **7181**.

The **Subject Code** for entry to the A level award is **7182**.

No coursework is required for this specification.

Private Candidates

The AQA specification is open to private candidates. Private candidates should contact AQA for a copy of '*Information for Private Candidates*'.



Oxford Open Learning

Arrangement of Lessons

lesson		Reading page-refs (Lawton, Book 1)
Module One: Introductory Topics		
1	Introduction	-
2	Research Methods and Ethical Considerations	257-291
3	Introduction to Approaches in Psychology TMA A	-
4	Describing and Interpreting Data TMA B	292-300
Module Two: Social Influence		
5	Social Influence	1-16
6	Obedience	17-39
7	Minority Influence and Social Change TMA C	41-49
Module Three: Memory		
8	Models of Memory	51-75
9	Forgetting	76-85
10	Eyewitness Testimony TMA D	86-97
Module Four: Attachment		
11	Attachment: Animals vs Humans	101-113
12	Attachment: The Early Years	115-127
13	Deprivation and Separation TMA E	129-142
Module Five: Theoretical Approaches in Psychology		
14	The Biological and the BioPsychological Approach	197-205; 225-234
15	The Behavioural Approach (Learning Theory)	206-217
16	The Cognitive Approach and Neuroscience	218-224
17	The Psychodynamic and Humanistic Approaches	-
18	Inferential Statistics TMA F	301-313
Module Six: Psychopathology		
19	Definitions of Abnormality	145-153
20	Depression	156-158 172-183
21	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	158-161 184-196
22	Phobias TMA G	154-155 163-171
	TMA H (Practice Exam Paper)	
	TMA I (Practice Exam Paper)	

2nd Year Programme		
lesson		Reading page-refs (Lawton, Book 2)
Module Seven: Research Methods and Approaches		
23	Psychological Approaches (1)	(revision)
24	More on Approaches	pp. 2-18
25	Issues and Debates in Psychology Practice Test (Research Methods & Inferential Statistics) TMA J	pp. 21-22; 28-59
Module Eight: Gender		
26	Studying Gender	pp. 112-114
27	The Biological Approach	pp. 120-123
28	Gender Differences and Cultural Variations	pp. 141-142
29	Applying Psychological Approaches to Gender TMA K	pp. 125-146
Module Nine: Schizophrenia		
30	Classification of Schizophrenia	pp. 186-197
31	Biological and Psychological Explanations	pp. 198-210
32	Drug Therapy, CBT and Family Therapy	pp. 211-220
33	Interactionist Approaches TMA L	pp. 221-226
Module Ten: Aggression		
34	Biology and Genetics	pp. 306-315
35	Ethological, Evolutionary and Social Explanations	pp. 316-328
36	Institutional Aggression	pp. 329-335
37	Media Influences on Aggression TMA M	pp. 336-341
Module Eleven: Revision		
38	Revision and Examination Technique TMA N, O and P – 3 practice exams	–

Textbooks

1st Year (AS)

You will need to acquire the following textbook to accompany your studies of the AS (1st Year) course:

Jean-Marc Lawton & Eleanor Willard: *AQA A-level Psychology Book 1* (Hodder; ISBN: 978-1471834882)

You will find detailed reading references to this text as you work through each lesson. This reading will give you an alternative perspective and provide additional detail in certain areas.

As an alternative (or in addition), we also recommend this text:

Cara Flanagan & Dave Berry: *AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 & AS – Student Book* (Illuminate; ISBN: 978-1908682406)

Occasional references are also given to this optional text.

2nd Year

You will need to acquire the following textbook to accompany your studies of the 2nd Year course:

Jean-Marc Lawton & Eleanor Willard: *AQA A-level Psychology Book 2* (Hodder; ISBN: 978-1471835377)

Once again, you will find detailed references to this text in each lesson.

Supplementary Reading

Another older AS text which may be helpful is this one:

Donald Pennington & Julie McLoughlin: *AQA(B) Psychology for AS* (Hodder; ISBN: 978-0340947029)

The following textbook is also recommended for the 2nd Year, depending on your selected options:

Lynda Turner, *Advanced Psychology: Atypical Behaviour* (Hodder; ISBN: 978-0340859339)

Other that might be useful include:

Active Psychology, edited by Irene Taylor (Longman; ISBN: 0-582-05195-9). This covers most of the key requirements of the A-level syllabuses.

Introducing Psychological Research, by Philip Banyard & Andrew Grayson (Palgrave; ISBN: 978-1403900388)

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.

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 you.

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 don’t have a theoretical background. It’s 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

The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses have been redefined as follows:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As roughly half of the total A-level studies

The AS no longer constitutes the first half of an Advanced Level qualification and no marks may be carried forward to that qualification. So, if you are expecting to complete the full A-level, there is no obligation to attempt the AS examinations at the halfway point.

The AS 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.

All topics and study required for AS level are also required for the full A-level, although not necessarily on the same examination paper.

The Advanced Level

The Advanced Level consists of three written exam papers, all of which must be tackled at the same exam sitting, i.e. it is no longer possible to carry forward the marks from one paper to a later sitting.

There is no coursework.

Students following this course have the option to take either the AS or the full A-level examination. Studies for the AS are confined to the first half of the course.

Shelf-Life

This AS specification was examined for the first time in June 2016 and the 'A' level specification is examined for the first time in June 2017. No end date has yet been set.

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 Examinations

Compulsory content		OOL Module
1	Social influence	2
2	Memory	3
3	Attachment	4
4	Approaches in Psychology	5
5	Psychopathology	6
6	Research methods	1

AS Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed: Compulsory content 1–3 above

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 72 marks in total
- 50% of AS

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed: Compulsory content 4–6 above

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 72 marks in total
- 50% of AS

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

AQA's A-level Subject content

Compulsory content		OOL Module
1	Social influence	2
2	Memory	3
3	Attachment	4
4	Psychopathology	6
5	Approaches in Psychology	5
6	Biopsychology	7
7	Research methods	1 and 10
8	Issues and Debates in Psychology	12

Optional Content

It is necessary to study *one* of the three topics nominated for each of Options 1-3. OOL's selected option is indicated in bold print.

Option 1		OOL Module
9	Relationships	
10	Gender	8
11	Cognition and development	
Option 2		
12	Schizophrenia	9
13	Eating behaviour	
14	Stress	
Option 3		
15	Aggression	10
16	Forensic Psychology	
17	Addiction	

A-level Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed: Compulsory content 1–4 above

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section D: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

A-level Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed: Compulsory content 5–7 above

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 48 marks

A-level Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

What's assessed:

Compulsory content 8 above;

Optional content, one from option 1, 9–11, one from option 2, 12–14, one from option 3, 15–17 above

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section B: one topic from option 1, 9–11 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section C: one topic from option 2, 12–14 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Section D: one topic from option 3, 15–17 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Practical Work; Scientific Research

Although this specification is written examination-only (i.e. there is no coursework), it is still a requirement that candidates should develop their “scientific” skills in practice as well as in theory. The following skills are specified:

- A** Use theories, models and ideas to develop and modify scientific explanations.
- B** Use knowledge and understanding to pose scientific questions, define scientific problems, present scientific arguments and scientific ideas.
- C** Use appropriate methodology, including ICT, to answer scientific questions and solve scientific problems.
- D** Carry out experimental and investigative activities, including appropriate risk management in a range of contexts.
- E** Analyse and interpret data to provide evidence, recognising correlations and causal relationships.
- F** Evaluate methodology, evidence and data, and resolve conflicting evidence.
- G** Appreciate the tentative nature of scientific knowledge.
- H** Communicate information and ideas in appropriate ways using appropriate terminology.
- I** Consider applications and implications of science and appreciate their associated benefits and risks.
- J** Consider ethical issues in the treatment of humans, other organisms and the environment.
- K** Appreciate the role of the scientific community in validating new knowledge and ensuring integrity.
- L** Appreciate the ways in which society uses science to inform decision-making.

There is a great deal more detail in the specification, including suggestions on how to set up suitable activities and experiments. The “practical” section at the end of both the AS and A2 courses is designed to enable you to develop specific research projects. It is strongly recommended that you tackle at least one such project – indeed, more than one would be advisable.

The specification also identifies some basic mathematical requirements. It is assumed that you are already competent in these skills; otherwise, a refresher course in mathematics or statistics is recommended.

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

AQA Publications
Unit 2, Wheel Forge Way,
Trafford Park
Manchester
M17 1EH (tel: 0870-410-1036)

or downloaded from www.ool.co.uk/0011pa.

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.

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