

# Psychology

**Level: A Level**

**Exam Board: AQA**

**Overview of course content:** Psychology is the scientific study of the human condition in terms of both mind and behaviour. The Psychology course is designed to provide a wide range of skills to the learner, as well as providing an overview of one of the most exciting disciplines to explain the human condition. With a focus on scientific research, method and statistical analysis you will be provided with a wide skill set applicable across many future degree options.

**Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology:**

- **Social influence:** This examines how a person's opinion, behaviour and emotions are affected by others. The topic explores four main areas including: conformity, obedience, minority influence and social change.
- **Memory:** This topic focuses on how humans process and store information; the factors that affect the accuracy and reliability of eyewitness testimony; and how information is lost or forgotten.
- **Attachment:** This examines the formation of attachments, animal studies of attachment, the cross-cultural differences in attachment, and the influence of early attachment on later adult relationships.
- **Psychopathology:** considers different explanations for various psychological disorders (e.g. depression, phobias and obsessive compulsive disorder), including biological, psychological and social explanations.

**Paper 2: Psychology in Context:**

- **Approaches in Psychology:** This topic considers the different beliefs of psychologists who make up the different approaches. These include behavioural psychologists, cognitive psychologists, social learning theorists, biological psychologists, psychodynamic psychologists and humanistic psychologists.
- **Biopsychology:** This is a branch of Psychology concerned with physiology and biology influence behaviour, thoughts and feeling. The biopsychology topic examines: the nervous system; endocrine system, fight-or-flight; localisation of function; plasticity and functional recovery; ways of studying the brain; biological rhythms and endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers.
- **Research Methods:** This topic examines the different tools and methods psychologists used to conduct psychological research, analyse data and draw conclusions. This area of Psychology also focuses on carrying out and interpreting statistical data.

**Paper 3: Advanced topics and options within Psychology:**

- **Issues and Debates in Psychology:** This topic explores the different issues and debates produced within Psychological research.
- **Relationships:** This topic in Psychology which examines evolutionary explanations for partner preference, the factors that affect the initiation, maintenance and breakdown of romantic relationships, virtual relationships and parasocial relationships.

- **Schizophrenia:** This topic explores the classification and diagnosis of Schizophrenia, along with the different explanations for why individuals suffer from Schizophrenia, including the biological and psychological explanations. As well as this, the topic explores the different treatments used to help manage Schizophrenia.
- **Aggression:** This topic explores why people behave aggressively. It examines the biological, psychological, environmental explanations. As well as looking at the effects of computer games.

**How will I be assessed:** There are three papers in total. The duration of each paper is 2 hours and the total mark awarded is 96 per paper. Each paper is worth 33.3% of the final A level mark.

**Key skills development:** Students will learn through practical work, problem solving, analysis and interpretation, reading, independent research, and exam practice. The subject is useful in enhancing social and communication skills and provides a deeper, more scientific knowledge of the human and non-human mind and behaviour.

**Costs:** £25 per year on textbooks and any additional money for non- compulsory trips.

**Progression:** There are many occupations that involve a psychological background including Occupational Psychologists, Forensic Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, nursing, teaching, policing, law, sports and business. Psychology is a highly desirable A level for higher study and gaining credit for many courses.

**Entry Requirements:** A GCSE grade 5 in English, Maths and Biology

**Contact:** For further information please contact Miss Ellis or Miss Pike