

Getting Started September 2007

GCE Psychology

Edexcel Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Psychology (8PS01)

First examination 2009

Edexcel Advanced GCE in Psychology (9PS01)

First examination 2010



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Introduction

Edexcel's GCE in Psychology has been developed in consultation with schools, colleges, university lecturers and professional bodies to ensure it provides a coherent and engaging programme of study at Advanced Subsidiary and natural progression into A2.

This Getting Started book will give you an overview of the course and what it means for you and your students. The guidance in this book is intended to help you plan the course in outline and to give you further insight into the principles behind the content to help you and your students succeed in the course.

Key principles

The specification has been developed with the following key principles:

A strong structure

Students study five approaches at AS level each with the same structure. At A2, students have a choice of applications each with a similar structure as the AS units. Through this consistent structure, students develop a holistic understanding of psychology, considering conflicting and complementary explanations to issues and major debates.

A focus on choice

Whilst some aspects are essential, the specification provides the flexibility of choice in selecting some theories, studies and key issues. At A2 the specification also allows for choice in the selection of applications. This choice allows for the course to be tailored to the needs of students.

Incorporation of practicals

A series of short and manageable practical experiments and tests accompany the approaches and allow for students to develop an active knowledge of the scientific aspects of psychology.

Assessment overview

The course will be assessed by examination only.

AS units

Unit 1	Unit 2
Two approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social • Cognitive 	Three approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychodynamic • Biological • Learning
One exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 20 mins • 40% of AS marks • January or June exam 	One exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 40 mins • 60% of AS marks • June only exam

A2 units

Unit 3	Unit 4
Choose two applications from four: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminological • Child • Health • Sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One compulsory application: Clinical • Issues and Debates
One exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hour 30 mins • 40% of AS marks • January or June exam 	One exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours • 60% of A2 marks • June only exam



Unit overviews

The diagrams give an overview of the content of each unit, so you can see at a glance the sort of material students will need to study.

AS units

Unit 1

Two approaches

One exam

Social Approach	Cognitive Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the approach • Methodology: Survey (interview and questionnaire), sampling and ethics • Content: Obedience Milgram etc and prejudice (Social Identity Theory) • Two studies in detail: Hofling et al (1996) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Prescribed practical: Survey gathering qualitative and quantitative data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the approach • Methodology: Laboratory experiments, and descriptive statistics • Content: Levels of processing and one other model of memory Cue dependent and one other theory of forgetting • Two studies in detail: Godden and Baddeley (1975) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Prescribed practical: One experiment related to a cognitive topic

Unit 2

Three approaches

One exam

Psychodynamic Approach	Biological Approach	Learning Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the approach • Methodology: Case study and correlation (including Spearman) • Content: Freud's theory and focus on gender development • Two studies in detail: Little Hans (1909) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Prescribed practical: One correlation using self-report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the approach • Methodology: Twin and adoption studies, scanning, issues of significance, using animals in studies • Content: Gender development –genes, hormones, CNS and neurotransmitters • Two studies in detail: Money (1975) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Prescribed practical: Test of difference using independent groups and Mann-Whitney U test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the approach • Methodology: Observations, Chi Squared test, review of experimental issues and ethical issues • Content: Classical, operant conditioning and social learning theory, including explaining gender development • Two studies in detail: Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Prescribed practical: Observation

A2 units

Unit 3

Chose two out of four applications

One exam

Criminological	Child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of the application • Methodology: Experiments and evaluation of their use in criminological psychology • Content: Causes of crime, ewt, defendant characteristics and treating offenders (selected material) • Two studies in detail: Loftus and Palmer (1974) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Practical evidence: Content analysis/article analysis related to the key issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of application • Methodology: Observations and case studies and cross-cultural, longitudinal research • Content: Bowlby, attachments, deprivation, privation, one developmental issue, one enrichment programme • Two studies in detail: Curtiss (1977) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Practical evidence Content analysis/article analysis related to the key issue
Health	Sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of application • Methodology: Animal studies and ethics in the application • Content: Actions, effects and treatment of drug abuse • Two studies in detail: Blättler (2002) and one other (which relates to another drug aside from heroin) • One key issue of choice • Practical evidence: Content analysis/article analysis related to the key issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of application • Methodology: Questionnaires and correlations in the application • Content: Participation, motivation, improving performance and anxiety and audience effects • Two studies in detail: Boyd and Munroe (2003) and one other (from a choice of three) • One key issue of choice • Practical evidence: Content analysis/article analysis related to the key issue

Unit 4

One application and an issues and debates element

One exam

Clinical	Issues and Debates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of application • Methodology: Research methods and issues of diagnosis (including reliability and validity) • Content: Defining, diagnosing, describing, explaining and treating mental disorders (schizophrenia and one other) • Three studies in detail: Rosenhan (1973) and two others • One key issue of choice • Practical evidence: advice leaflet focussing on the key issue 	<p>Focusing on psychology and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions of the approaches to society • Ethics • Research methods • Key issues • Debates (cultural issues, is psychology a science?, social control, nature/nurture) • Applying knowledge to novel situations

What's new?

This section outlines the new aspects of the specification and the assessment for both current Edexcel centres and those centres taking the Edexcel Psychology specification for the first time.

QCA criteria

The QCA criteria for Psychology apply to all awarding bodies but 40% of the specifications may still differ.

The Edexcel specification is approach based, allowing students to study Psychological methods and content in context, and apply their understanding in a practical task. The Edexcel AS level units cover the Cognitive, Social and Biological approaches explicitly, whilst incorporating aspects of the areas of Individual Difference and Developmental within the five approaches chosen.

The QCA criteria specifies that:

- The AS must cover the main five areas and the A level must build on at least two of these. Research methods must include those gathering both qualitative and quantitative data and must include experiment, observation, self-report and correlation.
- The AS must include descriptive statistics and graphical presentation of results, as well as experimental designs.
- The A level must include some inferential statistics.
- The A level must include an understanding of the major approaches in psychology, including cognitive, biological, behavioural and psychodynamic.
- The A level must also cover the scientific nature of psychology.

There is mention for the AS of emphasis on individual, social and cultural diversity, ethical issues and strengths and weaknesses of methods, as well as other issues.

Assessment objectives

There are three assessment objectives (AO)

- **AO1: Knowledge and understanding of science and of *How science works***

Candidates should be able to:

- a) recognise, recall and show understanding of scientific knowledge
- b) select, organise and communicate relevant information in a variety of forms.

- **AO2: Application of knowledge and understanding of science and of *How science works***

Candidates should be able to:

- a) analyse and evaluate scientific knowledge and processes
- b) apply scientific knowledge and processes to unfamiliar situations including those related to issues
- c) assess the validity, reliability and credibility of scientific information

- **AO3: *How science works* – Psychology**

Candidates should be able to:

- a) describe ethical, safe and skilful practical techniques and processes, selecting appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods.
- b) know how to make, record and communicate reliable and valid observations and measurements with appropriate precision and accuracy, through using primary and secondary sources.
- c) analyse, interpret, explain and evaluate the methodology, results and impact of their own and others' experimental and investigative activities in a variety of ways.

There is a lot more AO3 (as a percentage of the whole AS and A level) than for the Curriculum 2000 specification.

Incorporating How Science Works

Psychology is now a 'science subject', and in July 2006 the QCA criteria gave details about how science subject specifications were to be developed.

A brief summary of the new criteria for science subjects is given here. Students must:

- be able to use their knowledge and understanding to pose scientific questions, define scientific problems, and to present scientific arguments and ideas.
- consider ethical issues and appreciate the ways in which society uses science to inform decision-making.
- use theories, models and ideas to develop and modify scientific explanations, and use appropriate methodology to answer scientific questions.
- appreciate the tentative nature of scientific knowledge and appreciate how society uses science in decision making.
- communicate their ideas well, use appropriate terminology and consider applications and implications of science (together with risks and benefits).

The Edexcel GCE psychology specification for 2008 integrates all the above criteria for How Science Works.

A brief comment on terminology

The term 'method' is used in different ways in psychology — a research method, the 'method' section of a report, method in general.

With the Edexcel GCE in Psychology these definitions apply:

- **Methodology** – all aspects of methods and how science works
- **Research method** – the main method such as experiment, observation or case study
- **Procedure** – how the study was carried out

The term 'method' is not used on its own at all

Assessing the studies in detail

With the key study, students need more detail than would be required if asked to "describe a study" for four or five marks, because they may well be asked to describe a specific aspect of the study.

Ensure that students are given sufficient detail that they could produce a description of the procedure, including participant information, to answer, for example a possible 4 mark question on this. They need the same level of detail for results. It is also necessary to know what the aims and conclusions of the studies were as any of these may be specifically asked about. Also ensure students are able to compare their two studies, being able to produce up to 4 comparison points.

When considering evaluation, again make sure that every study can be evaluated thoroughly. Try to ensure that there are a mixture of points covering a range of issues such as practical considerations, ethical issues, reliability, validity and where appropriate, credibility of the findings.

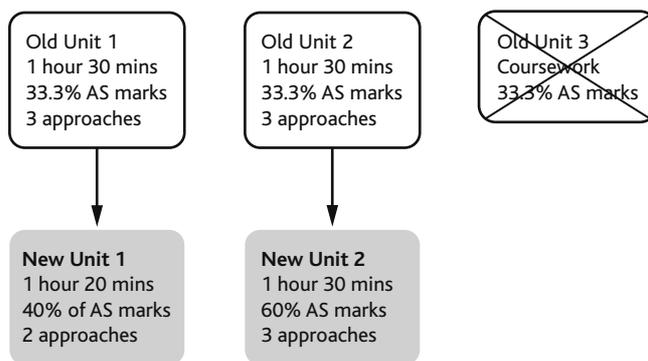
Information for current Edexcel centres

In the new specification:

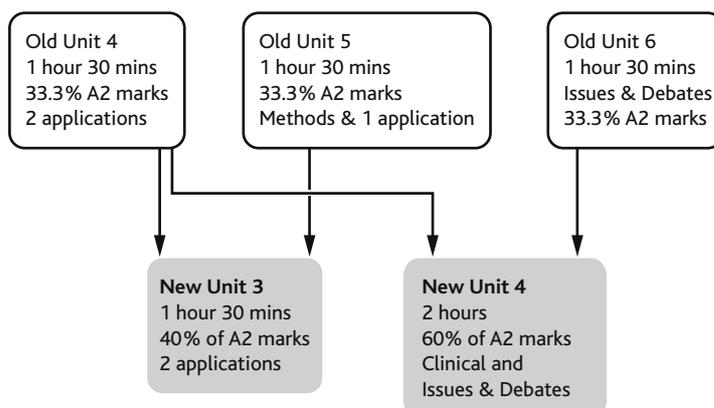
- there are four units, two for the AS and an additional two for the A2
- there is no longer a coursework unit
- content has been reduced
- the structure from the current AS specification has been retained, and slightly modified. A2 units are now structured in a similar way to the AS units.

How the units have changed

AS units



A2 units



Overview of content changes

There are five main areas of change in the way the content is presented in the units. These changes are based on classroom practice and are designed to build on the interest of students.

1. In areas such as Studies in Detail, one of the studies is compulsory, with a choice of one study from three options for the other, allowing you to tailor the course to your students' interests and needs.
2. Material that was previously covered by the coursework unit and the methods section in Unit 5 is integrated throughout the course. Students, under the guidance of their teachers, will conduct and write up short practicals in a section called Evidence of Practice, so that this important aspect of the learning is not lost.
There is guidance for this in the Support for Practical section in this book.
3. The methodology sections have been expanded and made more explicit to help teachers focus on those aspects that students need to know about.
4. Within the approaches found in the AS units, the key application and contemporary issue have been combined.
5. Some key terms that students are expected to define and use within any area of a unit are now listed so that students are clear about terminology from the outset.

Detailed content changes

The changes to each unit are outlined here with a brief rationale. There is a more detailed mapping of content in the next section of this book.

Unit 1

To make it easier to cover the material adequately for a January sitting of the examination this unit now covers only two approaches, Social and Cognitive.

- In the Social Approach, obedience and prejudice are retained.
- In the Cognitive Approach, memory and forgetting are retained.

The section on the Cognitive Developmental Approach has been removed.



Unit 2

In this unit, the term Physiological has been replaced by the term Biological to ensure consistency in terminology. Biological psychology is an accepted term for this approach.

The three approaches studied in Unit 2, Psychodynamic, Biological and Learning, all take up the theme of gender development.

- In the Psychodynamic approach the main area studied is Freud's theory though the material covered has been trimmed.
- In the Biological Approach, in keeping with the themed nature of this unit, the main area of study is now the role of genes, hormones and the brain in gender development.
- In the Learning Approach the acquisition of gender appropriate behaviour is used as a theme to which the principles of learning can be applied.

During both Unit 1 and Unit 2 students will learn about various means used by psychologists to collect evidence and will undertake the analysis of data they collect in the Evidence of Practice sections. This will allow them to grasp some of the important aspects of conducting research even though they no longer do a study as an assessed unit. There will be questions in the assessments that ask the students to draw on their experiences when undertaking these research exercises.

The A2 units have undergone more change than the AS units. In keeping with the AS model there will be a list of terms, methodology integrated into the applications and evidence of practice. There are also studies in detail introduced to link to the topics studied and key issues.

Unit 3

Students choose to study two applications from the following four:

Criminological, Child, Health and Sport.

In all these applications:

- content has been reduced to make delivery more manageable, and to make a January sitting of the paper feasible.
- content has been modified to take into account what has or has not worked well in the old specification.
- links to the AS approaches have been strengthened and made more explicit.

In Criminological Psychology, students will learn about:

- two different explanations for criminality,
- problems associated with eyewitness testimony and
- the treatment of offenders.

Offender profiling is still available but only as an option for the key issue.

In Child psychology, attachment is retained but play is removed. There is also a short section on how issues such as severe learning difficulties may affect development.

Health Psychology now focuses on drugs, including the treatment of addiction. The specification no longer includes stress as a content area.

Sport psychology looks at explanations for participation, predictors for achievement, effects of arousal and ways to improve performance.



Unit 4

Unit 4 has two components, Clinical Psychology which is now compulsory and the Issues and Debates section.

The Clinical material is similar, though there is no longer a need to study the humanistic approach.

- Both explanations and treatments are linked to the AS approaches.
- Some elements have been specified, with all students now being required to learn about schizophrenia as one of their disorders.

The Issues and Debates section draws together knowledge and understanding most of which the students have already covered. The greatest change to the Issues and Debates is the way they are organised and described. The change in wording clarifies what needs to be taught and learned.

A new idea in the synoptic section is the introduction of a new situation that students will be able to consider using the knowledge they have acquired through the course.

Information for new Edexcel centres

Overview of content

The Edexcel specification is approach based, allowing students to study Psychological methods and content in context, and to consolidate their understanding in a practical task.

The content of the specification has been designed to build on the interest of students and the structure reflects classroom practice.

Content has been carefully thought through to ensure delivery is manageable, and that Units 1 and 3 can be delivered in time to be assessed in January examinations.

Each unit of the AS is made up of approaches and the A2 is largely made up of applications. These allow students to study Psychology in context.

Each approach and application focuses on an aspect of Psychology, so that the theoretical parts of the course are studied in context. This provides a rounded and rewarding experience for students of all abilities.

The Edexcel specification offers:

- A strong structure
- A focus on choice
- Incorporation of practicals

A strong structure

Each approach and application has broadly the same structure, providing continuity and support for students of all abilities:

1. **Main key terms** that students are expected to define and use within any area are now listed so that students are clear about terminology from the outset.
2. The **methodology** required is made explicit to help teachers focus on those aspects that students need to know about.
3. **Content** includes all the main theory and learning of the unit and provides the main content of the unit. Some centres may prefer to teach this aspect before the methodology, although the latter underpins the content.
4. In **Studies in Detail**, one of the studies will be named as compulsory, with a choice of one study from three options for the other allowing you to tailor the course to your students' interests and needs.
5. The **key issue** is a choice of one key contemporary issue.
6. The **Evidence in Practice** allows integration of practicals throughout the course and brings everything together at the end of the approach. Students conduct and write up short practicals providing them with a hands-on experience of the theory they have studied.



A focus on choice

The specification allows for flexibility of choice so that you can tailor the course to suit your students' needs.

The main aspects of choice are:

- Studies in detail — one is prescribed, the other is a choice of one from three options.
- Key issue — this is a free choice, though a list of examples is included in the specification.
- Unit 3 — there is a choice of two applications from four.

The element of choice allows for different routes through the material, such as:

- Traditional route
- Route using more up-to-date, contemporary material

Incorporation of practicals

Under the new QCA criteria, internally assessed coursework is no longer allowed in GCE Psychology courses. However, the practical element of the course is useful for students as it allows them to apply the theory they have learnt. This makes it easier to retain and recall the theory in the exam.

The Edexcel specification retains this feature but without students writing up any of the practicals in full. Within each application and approach, a practical is prescribed, with a given research method but a free choice of topic. Students will only be assessed on knowing how to carry out practicals. They will understand them better if they have done them themselves.

There is a section in this book giving suggested practical tasks: Support for Practical tasks to encourage you to continue to make the course as active as it can be to motivate a wide range of students and help them to achieve.

The practicals should be seen as developing skills rather than investigating subject matter. Indeed, the practicals for each unit have been created to develop different skills and methods so each one has a different purpose.

Assessing practicals

AO3 involves assessing methodological issues and issues about actual research studies, including the student's own practical work and the studies of other researchers (at least in terms of assessing the work of others). For example, evaluating Loftus's experiments into eyewitness testimony to see if they are valid, or looking at Milgram's work in terms of methodological implications. As a rule of thumb, if around one third of the examination involves AO3, then there will be one third of the questions focusing on practical work, methodology and evaluation of studies.

Course planner

This course planner has been developed to help you plan the organisation and delivery of the course. The key issues, practicals etc selected are suggestions you may wish to use. A detailed Scheme of Work will be available based on this course planner in time for in depth planning of lessons.

AS course planner

Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Week 1 - 6	Social Psychology Definition of the approach and classic social studies Methodology/how science works: survey method Obedience research Obedience and prejudice Prejudice research Evidence of practice: survey	Week 13 - 17	Psychodynamic approach Freud defence mechanisms Psychosexual stages of development Evidence of practice: correlating parental strictness and tidiness Gender development	Week 24 - 28	Learning approach Classical conditioning Operant conditioning Social Learning Theory Gender development Evidence of practice: observation of gender
Week 7 - 12	Cognitive psychology Introduction to concepts and methodology Memory Forgetting Key issue: reliability of eyewitness testimony Evidence of practice: cue dependency experiment Revision and assessment	Week 19 - 23	Biological approach Gender development Studies in detail Key issue: transgender operations Evidence of practice: gender differences in spatial ability/language		Revision and Exam

A2 course planner

This course planner uses the choices of Criminological and Health in Unit 3 to illustrate a possible teaching programme for A2.

Autumn Term		Spring Term		Summer Term	
Week 1 - 6	Unit 3 – Criminological Psychology Crime and its causes Studying criminal behaviour Evidence in practice and eyewitness testimony Evidence of practice and treating offenders Evidence of practice and key issue Revision	Week 13 - 17	Unit 4 – Clinical Psychology Defining mental illness Diagnoses Schizophrenia	Week 22 - 26	Unit 4 – Issues and Debates Ethics and methods Evaluating studies, relevance of psychology Psychological issues
Week 7 - 13	Unit 3 – Health Psychology What drugs do and how they work How drugs work- Heroin Ecstasy, Research methods and explanations for drug misuse Methods of research, treating drug misuse Methods and revision	Week 18 - 21	Unit 4 – Clinical Psychology Methods Unipolar depression Evidence in practice		Revision and Exam

Routes through the specification

The element of choice throughout the specification means that you can choose a route that best supports and stimulates your students.

The three most common routes through the specification content are outlined here to help you plan your approach to the course. The three routes are:

- Gender route
- Traditional route
- Contemporary route

Gender route

Gender has been identified as a linking theme throughout Unit 2, and this can be extended to other units too. Here are some ways gender issues may be brought into the specification.

Social Approach: Milgram's variation using women as participants

Key issue: Gender differences in attitudes to authority

Survey: Attitude differences towards prejudice or obedience between men and women

Cognitive Approach

Key issue: Do sex differences in cognitive skills, such as language skills, affect cognitive abilities?

Psychodynamic Approach: Castration anxiety v penis envy

Studies into development of identity & gender

Key issue: Sexual orientation

Biological Approach: Genetic & hormonal effects on behaviour

Studies into sex differences (Bellis et al.)

Key issue: Gender reassignment

Learning Approach: Gender role learning using classical conditioning, operant conditioning and social learning theory

Key issue: Anorexia, role models & gender or changes in levels of female violence

Criminological Psychology: Explanations of criminal behaviour

Key issue: Gender and crime

Child Psychology: Gender differences in attachments and effects in adolescence

Key issue: Lack of male role models in day care and early years schooling

Health Psychology: Learning addictive behaviour through gender role models

Key issue: Gender related changes in alcohol consumption



Sport Psychology: Gender differences in sport participation

Key issue: How to increase female participation in sport

Clinical Psychology: Gender differences in incidence and age of onset of mental disorders

Key issue: Gender, the media and mental illness

Issues and Debates: Key issues from AS and A2

Nature – nurture issues

Gender differences regarding social control

Traditional route

Classic studies are identified throughout the material and the key issue may be one that, though relevant today, has its origins in the past.

Social Approach: Studies such as Sherif (1961) and Tajfel (1970) are both options for the studies in detail. Similarly, although there are more recent examples, the My Lai Massacre and its aftermath is still as relevant today as it was in 1968.

Cognitive Approach: Classic studies into memory and forgetting still provide valuable evidence for the nature of memory. Peterson & Peterson (1959) or Craik & Tulving (1975) are optional studies whose findings are as relevant today as they were when first published. If considering the reliability of eyewitness testimony, evidence such as the finding of the Devlin Report and Loftus' early work are pertinent.

Psychodynamic Approach: Axline's study of Dibs (1964) is an optional study for a traditional approach to the specification. In addition, with the use of analysis of dreams as the key issue, a topic that continues to fascinate students, students will get a view of the classic psychodynamic approach.

Biological Approach: In addition to the now infamous study on gender reassignment as the compulsory study in detail, those wishing to use tried and tested studies for the optional component could select from examples such as Gottesman & Shields (1966) on heritability of schizophrenia. This study could also provide a launch point for a key issue.

Learning Approach: The selection of some of the early ground-breaking studies in both classical and operant conditioning would be very suitable research to use for those pursuing a traditional route through the specification (e.g. Watson & Rayner or Skinner). In a similar vein, a traditional approach to the influence of advertising on behaviour could be adopted.

Contemporary route

The accessibility of research papers on the Internet makes a contemporary route increasingly easy to achieve. Here are some suggestions for each approach.

AS units

Social Approach: The recent study into obedience is Reicher & Haslam (2003) on their televised mock prison study. The key issue could centre on such things as concerns about the treatment of Iraqi detainees or racial tension caused by asylum seekers being housed in certain areas. In Evidence of practice, the collection of data through a questionnaire or interview gives teachers the opportunity should they wish to produce a very contemporary feel to the specification.

Cognitive Approach: The recent study is Ramponi et al's (2004) research related to levels of processing. When considering a contemporary angle to the key issue of fallibility of memory and the effects on people's lives is constantly being updated, whether it is because of a miscarriage of justice or another traumatic event played out on the world's media stage.

Psychodynamic Approach: The recent study relating to Freud's theory is by Phebe Cramer on identity, personality, defence mechanisms and gender (1997). A contemporary approach to the key issue is also possible and the continued popularity of Freudian ideas within the lay population ensures that there is plenty of material available to use.

Biological Approach: The recent study related to the biological aspects of gender is Bellis et al (2001) on sex differences in brain maturation. With arguments regarding the relative importance of biological and psychological factors in the development of gender, social functioning and cognition, there is ample scope to take a very contemporary angle on the key issue.

Learning Approach: The role of the media in so many aspects of contemporary life is a rich area for a modern key issue, but the use of ASBOs and what form of reinforcement they may produce may be of interest. The observational exercise in the Evidence of practice section also lends itself to a very contemporary approach, should this be desired.



A2 units

Criminological Psychology: The use of recent studies of eyewitness testimony and the studies in detail can help make this a very contemporary application. Options include Gesch et al's (2003) study on the effects of dietary supplements on the behaviour of young offenders. Recent high profile cases that use offender profiling can always be found if this is selected as the key issue. Similarly there are continuing debates in the public arena regarding the origins of criminality, the reliability of eyewitness testimony and the roles of treatments and punishments meted out to criminals in determining future behaviour.

Child Psychology: The use of contemporary research into privation and deprivation and the very pertinent research into the effects of daycare on children, can give the application of psychology to children's development a very modern approach. Again the choice of the key issue and the way this is pursued in the Evidence of Practice section will allow those who wish to use very recent ideas the opportunity to do so.

Health Psychology: This focus of health psychology on the issue of drugs, their effects, issues of addiction and dependence, as well as treatment, means that there is current research available to use for the content, the studies in detail and the key issue. The arguments about the best way to treat addiction and explanations for the variability of individual susceptibility are just two potential areas where current thinking is divided, providing excellent material for evaluation (e.g. the Robertson et al. 2006 study on the use of dihydrocodeine).

Sport Psychology: Current research such as Craft et al's (2003) meta analysis on anxiety, as well as the prescribed study concerning imagery, will provide a focus for the key issue.

Clinical Psychology: Evidence from contemporary studies into the nature, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders can be used throughout the content of Clinical Psychology. Examples such as Mineka & Ohma (2002) can be used as studies in detail. The key issue covered by the Evidence in practice section encourages students to explore issues regarding mental health in contemporary Britain.

Support for practicals

Advice for teachers

This advice includes suggestions for the Evidence of Practice: Short Practical, how the practicals might be carried out and ideas about how they might be assessed.

A main feature of the specification is the element of choice, so although suggestions follow, there are also other equally good practicals that you could use.

A practical is not a piece of coursework. There is less depth required. Each practical focuses on a specific area of methodology, and none requires a full piece of coursework write up.

The practicals are partly specified (for example, the research method that must be used) and partly offer a free choice (for example, the particular hypothesis chosen).

About the practicals

There are five practicals for the AS — one for each approach.

In AS the methodology part of each approach introduces the skills students need to know and the practical gives an opportunity to reinforce those skills.

For the A2 a key issue is focused on for each practical. The key issue is not specified and can be drawn from the 'content' or from elsewhere within the application. Students will have the necessary skills from AS, and so the practicals for the A2 involve a more analytic focus, rather than a focus on gathering data, though primary data are required.

There is no practical for the Issues and Debates part of Unit 4.

How to choose the practicals

For the AS, one way of choosing each practical is to move from the material selected for the 'content' part of the specification and to reinforce the student's learning by focusing on an aspect of that 'content'. Another way is to move from the material selected for the 'in depth studies' part of the specification, and to reinforce the student's learning by focusing on a hypothesis very similar to one of the chosen studies (either similar in research method or in content). Teachers can therefore choose 'in depth studies' that are central to the 'content'.

One approach to selecting an A2 practical is to link clearly to the 'content' to reinforce the student's learning, as with the AS.

Suggested practicals

Here are suggested practicals which you can use with your students.

For AS units, the practicals cover each of the approaches in turn.

For A2 units, there are exemplar practicals for Unit 3 showing the different requirements, and a suggested practical for Clinical Psychology in Unit 4.

Each of the suggested practicals is followed by detailed teacher's notes to help you plan and deliver the practical. The notes follow the structure that students are likely to use in the practical:

- Planning
- Carrying out the practical
- Analysis
- Drawing conclusions

You can use your own practicals with your students if you prefer.

Unit 1 - Social Approach

Specification requirements:

- One survey on a topic within the Social Approach, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data.

Suggested practical:

- Questionnaire to find out about in-group/out-group attitudes. Use open and closed questions to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Focus on sampling, alternative hypothesis, questionnaire design, brief analysis and drawing conclusions.

Teacher's notes

Planning

- Select an in-group/out-group e.g.
 - differing tastes in music (rock, rap, classical...)
 - local sport teams (football, badminton...)
 - classes within the school/college (biology v physics, arts v science...)
 - two towns within the area
 - members of society v non-members (chess, music...)

- Write out the alternative hypothesis
 e.g. there is a difference in attitudes and people prefer (like best) those who share their taste in music (their in-group) compared with those that have a different taste in music (their out-group).
- Choose sampling method

Sampling must mean sufficient numbers of each group, and anybody not in either group is not required so sampling method must reflect these issues.

Carrying out the practical

- Design the questionnaire to:
 - include personal data such as age, gender, identification of group, ability level within the group (if appropriate)
 - include clear ethical considerations, such as explaining on the front that the respondent has the right to withdraw at any time and that data are confidential
 - include closed questions such as statements using a Likert-type scale (strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, strongly disagree) e.g.

	SA	A	DK	D	SD
I like people who like my taste in music					
I like people even if they do not share my tastes					
I get on with everybody					
My friends all share my taste in music					

- include some open questions asking for attitudes towards the in-group and the out-group e.g. What do you think about people that do not share your taste in music?
 - gather data that will include numbers (e.g. score from the closed questions giving positive attitudes towards one group and negative attitudes towards the other)
 - gather data that will include comments as well that can be grouped into themes, e.g. from the open questions
- Decide whether to post the questionnaire, ask questions individually like an interview, or ask other people to get the questionnaires completed.



Analysis

- Analyse the quantitative data, e.g. scoring:

	SA	A	DK	D	SD
I like people who like my taste in music	5	4	3	2	1
I like people even if they do not share my tastes	1	2	3	4	5
I get on with everybody	1	2	3	4	5
My friends all share my taste in music	5	4	3	2	1

- Analyse the qualitative data e.g.

Question: What do you think about people that do not share your taste in music?

Answer: I prefer to be with people that like the same music as me but if they have other interests then I can be good friends with them, even if they like different music. But I hate people who like jazz. I cannot understand what there is to like about it.

This is evidence for in-group/out-group differences as seen from the last sentence but there is an element of tolerance as well. It seems that other tastes, for this person, are fine, but not jazz.

Drawing conclusions

- Represent the quantitative data in a graph in some format.
- Draw conclusions about the data gathered, e.g. people do prefer those who like the same music but there is also tolerance for different music tastes if the person is liked for other reasons. Perhaps music taste is not enough to form an in-group and out-group for most people, though there are exceptions (such as if they like music that the other person hates). Social identity theory suggests we prefer our in-group, but perhaps the in-group must be better defined than the rather vague idea of taste in music. However, Tajfel created minimal groups artificially, and still found in-group and out-group preferences.
- Write a short paragraph giving the strengths and weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative data, referring to the data gathered for this practical.
- Write a short paragraph giving strengths and weaknesses of the survey (in general and in particular) focusing on issues of reliability, validity and subjectivity.
- Define three types of interview as alternative methods of carrying out a survey (structured, unstructured, semi-structured).

Unit 1 – Cognitive Approach

Specification requirements:

- One experiment in cognitive psychology

Suggested practical:

- A laboratory experiment similar to that of Craik and Tulving to look at the effects of levels of processing.
- Focus on design, experimental hypothesis, controls, IV and DV, and presentation of results.

Teacher's Notes

Planning

- Decide which participant design to use out of repeated measures and independent groups (as matched pairs will not be easy to set up) e.g. using repeated measures to control for individual differences though there may be demand characteristics. Consider how this affects how participant variables affect the study.
- Write out the experimental hypothesis e.g. There will be a difference in number of words recognised out of a list (that includes the 'experimental words' and some words not involved in the experiment) depending on whether the words have been processed visually (what they look like) or semantically (what their meaning is). Consider whether the hypothesis is directional or non-directional.
- Identify the independent (IV) and dependent (DV) variables, e.g. IV is how the word is processed, visually or semantically, and DV is which words are recognised and how many of each (those visually or those semantically processed). Consider issues of operationalisation of variables.
- Decide on the apparatus to be used, e.g. make a list of words that match in terms of difficulty, how usual they are, length and number of syllables. Choose about two thirds of them to use as the list for the experiment. The other third are distractors in the 'recognition' list. Choose half of the 'experimental' list to be visually processed and half to be semantically processed. Put the words into sentences, with the words being semantically processed being in sentences that require meaning to be considered (e.g. 'table' can be in a sentence 'this is mostly used for sitting on') and the words being visually processed needing to be looked at (e.g. 'STOOL' is in capital letters).
- Draw up the apparatus e.g., write up the experimental list with the different processing tasks mixed up and then write up the word list for recognition, with the words mixed up and including the distractor words. Photocopy the required number of lists both for the test and for the recognition task. Consider issues such as counterbalancing, randomisation and order effects.
- Decide on the sampling method and choose the participants. Consider control over participant variables e.g. opportunity sampling of between 10 and 20 participants.
- Write up standardised instructions including ethical considerations clearly addressed.
- Decide on how the experiment will be run (where, when, with whom, for how long...). Consider control over situational variables.



Carrying out the practical

- For each participant, count how many of the semantically processed words were recognised, how many of the visually processed words were recognised and how many of the distractor words were 'recognised'.
- Draw up a table with the two lists clearly displaying how many 'semantically' processed and how many 'visually' processed words were recognised by each participant.

Analysis

- Work out descriptive statistics including the mean, median, and mode.
- Work out measures of dispersion including the range (and perhaps standard deviation).

Drawing conclusions

- Draw up a bar chart or histogram, and a frequency graph using the data gathered.
- Write a short paragraph, each looking at issues of reliability, validity, objectivity, and experimenter effects.

Unit 2 – Psychodynamic Approach

Specification requirements:

- One study which must be a correlational design, using two rating scales and self-report data.

Suggested practical:

- Collecting data by means of a survey, using self-report data and two scales based on psychosexual stages e.g. data about own characteristics (mean, generous) compared with parental strictness (laissez faire, democratic, authoritarian).
- Focus on correlation and Spearman’s test.

Teacher’s Notes

Planning

- Study psychosexual stages and in particular the anal stage. Make a list of characteristics that might apply to type of parenting at that stage. Make a list of characteristics that might apply to a child, when an adult, fixated at the anal stage being anal retentive.
- Work with someone else to check the two lists – to aim for inter-judge reliability.
- Write a hypothesis looking for a relationship, e.g. there is a relationship between a parenting score on authoritarian characteristics (such as strict on bedtime and meal times, strict on keeping the house tidy) and an adult’s score on characteristics (such as meanness or tidiness). The more authoritarian (strict) the parenting, the more a person is mean, tidy or well groomed. Focus on operationalising variables and identifying them (as opposed to having an IV and a DV).

Carrying out the practical

- Draw up the two self-rating questionnaires making design decisions, e.g. use two separate sheets or mix the two sets of questions as a control.

Questions might include:

1. ‘Tick any characteristics from this group that you think apply to you as an adult’.

mean	tidy	careful	happy
intelligent	successful	generous	well-groomed
messy	attractive	boring	interesting

The main characteristics for an anal retentive personality here are mean, tidy and well groomed and these are worth 2 points each. Tidy and careful could be worth 1 point each.



2. 'Tick any characteristics from this group that you think applied to your parents when you were very young'.

relaxed	happy	kind	thorough
	interested	strict	generous
successful	mean	unyielding	conscientious

The main characteristics for authoritarian parenting here are strict, mean and unyielding so they could have a score of 2 each. Conscientious and thorough might be worth 1 point each.

- Prepare the materials, including standardised instructions considering ethical issues.
- Choose the sampling method and the participants.
- Carry out the study, gathering the data.

Analysis

- Calculate the scores for each participant on both scales (parent strictness and own adult characteristics).
- Draw up a table of the scores side by side and a scattergram of the data.
- Review the data to see if there appears to be a correlation or not (e.g. the line of best fit).
- Carry out a Spearman's test on the data to find the correlation coefficient.
- Using the relevant tables see if the test finds a significant relationship and see if the correlation (if there is one) is positive or negative.

Drawing conclusions

- Produce a short report focusing on the procedure, sample, apparatus and results.
- Conclude the report by writing a short paragraph on the advantages and disadvantages of correlations.

Unit 2 - Biological Approach

Specification requirements:

- One practical that is a test of difference, collecting data other than nominal and using an independent groups design

Suggested practical:

- A test using gender as the IV and some other characteristic as the DV.
- The characteristic must be measured to generate a score. For example, use a test on www.bbc.co.uk/science to find out scores and compare them. Or use tasks such as a spot the difference task (where females should succeed because they notice landmarks more) or a rotational task (where males should succeed because they are better at visuo-spatial tasks).
- There must be a sufficient number of tasks within a test to get a score for each person on each type of task. Then the scores on one of the test types (e.g. the visuo-spatial one) between the two genders can be tested for difference.
- Alternatively two statistical tests can be done, one each for the two types of test separately compared by gender.
- Focus on the statistical test (Mann Whitney) and issues such as level of measurement, level of significance, calculated value, critical value, one or two tailed tests.

Teacher's Notes

Planning

- Choose a sampling method and find participants, e.g. it makes sense to have an equal number of males and females and similar ages.
- Find a relevant test using a web site (check for issues of copyright) or using a book of tests (such as IQ tests). Check that it will be clear which test(s) the males and females will do best and that the tests link to theory in some way. Either choose just visuo-spatial tasks, for example, to make up the test (and the males should do best). Alternatively get each person to do two different tests (one made up of 'male' tasks and one made up of 'female' tasks) and then test for difference twice (test the males and females for difference on the 'male' task and then test the males and females for difference on the 'female' task).
- Write out an appropriate alternative hypothesis clearly giving an operationalised IV and DV, and focusing on whether the hypothesis is directional or non-directional, e.g. males will do better on a visuo-spatial test (requiring rotation of shapes as tasks) and females will do better on a verbal test (requiring sorting of anagrams as tasks). The IV is gender and the DV is the type of test (visuo-spatial e.g. rotating shapes or verbal e.g. recognising anagrams).
- Prepare the materials so that the participants can all carry out all the test(s). Focus on this being an independent groups design as the IV is gender.



Carrying out the practical

- Carry out the test(s) and record the score(s).
- Draw up a table showing the scores for the male participants separately from the scores for the female participants.

Analysis

- Produce a relevant graph and descriptive statistics.
- Look at the data to see whether results look sufficiently different between the genders or not.
- Carry out a Mann Whitney test to see if any difference is significant or not. Choose an appropriate level of significance and focus on why the Mann Whitney test is the right one. Consider whether data are nominal (they should not be), ordinal or interval.

Drawing conclusions

- Put together the hypothesis and results analysis that have already been produced, so that there is a brief report.
- Write one short paragraph each to consider the issues of reliability, validity, credibility and generalisability with regard to the study.

Unit 2 - Learning Approach

Specification requirements:

- One observation focusing on Learning Theory and gathering quantitative data to use a Chi Squared test

Suggested practical:

- An observation of cars used depending on gender, to see if there is a difference between type of car being driven (e.g. small hatch compared with large 'executive' car) and whether the driver is male or female.

Teacher's Notes

Planning

- Choose an appropriate place to observe people and the cars they are driving, with due regard for your own and their safety, e.g. a large car park where you can sit unobserved and without imposing on the participants. This has the advantage that you can approach the drivers to debrief them if it is felt to be necessary. Consider all ethical issues.
- Choose two categories of car that are easily distinguished and check with others that this is a reasonable distinction. This will give inter-judge reliability. One way of doing this is using TV adverts or magazine adverts, as this links well with social learning theory, modeling and imitation. Check which models or types of car have women drivers in TV adverts or magazine adverts and which focus on male drivers, and choose those types of car for your observation.
- Make relevant design decisions, for example, choosing a type of car rather than a specific make and model means you should be able to gather more data, e.g. choose large executive cars (like large BMW, large Mercedes (not A class), Jaguar, Lexus) compared with super minis (such as Clio, C3, Yaris, Fiesta). This design would be non-participant and covert – focus on such issues.
- Make design decisions about the time of day for the observation and whether there needs to be more than one observer for inter-rater reliability. Decide whether, if there are two people in the car, they might swap driving so the driver might not 'choose' the car and you might want to use only occasions when only the driver is in the car.
- Prepare a sheet for recording the data by tallying.

Carrying out the practical

- Carry out the observation and record the data carefully.
- Draw up the table ready for a Chi Squared test (a two-by-two table) e.g.

	Executive car	Super mini
Male driver		
Female driver		

Analysis

- Choose an appropriate level of significance and carry out the Chi Squared test. Focus on issues of degrees of freedom briefly.
- Check level of measurement and why a Chi Squared test is appropriate (compare with Spearman's and Mann Whitney).

Drawing conclusions

- Write a short paragraph each on the issues of reliability, validity, generalisability, credibility and ethical issues.

Unit 3 – Applications of Psychology

Students choose two applications from a choice of four. The choices are Criminological, Child, Health and Sport.

For each application there are two possible practicals:

- a content analysis and
- an article analysis.

Students must complete a content analysis for one application, and an article analysis for the other one.

The two tasks are very closely linked.

- The content analysis involves gathering primary data using TV programmes, articles in the media or some other source(s).
- The article analysis involves analyzing what is being said in two different articles and summarising that – so the data are secondary.

Both involve using concepts and research from the application, so the conclusions about the findings are likely to involve similar processes.

If the student gathers primary data by doing a content analysis for one application, they must do the analysis of secondary data for the second application and vice versa.

Specification requirements:

Either

- Conduct a content analysis of magazine or newspaper articles (can include TV or web-based material) concerning a key issue within this application. Write up the findings. Draw conclusions about the findings, linked to concepts, theories and/or research (as appropriate) from the topic of relevance.

Or

- Summarise two magazine or newspaper articles (can include TV or web-based material) concerning a key issue within this application. Write up the summaries. Draw conclusions about their findings, linked to concepts, theories and/or research (as appropriate) from the topic of relevance.

The suggested practicals show one of each of the requirements:

- A content analysis in Criminological psychology
- An article analysis in Child psychology

Unit 3 - Criminological psychology

Specification requirements:

- Summarise two magazine or newspaper articles (can include TV or web-based material) concerning a key issue within this application. Write up the summaries. Draw conclusions about their findings, linked to concepts, theories and/or research (as appropriate) from the topic of relevance.

Suggested practical:

- Looking at eyewitness testimony and its reliability in court, find one example of where there have been problems when convicting someone on the basis of eyewitness testimony and one example of where decisions have been made by the courts to try to make sure eyewitness testimony is reliable. Summarise the two articles separately. Then use knowledge of research in the field to comment on what the two articles have said.

Source material

Article 1:

Orlando Bosquete was sentenced to 55 years in prison because he was bald and shirtless on a hot summer night in 1982.

A woman had been raped. The rapist was bald, shirtless and Hispanic.

The victim identified Bosquete, the only bald, shirtless man in a crowd of Hispanic men detained by police across a dim Key West parking lot as she sat in a patrol car. It took 23 years, a team of lawyers and DNA evidence to prove his innocence.

Nina Morrison, one of Bosquete's attorneys from the New York-based Innocence Project, said five of the six wrongful convictions the group has uncovered in Florida were a result of mistaken identity, often influenced by flawed police line-ups that put the focus on a single suspect.

"He might as well have had a red flag on him that said, 'Pick me, pick me'", Morrison said of the impromptu line-up that resulted in Bosquete's arrest. "She never had an opportunity to compare his face to others under proper lighting.

Cases similar to Bosquete's spurred sweeping witness identification reform in states such as New Jersey and Wisconsin. But despite being identified by researchers as one of the top five states for convictions overturned by DNA, Florida police, prosecutors and lawmakers show little interest in taking on the police line-up issue.

Source: The Gainesville Sun, 2007 – an online news report

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Article 2:

In August 2006 an article by a journalist Robert Schwaneberg noted that 5 years before the then Attorney General John Farmer had put forward guidelines about eyewitness testimony. Farmer said that witness identification in line-ups and other situations would not be accepted as evidence unless police recorded at the time details of how the line-up or identification took place. In August 2006 the Supreme Court in New Jersey passed a ruling agreeing with Farmer's guidelines. An identification of someone by an eyewitness is inadmissible in that State if it takes place by a line-up or from a series of photographs, unless details of how the identification took place are provided at the same time. The article claims that in practice most police forces already take notes and the ruling would not change what already took place. Tape recordings of what occurred were suggested although the ruling stopped short of requiring video-taped evidence. One of the instructions was to record dialogue at the time of the identification as there can be suggestions that affect the identification.

Source: adapted from Star Ledger. Article found on Gary Wells homepage, an expert witness in eyewitness testimony may not be published, broadcast or redistributed without the prior written authority of The Gainesville Sun

Teacher's Notes**Suggested summaries:**

Article 1 describes a real case where after a rape the victim identifies her attacker because he was bald, shirtless and Hispanic. The police had formed a group of Hispanic men across the parking lot and asked the victim to identify her attacker, and the person convicted on her evidence was the only bald, shirtless man in the group. The victim chose that person when looking across a dimly lit parking lot and sitting in a patrol car (presumably not long after the attack). This was an impromptu line-up and there was no proper lighting. The article — and the man's lawyers — claim that the line-up procedures were flawed and the man wrongly convicted because of this. The article mentions reforms in some USA State laws because of such flaws being highlighted, though it says that Florida is not responding to the claims of miscarriages of justice because of flawed line-ups.

Article 2 shows how courts are responding to research findings in areas such as eyewitness testimony, where expert witnesses have used findings to throw doubt on the reliability of eyewitness testimony. Firstly, guidelines are suggested to make sure police can provide evidence about the situation at the time of the identification and, for example, what was said to the witness. This might help to show that there was no influence, for example, from leading questions. The guidelines in 2006 in one State at least became law. Police now have to give written evidence about the procedures at the time of the identification. If they cannot, then the identification is not admissible in the court.



Applying concepts and research findings to the summaries:

- Both the articles mention how laws have followed research findings, for example, to make line-up procedures more secure. This underlines the importance of this key issue as an application of research, and in one of the articles a real case study is given where a man is imprisoned on the basis of eyewitness testimony and released (after 23 years) on the basis of the unreliability of that testimony.
- Elizabeth Loftus, since the 1970s, has carried out a lot of research in the area of eyewitness testimony, including showing that leading questions can affect what someone says about an event. In a well-known study in 1974, Loftus and Palmer showed that simply changing a verb when asking questions can guide someone's judgement about a situation. Students judged the speed of a car involved in an accident as being faster when the car was described as 'smashing' into another car than when the car was described as 'hitting' the other car.
- Also, in another study, it was found that if asked about 'a' broken headlight a participant was less likely to mention seeing broken glass than if asked about 'the' broken headlight.
- This is what is being referred to when in the second article it is said that police must write down dialogue in case suggestions guide any identification.
- Another factor that has been said to affect eyewitness identification is the emotions at the time. The first article seems to say that the victim identified her attacker very close to the time of the rape. Valence, which is the importance of the event for the eyewitness in terms of emotion, seems to affect memory in a U curve as the Yerkes Dodson law shows. Emotion can heighten recall but too much can reduce accuracy. Here the emotions were likely to be sufficient, with stress, to reduce accuracy.
- Race is also an important factor in eyewitness testimony. Scheck et al (2001), in the Innocence Project, suggest that 44% of mistaken identity takes place between a White person and an African American, whereas 25% of mistaken identity takes place between two White people. In the case study outlined in Article 1 it is not known what the victim's race is, however, the alleged attacker was Hispanic and race might have been an issue.
- Identification evidence, which is what both the articles are about, is according to Scheck et al (2001) responsible for 81% of wrongful convictions whereas other factors (such as 50% for police misconduct) are lower down the list of causes for such convictions. Others differ in their estimates, particularly if years earlier when it was not recognised that eyewitness evidence was such a problem, however, even in 1983 Rattner thought that eyewitness testimony was the cause of 52% of wrongful convictions in the cases studied. Again this shows how research in psychology can be used in real life situations, in this case in situations where people might be wrongfully convicted of a crime they did not commit.

Unit 3 – Child psychology

Specification requirements:

- Conduct a content analysis of magazine or newspaper articles (can include TV or web-based material) concerning a key issue within this application. Write up the findings. Draw conclusions about the findings, linked to concepts, theories and/or research (as appropriate) from the topic of relevance.

Suggested practical:

- The issue of daycare is regularly debated, and research shows advantages and disadvantages of daycare for preschool children. Daycare can be seen as a form of short-term deprivation. The general conclusion is that under certain conditions (right number of well-trained staff, not too many hours in daycare at a time and so on) daycare can be beneficial – at least for certain groups. Undertake a content analysis of two newspapers to see what attitudes to daycare, families, and preschool children are found. Then link concepts and ideas from research in the field to the data gathered to explain and comment on the data.

Teacher's Notes

Planning

- Choose resource material such as newspapers from the same day – in the example, The Times and the Daily Mirror on 12th April 2007 were used. There was nothing particular about this day or these papers. Choosing any papers and any day should mean that general attitudes are discovered, rather than choosing a day focusing on that news issue – though it might be better to choose a particular day with a particular news item, because more data could be gathered.
- Firstly, each paper was read through to identify any articles that referred to families and preschool children. Four articles were found. The Daily Mirror had one about Family Intervention Centres. The Times had one about free childcare for the welfare of children, one in the letters section about children being for life not just for Christmas, and one about how 'more unruly' families should be supervised.



Carrying out the practical

- Each article was then examined for themes and wording. List the themes and wording in a table:

Table one – the original list of categories from the content analysis

Issue	Tallying
Badly behaved families	
Parents can be isolated and need support	
Not necessarily childcare that families need	
Responsibility of others to raise, maintain, control and entertain their children	
Government tackling anti-social behaviour	
Families cause crime and social problems	
Childcare gives children the best start in life	
Disruptive parenting	
Parents get help then are rewarded or punished according to their behaviour	
Parents should give time and commitment	
Childcare subsidy is there to boost employment	
Turn their lives around	
Childcare to promote child development	
Threat of sanctions	
Group who need childcare most are not working	
Challenge cause of bad behaviour	
Preschool education	
Boost intellectual development and social skills	
Family intervention projects	
Short periods in childcare	
The most disadvantaged backgrounds benefited more in social and cognitive development	
Decent member of the community	
Good preschool education = economic advantage	
Children get the best chance in life	
Poorest families least able to look after child properly	
Training for nursery staff	
Staff well trained	

- Put the list into themes:

Table two – items put into themes from the content analysis

Theme	Total
Anti social behaviour, families behaving badly, families causing crime and other social problems, disruptive parenting, the aim for society is to develop decent members of the community	12
Family intervention projects, to turn the families' lives around, by challenging the causes of the bad behaviour, using the threat of sanctions, parents get help and are then rewarded or punished according to their behaviour	9
The group who need childcare most are those not working, the poorest families are the least able to look after the child properly, the most disadvantaged backgrounds benefited more in social and cognitive development	3
Childcare is to give children the best chance in life, to promote child development, good preschool education also gives an economic advantage, and is there to boost employment	5
Not necessarily childcare that parents need but support – parents can be isolated	2
Childcare is best when staff are well trained, and the child is not in the childcare for very long periods	3
Some people think it is the responsibility of others to raise, maintain, control and entertain their children (with the implication that this is not right), parents should give time and commitment	3
Preschool education boost intellectual and social development (with the implication that this is what society is aiming for)	3

- Summarise the themes and the scores ready for analysis:

Table three – final themes from content analysis

Themes	Score
Society has a problem with disruptive families and aims to produce decent citizens	12
Intervention programmes provide help, and use threats and rewards	9
Childcare gives children the best start in life	5
Poor families are the worst parents and benefit most from childcare	3
Childcare is best with trained staff and in short periods	3
Preschool education boosts social and cognitive development	3
Parents should be the ones bringing up their children and giving them time	3
But parents can be isolated and need support not childcare	2

Analysis and drawing conclusions

- Analysis of themes using some concepts from the application – some ideas:
- The term 'daycare' is never used, and all the articles prefer 'childcare' or 'preschool education'. Research into 'preschool education' (such as the EPPE project, which is mentioned in one of the articles) does suggest that some form of daycare after the age of 3 years old can help with 'cognitive and social development' (e.g. Sylva and Melhuish). They also found that part time attendance was as effective as full time attendance. The EPPE project has been cited often by government agencies to support the idea that preschool education is good for society, and it is cited in the articles analysed for this practical. There are three references to social and cognitive development being boosted by daycare.



- Other researchers point to the value of a young child being with their main caregiver (e.g. Belsky, 1986). The EPPE project itself suggests that before the age of 3, a child in a childcare setting (group care) may show more antisocial behaviour than a child cared for at home. This is especially true the more time spent in daycare, with over 20 hours starting to show the effect and more than 40 hours especially so. The articles mention antisocial behaviour but only in relation to how it comes from within families, not from any form of childcare.
- Belsky (2001) found that even ten hours a week away from the main caregiver in the first year of life led to a worse mother-child attachment bond. This sort of research is not mentioned in the articles. However, there is mention of the idea that it might not be that parents are not as good as childcare, but that parents need support themselves. This is only briefly mentioned, with the articles focusing on punishing 'unruly' families.
- Bowlby's theories of attachment and maternal deprivation strongly suggest that a child needs their main attachment figure at least until they have passed the stages of stranger fear and separation anxiety.
- Ermisch (2001) suggested that childcare increased likelihood of depression as an adult and of unemployment, and decreased chance of getting good 'A' levels, all of which go against what the articles claim – that children do better with preschool education than without. For example, economic success is specifically mentioned. It is interesting that depression as an adult is mentioned in this research as that reflects the psychodynamic view of the importance of parents in the early years (e.g. the object relations school).
- It has been found in studies in Sweden up to the 1990s that daycare can be successful if heavily subsidised and with highly trained staff (e.g. Andersson, 1989). However, as parental leave has been increased in Sweden, now when children are aged up to eighteen months, most parents do not use daycare as they used to (e.g. Melhuish, 2001).
- The idea that good quality staff and a high number of staff has been reinforced by research and good quality daycare is seen to help children from disadvantaged families e.g. US Dept of Health and Human Services, 2002 prescribes the best staff-child ratio. The articles do refer to these research findings.
- The assumption of the articles is that preschool education is good and that families, especially poor families, will not do such a good job in improving a child's cognitive and social development. From this assumption comes the claim that disruptive families are to blame for antisocial behaviour and treatment programmes are imposed on such families. The programmes use operant conditioning principles to reinforce the required behaviour and to turn families around. The families interviewed for the articles agree that the programmes are successful. Operant conditioning principles come from work of those such as Skinner whose work with animals showed that positive reinforcement is very successful in changing voluntary behaviour. Other operant conditioning principles such as punishment or the 'threat of sanctions', which would be negative reinforcement, are also used.

Unit 4 – Clinical Psychology

Specification requirements:

- Prepare a leaflet using secondary data for a particular audience about a key issue within the application. Include a commentary explaining the decisions made, who the audience was and what the leaflet is intended to achieve.

Suggested practical:

- Prepare a leaflet about eating disorders to help possible sufferers to identify that they have an eating disorder, and what they can do to get help.
- The audience would be the sufferers, before they are diagnosed, or just after diagnosis, although the leaflet would be written with parents in mind as well.
- Include features and symptoms, possible causes (briefly), suggested treatments, prognosis, and what to do next.
- The style should not be technical – there should be information rather than advice.
- Ethical issues should be followed, such as mentioning confidentiality.

Teacher's Notes

Planning

- Write about the audience aimed at – in this case young people who might have an eating disorder, both males and females.
- Write about what the leaflet is intended to achieve – in this case information about eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia) to help someone to identify that they have such a disorder, tell them a bit about it, suggest what they might expect and what to do next.
- Consider ethical issues such as if anyone in the group or involved in the leaflet production might either have an eating disorder or think that they might have, or have someone in the family with an eating disorder. Perhaps they would prefer to focus on a different issue.
- Research what leaflets are used in practice – contact a local Health Centre perhaps, or interview a relevant professional (if this is considered appropriate).



Carrying out the practical

- Make a diagram of how the leaflet might look — such as A4 folded into 3 or A5, and what information is required where.
- Divide the required information into the chosen format — e.g. if A5, then there are 4 sections. The first page can explain the leaflet, the second page can give features and symptoms, the third page can give possible causes and treatments, and the back page can give information about what to do next.
- Prepare the written materials, including diagrams, pictures or other illustrations if possible. Consider all forms of communication.
- Access necessary technical support to produce the leaflet — although the leaflet itself will not be assessed.
- Produce the leaflet.

Drawing conclusions

- If possible, get the leaflet evaluated by some of the audience (e.g. students in another class, parents, health workers)
- Write an assessment of the leaflet, considering its purpose and audience. What difficulties were there? For example, giving sensitive information sensitively.

Unit 4 – Issues and Debates

There is no practical element to this final section.

How the practicals might be assessed

Here are some ideas of how practicals might be assessed, though the questions that follow would not necessarily appear exactly in that format in an examination.

No materials can be taken into the exam. The candidate needs to read through the work they did and be able to summarise the studies and findings of their practicals. Therefore, keeping a practical notebook with all this information in one place might be good advice. Students would not be required to remember their data, just a summary of the results and conclusions.

The main purpose is to learn and test skills, rather than the subject matter of their studies. The focus is on carrying out the studies, learning about methods, looking at difficulties, controls, ethical issues and so on, and learning how to represent and analyse results.

The Specimen Assessment Materials prepared for the new specification (2008) gives examples of questions on the practical work.

Units 1 and 2

- Unit 1 has multiple choice questions, short answer questions and some extended writing. The methodology could be assessed in any of these questions.
- Practical work is individual to each student so is unlikely to be assessed by multiple choice questions. The most that can be assessed there is the knowledge of the method(s) required. For example:

Which of the following defines an overt participant observation?

- a) when someone observes as part of the group
 - b) when someone observes but not as part of the group
 - c) when someone observes as part of the group but secretly
 - d) when someone observes as part of the group and they all know about it
- Their actual practical work involves the student explaining what they did, which requires short answers or extended writing.

For example, for short answer questions:

For your course you will have carried out a study in the Biological Approach using an independent design and gathering ordinal or interval data.

- a) Outline the aim of your study (2 marks).
- b) Give the alternative hypothesis for your study (2 marks).
- c) Explain what inferential statistical test you used and why (4 marks).
- d) Explain two controls you used when carrying out your study (4 marks).



For example, for an extended piece of writing question:

For your course you will have carried out a survey using self-report data within the Psychodynamic Approach.

Describe and evaluate how you carried out your survey.

Unit 3

- Each student will have carried out a content analysis and an analysis of two articles, so questions will focus on these.
- Within each application it will not be known whether the student gathered primary data or not, so questions will have to focus on 'one or the other', as is the case in the Specimen Assessment Materials.
- Students can be asked to describe the key issue chosen (for about 4 marks perhaps).
- Then they can be asked to summarise the analysis they carried out (for about 6 marks perhaps, including their method).
- They are also likely to be asked to use concepts and research from the application to explain their chosen key issue, using their analysis.

Unit 4

- The student can be asked to describe the key issue they chose (for about 4 marks perhaps).
- They can be asked to explain the decisions they took when designing the leaflet, such as ethical considerations.
- They can be asked about the content of the leaflet, in so far as they need to know about the key issue.
- They are also likely to be asked to use concepts and research from the application to explain their chosen key issue.

Glossary of injunctions

This glossary defines the key terms used in the specification and in the assessment so that you are clear what the terms mean and how to explain them.

Injunction	Definition
Apply	Use knowledge with understanding to explain new material, other theories and studies, or some real life scenario.
Assess	Give strengths and weaknesses to suggest a conclusion about the value of.
Collect	Gather data using specified or other research methods. Not used in an examination.
Comment on	Use knowledge with understanding when explaining an issue or area of study. Not likely to be used in an examination.
Compare	Give knowledge with understanding about the issues requested in such a way as to show similarities and/or differences and where appropriate draw conclusions.
Conduct	Carry out a study or analysis/test. Not used in an examination.
Define/what is meant by?	Give a definition of a concept or term to show what is meant by it – likely to be up to 2 marks in an examination.
Describe	Give knowledge with understanding so that a study/theory/strength etc. is made clear – 4 marks or more in an examination.
Devise	Produce, after designing and planning, an assessment tool such as a questionnaire or interview schedule.
Evaluate	Assess the value of (giving salient points including strengths and weaknesses). In Units 3 and 4, this may involve drawing on information from other units synoptically.
Explain	Show knowledge with understanding so someone else achieves understanding.
Give	Provide when asked, showing knowledge.
Identify	Select and/or list. Show knowledge of.
Outline	Give a brief description showing knowledge with understanding – 3 marks or fewer in an examination.
Present	Use tables, graphs or other appropriate format to show findings. Unlikely to be applicable in an examination.
State	Show knowledge of.
Use	Make use of in a practical context to explain, describe, evaluate etc.



Student Guide

What do I need to know, or be able to do, before taking this course?

You do not need any previous knowledge to study psychology. However the nature of the course means that having both maths and English language, to grade C or better at GCSE level, is strongly advisable. The course involves some essay writing, data collection and interpretation of evidence.

What will I learn?

AS Psychology

You will learn about five major approaches to psychology in the AS course. In each one you will discover a key topic of research, learn about important studies related to that topic, and find out how research is conducted in that area of psychology. You will learn to use statistical tests to help interpret data collected in class exercises.

Here is a short summary of each of the five Approaches:

Social Psychology investigates how our behaviour changes because of the way we relate to people around us. You will study two themes:

- what makes people obey orders, even when the orders are known to be wrong
- what prejudice is

In **Cognitive Psychology** you will again study two themes:

- memory, how it is created and how it is organised
- why people forget.

The remaining three approaches focus on how we develop, with a particular focus on gender.

Within the **Psychodynamic Approach** you will study Freud's view of how early childhood experiences and relationships with our parents create our personality and our gender identity.

In the **Biological Approach** you will learn why some psychologists see our genes as the main source of differences in thinking style and behaviour between males and females.

In contrast, other psychologists see differences between males and females as mainly due to learned behaviour. How such learning occurs is covered in the **Learning Approach**.

A2 Psychology

The A2 course gives you an opportunity to study some uses of psychology in the real world. You will discover how the Approaches you have learned about come together to explain human behaviour. In all areas, you will be encouraged to use recent evidence from events in the news.

You will study two optional Applications out of four that are available:

Criminological Psychology looks at psychological explanations for criminal behaviour, problems with eyewitness testimony and treating offenders.

Child Psychology looks at the development of relationships in infancy, as well as the impact of day care on young children.

Health Psychology considers the problems associated with the use of recreational drugs.

Sport Psychology looks at the reasons why individuals participate in sport, and why some give up sport at an early age. It also considers the reasons why some people excel in training and flop on the big occasion, while for others the reverse is true.

You will also study **Clinical Psychology** where you will learn about explanations for mental illness, their diagnosis and treatment. You will study two disorders, including schizophrenia.

In the A2 course you will cover a section on Issues and Debates, where all the material you have covered is drawn together to develop an overview of the subject. You will look at the contributions psychology has made to society, what methods it uses and whether the research conducted is ethical. You will also address problems associated with psychological knowledge being used to control people's behaviour, the influences of inheritance and upbringing and the question of whether psychology is really a science.

Is it the right subject for me?

The most important quality for anyone wanting to study psychology is to find people fascinating. Are you intrigued by why people act in the way they do? If so, then psychology will capture your imagination and you will never look at people in the same way again. You will need to:

- be willing to have your opinions and values challenged
- be willing to listen to and take on board new ideas and novel arguments
- be able to see both sides of an issue and not reject one side simply because you initially believe it is wrong.

Psychology provides many opportunities to develop skills in assessing debates and arguments.

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed through four Unit examinations, two for the AS units and two for the A2 units. As with all subjects, the AS level contributes half the marks to the final A level.

Level		Topics covered	Length of exam
AS	Unit 1	Social and Cognitive Approaches	1 hour 20 minutes
	Unit 2	Psychodynamic, Biological and Learning Approaches	1 hour 40 minutes
A2	Unit 3	Two options chosen from Criminological, Child, Health and Sport Psychology	1 hour 30 minutes
	Unit 4	Clinical Psychology and Issues and Debates	2 hours

All the units contain some Short Answer Questions and some Extended Writing. The AS Units also contain some Multiple Choice Questions.

What can I do after I've completed the course?

Psychology is a very useful subject for any career where you interact with people. Occupations such as journalism, nursing and marketing all welcome trainees who have studied psychology.

If you are considering Higher Education, psychology can be an invaluable subject. Because it sits on the boundary between Arts and Science subjects, it combines elements of both. If you choose the Arts route, psychology shows a competence in scientific thinking and numeracy that will add breadth to your skills. Similarly, the Science route can often lack the opportunity to show your ability to construct a well argued essay, but psychology will show you can do this.

Next steps

- Talk to the psychology staff and students at the school/college where you intend to study.
- Look at the detailed course information on the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.org.uk.
- Look at the British Psychological Society's website: www.bps.org.uk. It gives details of courses in psychology, career opportunities for those who study psychology and even has an e-zine for A level students of psychology.

Unit overviews for students

Unit 1: Social and Cognitive Psychology

About this unit

This unit introduces two approaches: the Social Approach and the Cognitive Approach.

Social Approach

Would you obey someone who told you to do something you knew was wrong? You may believe you would not, but when researchers asked nurses to give a patient twice the maximum dose of a drug... Well, if you want to know the results, study social psychology!

In the **Social Approach** you will learn about two areas that have generated a great deal of controversy over the years, obedience and prejudice. You will study research as well as theories that try to explain such behaviour. One controversial study that attempts to explain these issues was conducted by an American psychologist, Stanley Milgram. His participants thought they were giving lethal electric shocks to other people. Milgram was studying people's capacity to obey commands.

How much impact those around us have on our behaviour is just one of the insights you will gain from studying social psychology. You will also begin to understand more about what makes people prejudiced against others and how such prejudice can be tackled.

Cognitive Approach

Have you ever forgotten to call your friend, or to pick up the handout you needed for your homework? Once you have studied the Cognitive Approach you will begin to understand why we forget, and why there are some things we do not forget!

In the **Cognitive Approach** the main area you will study is memory. Here you will look at research and theories that seek to explain how memory works and why we forget. Most cognitive psychology research uses experiments and you will learn about how experiments are conducted and their strengths and weaknesses. You will have an opportunity to conduct your own study into some aspect of memory. The named study in detail used a group of students on a diving holiday in Scotland as the participants and was conducted to try and understand why divers on the oil rigs in the North Sea kept forgetting data that had been collected on the dive when they returned to the rig.

The big spin off for most people when learning about memory in cognitive psychology is a better understanding of how to create new memories that will last. So you should become better at learning for those exams! As to the world beyond education, both social and cognitive psychology are useful in the workplace. Whether it be in personnel work or as a task manager, insights gained in this area can be a great help.



The methods you will use in this unit

All the practicals in the course are designed to be short. They aim to give you an understanding of how research is conducted. Writing up a report on what you have done is likely to be done as a homework and each report will focus on one aspect of producing a report, such as data presentation or ethical considerations.

In the **Social Approach** you will conduct either a questionnaire or an interview to discover something about attitudes or beliefs. Based on what you find you may be able to draw some conclusions about people, for example whether the older generation are more or less obedient to authority than the younger generation. As a result of doing this you will find you see things in magazine questionnaires that you were unaware of before.

In the **Cognitive Approach** you will have an opportunity to conduct a short experiment on memory or forgetting. You will summarise the results from your participants in a table and a graph to see what conclusions you can draw. You will probably find you will do lots of small experiments in lessons too.

Unit 2: Understanding the Individual

About this unit

There are three approaches in this unit, they are the Psychodynamic, Biological and Learning Approaches. You will look at how each approach explains gender.

Whoever we are, by the time we reach our mid teens, we are usually very aware of our own sex, gender and sexual orientation. All three of the approaches in this unit have something interesting to say about these matters and how our childhood lays the foundation for our mature self.

The arguments that rage between those who suggest that, for example, sexuality is biologically determined, and those who suggest that it is learned, are relevant to all.

Psychodynamic Approach

The psychodynamic approach may divide opinion on whether it has something useful to say about our gender development, but whether you end up believing it or believing it is nonsense, you will certainly find it interesting!

The **Psychodynamic Approach** focuses on Freud and his theory of how personality develops. Freud's views on the way children develop ideas of right and wrong and their relationships with their parents are as controversial today as when he first produced them. Freud based his theory of the Oedipus complex on the study of "Little Hans", which is one of the named studies you will cover. You can decide for yourself if Little Hans was really afraid of horses because he thought his father might castrate him, or whether it was because he had seen a horse collapse in the street.

You will learn how psychologists may look for systematic relationships between two factors to try and understand if they are linked. You will also collect data to find out if you can detect a link between an aspect of personality and behaviour. Your key issue may be centred around Freud's belief that dreams hold the key to unravelling our secret wishes and desires, or it might be how early experiences may be the cause of later problems.

Biological Approach

In the **Biological Approach** you will discover how genes and hormones influence us and the close link between biological sex and psychological gender. You will learn too about differences between male and female brains, why that difference occurs and the implications for our behaviour.

The key study is a case study of a boy who, because of an operation that went wrong, was raised as a girl. The psychologist behind the study believed treating the child as a girl would develop female behaviour. The evidence, including the individual's own testimony, suggests the doctor was wrong.

Other issues in the Biological Approach could include possible links between genes and psychological disorders, the effect that taking certain drugs or hormone treatments during pregnancy can have on the unborn child, or what happens when someone sincerely believes they were born into the wrong sex.

You will learn how animals are sometimes used to study issues related to the brain and behaviour, the advantages as well as the pitfalls in this research, and you will consider the ethical implications of using animals.

We have all heard the jokes about men and multi-tasking or women and poor parking skills. Once you understand something about the biological basis of human behaviour you can appreciate that although there is some truth in the jokes, it is far more complex in real life. Maybe, someday, you might be the person deciding whether someone gets a job. If so, psychology may well come in very handy.

Learning Approach

The **Learning Approach** looks at what is involved in learning. The three types of learning covered will feel very familiar. As you learn about each one you will recognise how much of your own learning can be explained in this way.

- Do you have an irrational fear of something? Perhaps classical conditioning can explain why.
- Does your pet dog know when it is time for his walk? Operant conditioning can explain how.
- Ever noticed how your best friend has exactly the same mannerisms as their same sex parent? Social learning theory can explain why.

Learning theory claims that most of our gender appropriate behaviour is learned and one of the studies in detail shows how small children are far more likely to copy an adult of the same sex.

The key issue will centre on the learning of behaviour. This may be the issue of whether violence in society is a result of watching violent films or playing violent computer games. It could be that you will look at whether disorders such as anorexia are influenced by the size zero models.

Building on what was learned in Unit 1, the material you cover in the Learning Approach will enable you to gain considerable insight into how humans undertake tasks, solve problems and learn new ways of dealing with things in the work place. You will now appreciate why breaking down tasks into manageable chunks to train new staff is so successful.



The methods you will use in this unit

In the **Psychodynamic Approach** the practical will involve collecting evidence regarding an aspect of personality and an aspect of behaviour. You will use a scattergram to present the results and do a simple statistical test to find out whether the relationship is likely to be by chance or not.

The practical for the **Biological Approach** will involve testing two groups of people who differ in some way that is biologically based, such as males and females. You will then compare the results of the two groups and use a simple test to find out if any difference between the two groups is likely to be an important difference or just chance.

The **Learning Approach** practical will give you a chance to do an observation. This may be a real life observation such as one of children at play. Here you might look for evidence of learning of gender roles. Alternatively, television programmes can produce a useful source for collecting observational material. Again once you have collected your results you will undertake a simple test to find out whether the pattern of results you have is likely to be chance or not.

Unit 3: Applications of Psychology

About this unit

There are four options in this unit, you will study two of them. They are all Applications, which means they give you a brief insight into areas in society where psychologists work and where research psychologists investigate behaviour in order to better understand people.

The Applications will give you a brief insight into the many ways in which psychologists are employed in the world of work. Anyone entering a career in business, health services or the media will find a grounding in psychology invaluable. Indeed many of these careers include psychology as part of their training.

Even if you have no interest in a career in psychology, you will encounter psychology a great deal during your working life, for example in interviews, handling pressure from friends and, maybe in the future, making decisions about how you bring up a family. Psychology is all around us, sometimes in ways we may not expect, such as subtle pressures to shop faster or slower. Once you have studied psychology you will know when you are being got at!

Criminological Psychology

Criminological Psychology deals with our understanding of crime and criminals. If you study this option you will study two different explanations for why someone becomes a criminal. The problems involved in collecting evidence from eyewitnesses of crimes is tackled through looking at studies into this area. You will also look at two ways in which offenders might be treated in an attempt to stop them re-offending.

One key issue you may investigate is the role of psychologists in developing offender profiles for serial offenders, an alternative might be whether criminals are born to crime, or whether they learn a life of crime.

Child Psychology

Child Psychology looks at the social development of children. In particular it concentrates on a process known as attachment, when the infant develops a strong bond with the people who care for it. You will learn about the way attachments are formed and what can happen to children if either the attachment is broken or cannot form properly. You will also look at how one particular problem such as severe learning difficulties or autism can disrupt the normal development of a child.

The increasing use of day care by working parents and its impact on children's social and cognitive development could be used as an appropriate key issue, another possibility would be the way that childhood experiences such as deprivation can affect development.

Health Psychology

Health Psychology focuses on the issue of substance abuse. You will learn how addiction can occur. The effects that heroin and one other drug have on the brain and the body, both in the short term and the long term, are also covered. You will also consider ways that addiction can be treated and how successful, or not, these treatments are. In addition you will also look at how health campaigns have tried to prevent or limit the use of recreational drugs and whether such campaigns make an impact or not.

For your key issue you may consider attempts to either prevent or treat addiction in Britain. Alternatively you may look at cross cultural differences in drug taking.

Sport Psychology

Sport Psychology considers both participation and performance in sport. You will look at factors that influence which sports people become involved in, as well as what determines whether they stay with their sport or give up. Anyone who has participated in or watched sport will be aware how different players respond to the big occasion, as part of sports psychology you will look at theories and studies that explain what happens to sports people in these situations. In addition you will also look at how psychological techniques can be used to improve performance.

The key issue you study may focus on issues regarding participation in sport such as gender, or possibly what makes one athlete a winner and another equally talented individual second best.

The methods you will use in this unit

In each of the options you will be required to do some independent research tied in with the key issue.

In one case you will be asked to find articles in a newspaper, magazine or on the web that concerns the key issue you are studying. It may be that there is a current news story at the time you are doing this part of the course that you could use. Alternatively it may be something that creates ongoing interest so the articles may have been written a few months before. You will undertake a content analysis of the articles, looking at what arguments and evidence they use. You will also be asked to use psychological theories and ideas to draw conclusions about the articles.



The other type of practical research you will undertake will involve finding two different articles on the same area, both related to material you have covered in the application. After reading and summarising these articles you will be asked to analyse the articles and draw conclusions about them. Again you will be expected to use your knowledge of psychology to consider the material in the articles.

Unit 4: How Psychology Works

About this unit

This unit is divided into two parts. The first part is about Clinical Psychology and the second part is on Issues and Debates.

Once you have completed this unit you will have completed the whole A level course. You will have gained some insight into psychology, both as an area of study but more importantly as something you will encounter on a regular basis throughout your life.

Once you have studied psychology you will never look at the world in quite the same way. You will begin to appreciate just how and why people behave in the way they do, and you will become more aware of your own behaviour. You may not know many more answers to questions about why we behave in the way we do as a result of studying psychology, but you will better understand which questions need to be asked.

Clinical Psychology

In Clinical Psychology you will look at the application of psychology in the area of mental health. There are strong links here back to the five approaches you will have studied at AS (Social, Cognitive, Psychodynamic, Biological and Learning). Each of the approaches has something to say about the causes, diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders and you will look at these and compare how useful the different approaches are.

You will learn about how mental illness is diagnosed and learn about problems that can be encountered at this stage. Two disorders are studied, one of which is schizophrenia. You will learn about the symptoms and features of the disorder, how it can be treated and the possible outcome of any treatment given.

You will study issues such as whether the media can be blamed for the dramatic increase in eating disorders, or why depression is so widespread in Britain today.

Issues and Debates

Issues and Debates are those issues that occur throughout Units 1, 2 and 3 and which draw together the subject of psychology. Much of the material in Issues and Debates links back to the previous three units. Very little is genuinely new material, rather you will learn how to bring various strands together, enabling you to draw parallels or make comparisons between ideas from across the specification.

New topics you will encounter as you study the Issues and Debates (but which draw on material you have already learned) include considering whether psychology can be viewed as a science or not and the relative importance of nature and nurture in explaining human behaviour. You will also be asked to look at how cultural bias might have affected some of the research you have looked at over the course. The issue of an individual or society exerting control over another person because they understand psychological principles is also considered. Finally you will learn how to apply knowledge gained through the course to a situation you have not encountered before.

Why will this unit be useful to you? Because as it draws all those strands together it will create a pattern that demonstrates just how complex and how fascinating human beings are. Psychologists may not solve the problems of the world by studying human behaviour, but they get a lot of satisfaction out of trying and hopefully, so will you.

The methods you will use in this unit

In the Clinical Psychology section the key issue will be based on mental disorders. You will be asked to explore an issue such as how to support someone with a disorder, or how the media portray mental illness. Then as a second part to the key issue you will be asked to prepare a leaflet about your issue. You may decide to produce a leaflet designed for those involved in personnel work on how best to support workers suffering from clinical depression. Alternatively your leaflet may be designed to inform those who are newly diagnosed and their families about the nature of the disorder.

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We will inform centres of any changes to this issue. The latest issue can be found on the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.org.uk.

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