

# A Level Psychology



## COMPONENT GUIDE 3 - ISSUE 2

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Psychological Skills

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# GCE Psychology 2015

## Component Guide 3: Psychological Skills

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## Introduction

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The specification has been developed in consultation with the teaching community, higher education, learned societies and subject associations. Teachers from a range of schools and colleges – in focus groups, phone interviews and face-to-face conversations – have provided feedback at each stage and have helped us to shape the specification. Psychology academics in UK universities have helped us understand how to build on the strengths of the GCE 2008 specification and advised on how progression to undergraduate study could be improved.

**Component Guide 3: Psychological Skills** provides an overview of the psychological skills component of the new specification to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what they mean for you and your students.

## Overview of changes

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### Changes to AS and A level qualifications

From September 2015, A level Psychology will be a linear qualification. This means that all examinations must be sat at the end of the two-year course.

From September 2015, AS level Psychology will be a stand-alone qualification. This means that it cannot be used to contribute towards an A level Psychology grade.

## Methods

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### Key Content /topic description

The methods section of the Psychological Skills component summarises all the methodology that is in each topic area in the specification, including the Year One and Year Two material. The peer review process has been added.

Topic 9: Psychological Skills
Review of Methodologies
Review of Studies
Issues and debates

Topic 1: Social Psychology	Topic 2: Cognitive Psychology	Topic 3: Biological Psychology
Topic 4: Learning Theories	Topic 5: Clinical Psychology	Topic 6: Criminological Psychology <b>OR</b>
Topic 7: Child Psychology <b>OR</b>	Topic 8: Health Psychology <b>OR</b>	Topic 9: Psychological Skills
<b>Paper 1: Foundations of Psychology</b>	<b>Paper 2: Application of Psychology</b>	<b>Paper 3: Psychological Skills</b>
Social, Cognitive, Biological & Learning	Clinical & either Criminological/child/health	Methodology & Review of studies

Topics 1–8 all include research methodologies and these methodologies are summarised in Topic 9: Psychological Skills. All research methodology indicated in Topic 9 must be covered and students may be assessed on any of the research methods in the context of any topic area. The aim is to bring together the methods sections in the topic areas to test overall understanding, and this will be done by using stimulus material, such as unseen studies.

Table 2 on page 11 outlines the specification content for this part of the Psychological Skills topic area.

## Detailed content changes

### Overview and rationale of the methods section

There has been minimal change in the methods section between the GCE 2008 and GCE 2015 specifications. There are some differences, which are discussed in here and summarised in Table 1 on pages 7 and 8 at the end of this section.

The methods section in the Psychological Skills component of the GCE 2015 specification includes material from the methods sections of the topic areas in Year One, and from Clinical Psychology in Year Two. Therefore, the discussion about what has changed in the methods section of each of the topic areas in the **Component Guide 1: Foundations of Psychology** and **Component Guide 2: Application of Psychology** will be helpful in seeing what changes there are. A summary of the changes are included in this section of **Component Guide 3: Psychological Skills**.

Psychological Skills is similar to the methodology section of the Issues and debates section of Unit 4 GCE 2008, and can be taken to have a very similar role in the psychology specification, such as bringing in synoptic ideas. Unit 4 in GCE 2008 asked for nine research methods to be reviewed, including studies which used each method, as well as asking for ethical issues when using humans and animals in studies. The methods section of Psychological Skills in GCE 2015 does *not* ask for any material, other than what is contained in the topic areas in GCE 2015, to be covered (with the exception of knowledge of the peer review process).

The GCE 2015 methods section asks candidates to have an overview of the methods material they have covered throughout the specification, as well as an ability to apply it using unseen material.

GCE 2015 differs from GCE 2008, which did not list the methodology in an 'end' section, as GCE 2015 has done. However, the material itself is not that different.

The material in both the GCE 2008 and GCE 2015 specifications are similar, although the GCE 2008 did not list the methodology in the same way that has been done in the GCE 2015 specification.

A summary of the changes follows.

## A summary of changes to the methods section of Psychological Skills

### Research methods:

- There is the same focus on questionnaires and interviews, but without putting them under the umbrella term 'survey'. This is because observations can be seen as surveys. Aspects of questionnaires and interviews, for example, open and closed questions and type of interview, are the same as in GCE 2008.
- There is the same focus on experimental method, including both laboratory and field experimental method. However, naturalistic experiments are not looked at, partly because studies using naturalistic experiments do not appear in the Cognitive Psychology topic area of the GCE 2015 specification, and partly because naturalistic experiments differ from field only really in the way the IV (independent variable) is developed. It was therefore thought sufficient to focus on field and laboratory experiments.
- There is the same focus on observation in the GCE 2015, though structured observations appeared in Child Psychology in GCE 2008 and this time they are part of observations in Year One (Learning Theories) as well. Aspects of observations such as overt and covert are required as in GCE 2008.

### Additional methods:

- Twin and adoption studies, animal studies and scanning methods were in GCE 2008 as well, also in Biological Psychology, as in GCE 2015, so no change. However, scanning involved PET and MRI in GCE 2008 and in GCE 2015 involves CAT, PET and fMRI to indicate changes in practice over time.
- There were case studies in GCE 2008 specification as well, in the Psychodynamic Approach. In GCE 2015 there are specific case studies e.g.:
  - Of brain damaged patients in Cognitive Psychology
  - As used by Freud **can** be studied in the Biological Psychology
  - As they are used in Clinical Psychology.
- Content analysis was used in a practical investigation in the A2 part of GCE 2008, whereas now it is asked for in Clinical Psychology, as well as in Learning Theories. Though content analysis was also included as part of issues and debates in GCE 2008.

### Methods/designs:

- Correlational analysis used to be in the Psychodynamic Approach in the GCE 2008 specification and in the GCE 2015 specification it is in Biological Psychology. Other than that, the requirements are the same.
- Longitudinal and cross-section designs are the same, but they were in the Psychodynamic Approach in the GCE 2008 specification and in the GCE 2015 specification they are in Clinical Psychology.
- Cross-cultural designs are the same, but they were a choice in GCE 2008 whereas in GCE 2015 they are a requirement in Clinical Psychology.
- Meta-analysis was not specified as such in GCE 2008, but in GCE 2015 it is, within Clinical Psychology. This is because it is used often in psychology and

so it would be useful to know about such a technique. The technique is also useful as it highlights the difference between primary and secondary data.

### Design issues:

- Experimental/research designs are in GCE 2015 just as they were in GCE 2008. They are fundamental to designing a study. The three designs are repeated measures, independent groups and matched pairs. In GCE 2008 there was some discussion about whether these are experimental designs, participant designs or research designs. In GCE 2015 they are referred to as experimental or research designs.
- Types of data include qualitative and quantitative data, and these are in GCE 2015 just as they were in GCE 2008. Primary and secondary data are also in the GCE 2015 specification, in Clinical Psychology, as they were in GCE 2008.
- The sampling techniques required are the same as in GCE 2008. They are random, stratified, opportunity and volunteer sampling. There are other sampling techniques but GCE 2015 sticks to the same four as in GCE 2008. The idea is to look at these four techniques and the importance of sampling.
- Controls in studies are important in the GCE 2015 specification as they were in GCE 2008; nothing has changed.
- Variables are important and the same in GCE 2008 as in GCE 2015. The independent and dependent variables need to be known about, as well as looking at extraneous and confounding variables. (Note that though these were not listed in GCE 2008, they were expected). Situational and participant variables also feature in the GCE 2015 specification, as in GCE 2008. Knowing about operationalisation of variables is also required, as in GCE 2008. Counterbalancing, randomisation and order effects also feature in the GCE 2015 specification, as in GCE 2008.
- Alternative and null hypotheses need to be understood in GCE 2015, as in GCE 2008, and experimental hypotheses as examples of alternative hypotheses. Directional and non-directional hypotheses need to be understood and the concept of one- and two-tailed testing comes into the GCE 2015 specification, as in GCE 2008. No change.

### Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics are in GCE 2015, just as in GCE 2008, though GCE 2015 has a greater emphasis on the mathematical element in psychology. So standard deviation and normal distribution is new to GCE 2015 and sits alongside the range as a measure of dispersion (also in GCE 2008). Measures of central tendency, as in GCE 2008, remain the same. Frequency tables, rather than frequency graphs (as in GCE 2008), are highlighted, as well as histograms and bar charts.
- Inferential statistics are very similar to what was asked for in the GCE 2008 specification. The inferential tests are the non-parametric tests: chi squared, Mann–Whitney U, Wilcoxon and Spearman's rho tests. Three of these are used in GCE 2008 – there is the addition of the Wilcoxon test which was not in the 2008 specification. Issues around inferential testing are the same: levels of measurement, levels of significance, one- and two-tailed issues in testing, reasons for choosing a test (the four tests asked for), and knowing about critical and observed values in testing. Type I and Type II errors are required in GCE 2015, which is new. There is more emphasis on the mathematical element of psychology and candidates can be asked to calculate the results of tests, such as doing a chi squared test in an

examination or working out the standard deviation of a set of scores (see the SAMs). When looking at observed and expected values, candidates will be told whether a value has to be greater than, equal to, or less than the critical value to be 'significant'. Critical value tables are given in the front of each exam paper as well as the formulae, including the formula for standard deviation. This emphasis on the tests and on calculation is different from the GCE 2008 requirements.

- Analysis of qualitative data also features in the GCE 2015 specification, involving looking at thematic analysis in Year One and adding an understanding of grounded theory in Year Two. Analysis of qualitative data was expected in the GCE 2008 specification, such as in the Social Approach practical investigation, but thematic analysis and grounded theory were not asked for specifically. As the use of qualitative data grows in psychology and related areas, it was thought more focus should be on such analysis in GCE 2015.

#### Evaluation issues:

- Issues of validity, reliability, generalisability, subjectivity, objectivity, credibility are required in GCE 2015, just as in GCE 2008.
- The effects of social desirability demand characteristics and experimenter effects are also important, just as in GCE 2008.
- Strengths and weaknesses in methodology are also required, though not specifically listed as they tended to be in GCE 2008. They are important and expected in GCE 2015, just as in GCE 2008. In GCE 2015 there is a general comment: 'students should know, understand, apply, critically analyse and evaluate the following content – performing procedures and making connections where appropriate' and that is where GCE 2015 indicates that issues like 'strengths and weaknesses' are expected, and not just in research methods. (See page 5 of the specification)

#### Ethics:

- The ethics of using humans in psychology is covered in GCE 2015, and it is also covered in GCE 2008. However, instead of focusing on five specific ethical issues (consent, deception, right to withdraw, debriefing of participants and competence), GCE 2015 focuses on the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Conduct and Ethics (2009). This does include the five ethical issues specified in GCE 2008, but goes more into four ethical principles (respect, competence, responsibility and integrity) in which the other ethical guidelines are embedded.
- Risk management is added in GCE 2015, and reflects psychology as a science. It was not in GCE 2008.
- The ethics of using humans in research in GCE 2015 includes looking at Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) issues, covered in Clinical Psychology. It is also included in Child Psychology, which considers the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the rights of the child, including their participation in research.
- The ethics of using animals in research is the same as in GCE 2008, with focus on the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and issues around how animals should be treated if used in animal experiments. This is the same in GCE 2015 as in GCE 2008.

**Report writing:**

- As in GCE 2008, report writing is incorporated into the practical investigations throughout the specification but in more detail. Research question/hypothesis; research method; procedure – including sampling, ethical considerations, data collection tools, data analysis (including graphs and tables for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data); results; discussion and being able to write an abstract is also required.

**Report writing requirements for specific topic areas:**

- Procedure, results and discussion sections are asked for in Social Psychology, Cognitive Psychology (and Criminological Psychology).
- Research question/hypothesis; research method; sampling; ethical considerations; data collection tools; data analysis; results; discussion are asked for in Biological Psychology (and Child Psychology and Health Psychology).
- The results of the quantitative data, including appropriate graphs and tables are asked for in Learning Theories.
- The results of the qualitative analysis (thematic analysis) are asked for in Learning Theories
- An abstract, discussion (including conclusions) is required in biological psychology

**The process of peer review:**

- The specification asks candidates to know about the process of peer reviewing, and this is only mentioned in Topic 9: Psychological Skills. This is not so much part of the methodology throughout the specification, as part of the section on studies in each topic area. When discussing the various studies, including contemporary ones, there is a need to consider how articles would get published, such as in a journal, and the process of peer review. This is new in GCE 2015.

**Table 1 shows material in methods section which has been added to, taken out of or changed in GCE 2015, compared with GCE 2008**

Material	Changed	Added	Taken out
Survey as a separate term			x
Structured observations now compulsory		✓	
Natural experiments			x
Scanning techniques	✓		
Case studies of brain damaged patients		✓	
Case studies as used in Clinical Psychology		✓	
Cross-cultural design and meta-analysis		✓	
Standard deviation and normal distribution		✓	
Frequency tables	✓		

Type I and Type II errors		✓	
Calculating standard deviation or a statistical test		✓	
Knowing more about the critical value tables		✓	
Thematic analysis and grounded theory		✓	
Ethics (humans)	✓		
Elements of report writing	✓		
Process of peer review		✓	

To support centres with the mathematical skill requirements Edexcel have a support document on the website at the following link:

[http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Psychology/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE\\_Mathematical\\_Guidance%20\\_Psychology.pdf](http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Psychology/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE_Mathematical_Guidance%20_Psychology.pdf)

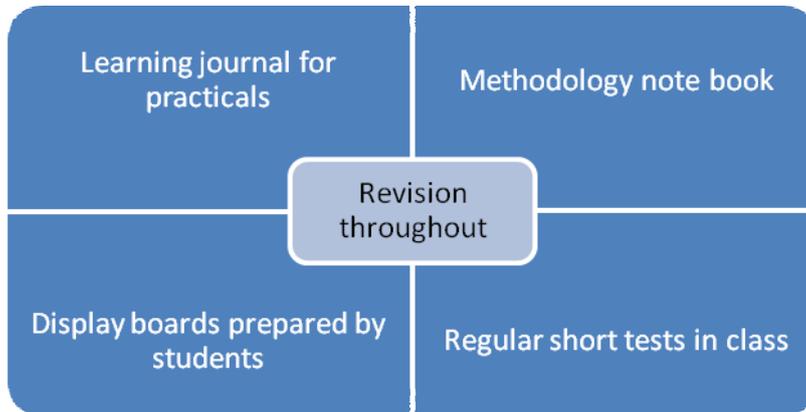
Delivery approaches

By the time a student reaches Topic 9: Psychological Skills, they will already have covered the material in this part of Psychological Skills in other topic areas. With the exception of the process of peer reviewing, there is no new material in the methods section.

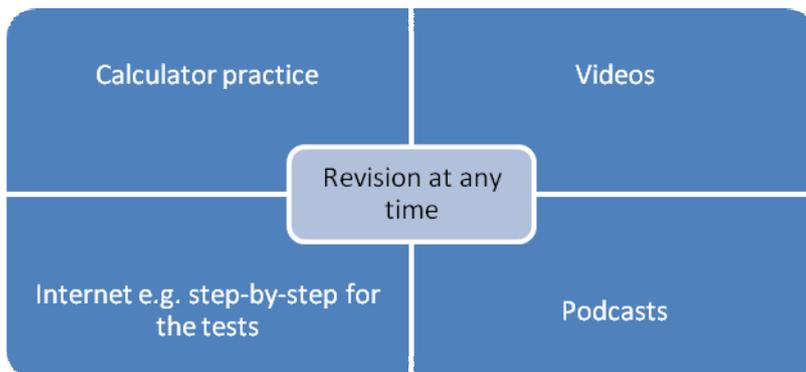
Some ideas for delivery follow.

Diagrams 1 to 3 show ideas for delivery of the methods section of Psychological Skills.

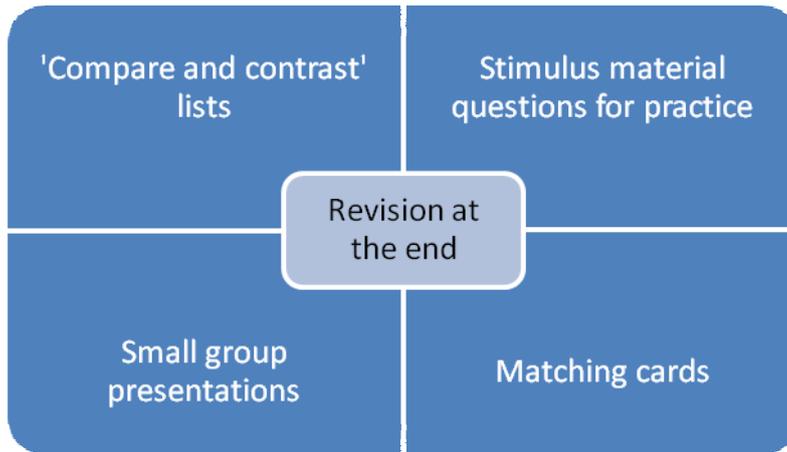
**Diagram 1 revision throughout the course**



**Diagram 2 revision at any time**



**Diagram 3 revision at the end of the course**



**End of course revision ideas for methods learning:**

1. Use **stimulus material questions** in the form of studies to generate practice questions:

- Summarise research studies (e.g. find them on the internet and shorten; adapt studies used in the specification topic areas; use studies from previous exam papers in GCE 2008 specification; or make studies up).
- Generate a list of questions that test knowledge and understanding of all the areas in the methods section of Topic 9: Psychological Skills so that there is a bank of questions.
- Apply questions that relate to the chosen research studies to prepare revision sheets.
- Add questions appropriate to a particular study being used.

2. Prepare cards with a research issue on and cards with the definition of the issue or an example of the issue on. **Matching cards** can help learning.

3. Students take one aspect of research methods and prepare a **small group presentation** on it, to present to the rest of the class.

4. Make **compare and contrast lists**, breaking up different aspects of research methods perhaps using Table 2 to divide issues.

**Rolling revision of research methods:**

1. Throughout the course use **display boards** to flag up research methods issues that are encountered in the topic areas so that students have their own revision boards when they get to Topic 9: Psychological Skills.

2. Keep a **note book** throughout, with a page or two for each research issue (perhaps using the headings in Table 2) and make notes each time methodology is being learned about.

3. **Test regularly** on research methods at the start of a class, using Table 2. 4. Use a **practical investigations learning journal** to make notes about methodology in general as well as their investigations in particular.

**Using audio visual materials to review research methods:**

1. There are published **videos** on statistical testing and other aspects of methodology.

2. There are **podcasts** on statistical testing and other aspects of methodology.

3. Use the **Internet** to practice statistical testing – using step-by-step guidance on a made up (and small) set of data.
4. Use a **calculator** to work out standard deviation of a made up (and small) set of data.

**Covering the process of peer reviewing:**

For the peer review process, it is suggested that as part of the revision for the 'synoptic review of studies' section of Psychological Skills, the process of peer reviewing is examined.

The journal articles/studies that make up the synoptic review of studies section of this topic area will have been peer reviewed.

1. There could be **discussion** around what 'peer reviewing' means, why it is necessary, and perhaps an exploration using the Internet to find material that is published on the Internet but not peer reviewed, to help the discussion.
2. Perhaps find other studies, condense them as **practice questions** and consider peer review issues in each study (and use the condensed study for research methods revision too).
3. **Debate**, using a study, who might have reviewed it and other such issues.
4. Find situations of **'bad research'** such as Burt in the 1960s and 1970s (widely said to have made up his results) and discuss how peer reviewing the study would have helped (or not): <http://pubs.socialistreviewindex.org.uk/sr196/parrington.htm>

## Specification requirements

**Table 2 summary of the specification requirements for the methods section in Psychological Skills**

<b>Psychological Skills, methods section requirements</b>
<b>Research methods:</b> questionnaire; interview; experiment (laboratory and field); observation.
<b>Additional methods:</b> twin and adoption studies; animal studies; case studies; scanning; content analysis.
<b>Methods/designs:</b> correlational analysis; longitudinal; cross-sectional; cross-cultural; meta-analysis.
<b>Design issues:</b> experimental/research designs; types of data; sampling techniques; controls; variables; hypotheses.
<b>Analysis:</b> descriptive statistics; inferential statistics; analysis of qualitative data.
<b>Evaluation issues:</b> validity; reliability; generalisability; objectivity; subjectivity (researcher bias); credibility. Also issues of demand characteristics, social desirability and experimenter effects.
<b>Ethics:</b> ethical issues in research using animals; ethical issues in research using humans.
<b>Report writing:</b> sections of a report; peer reviewing.

## Synoptic review of studies

### Key Content/topic description

The content in this section of the Psychology Skills topic area is intended to represent a literature review. It was thought that candidates should not be asked to learn new studies, and doing a literature review would be too demanding as part of an assessment, so the classic studies they will all have covered are drawn upon in this part.

The idea is, therefore, to ask for comparison (which includes both similarities and differences) between the classic studies they have covered and for a thorough understanding of each study.

To narrow this down, the focus is on using the issues and debates listed throughout the specification (and summarised in the following section). The 11 issues and debates are used to make comparisons between studies.

For example, studies can be compared in terms of their ethical issues, or in terms of their research methods, or the design they used, or in terms of gender issues (if appropriate) and so on.

Other issues about the classic studies can be required too. Both the 'compare in terms of issues and debates' requirement and the general 'draw on and compare' requirement are listed in Topic 9: Psychological Skills.

As well as a thorough understanding of the classic studies covered in the specification, material from the contemporary studies can be drawn upon. Candidates will have covered different classic studies according to their individual options – therefore a list of three studies will be given from which the candidate chooses one.

Other (unseen) studies can be summarised in an examination with an assessment based on this material (using the information provided only). This is represented in the specification for Topic 9: Psychological Skills as 'use principles of understanding, evaluation and synopticity on unseen material'.

Candidates will be required to move freely between their contemporary studies, issues and debates and unseen studies.

**Table 3 summary of the specification requirements for the synoptic review of studies section in Psychological Skills**

<b>Psychological Skills, synoptic review of studies section requirements</b>
Draw on and compare studies from the classic study section throughout the course.
Review synoptically the classic studies of psychology in terms of issues and debates.
Use principles of understanding, evaluation and synopticity on unseen material.

### Detailed content changes

#### Classic studies

The requirement for learning classic studies was in GCE 2008, with one classic study being compulsory for each approach and application. The same requirement is in GCE 2015, though there are just four topic areas instead of five in Year

One/AS. And in Year Two there is just one application alongside Clinical Psychology, so just two classic studies in Year Two.

The classic studies in GCE 2008 are compared with those in GCE 2015 in Table 4.

**Table 4 comparison of classic studies for GCE 2008 and GCE 2015** (optional topic areas of GCE 2015 are indicated by italics)

Topic area	GCE 2008 classic study	GCE 2015 classic study
Social Psychology	Hofling et al. (1966)	Sherif et al. (1954/1961)
Cognitive Psychology	Godden and Baddeley (1975)	Baddeley (1966b)
Biological Psychology	Money (1975)	Raine et al. (1997)
Learning Theories	Bandura et al. (1961)	Watson and Rayner (1920)
Clinical Psychology	Rosenhan (1973)	Rosenhan (1973)
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	Loftus and Palmer (1974)	Loftus and Palmer (1974)
<i>Child Psychology</i>	Curtiss (1977)	van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988)
<i>Health Psychology</i>	Blättler et al. (2002)	Olds and Milner (1954)

The definition of 'classic study' is not just an 'old' study but a study which has led to a lot of other research or was classic in its methodology. The classic study is intended to link to the 'history of psychology' and also to be illustrative of the topic it is found within.

A classic study can be useful for the issues and debates section, including how psychology has changed over time (in this part of the Psychological Skills topic, it is necessary to do the reverse and apply issues and debates to the classic studies). For example, van IJzendoorn is one of the researchers in one of the contemporary studies in Child Psychology and is still working in the field today, as well as being one of the authors of the classic study in Child Psychology in the GCE 2015 specification. His work can chart changes in psychology over time. Baddeley too (in Cognitive Psychology) has continued to research into working memory, so his more recent ideas can be used to show changes over time as well.

**Contemporary studies:**

Contemporary studies are intended to represent psychology as it is today, or at least to be as up to date as possible – whilst choosing work that meets the specification.

**Table 5 shows the contemporary studies – one to be chosen in each topic area** (optional topic areas are indicated by italics)

Topic area	Choice of contemporary studies
Social Psychology	<b>Burger (2009)</b> Replicating Milgram: would people still obey today?
	<b>Reicher and Haslam (2006)</b> Rethinking the psychology of tyranny.
	<b>Cohrs et al. (2012)</b> Individual differences in ideological attitudes and prejudice: evidence from peer report data.
Cognitive Psychology	<b>Schmolck et al. (2002)</b> Semantic knowledge in patient HM and other patients with bilateral medial and lateral temporal lobe regions.
	<b>Steyvers and Hemmer (2012)</b> Reconstruction from memory in naturalistic environments.
	<b>Sebastián and Hernández-Gil (2012)</b> Developmental pattern of digit span in Spanish population.
Biological Psychology	<b>Li et al. (2013)</b> Abnormal function of the posterior cingulate cortex in heroin addicted users during resting-state and drug-cue stimulation task.
	<b>Brendgen et al. (2005)</b> Examining genetic and environmental effects on social aggression: a study of 6 year old twins.
	<b>van den Oever et al. (2008)</b> Prefrontal cortex AMPA receptor plasticity is crucial for cue-induced relapse to heroin-seeking.
Learning Theories	<b>Becker et al. (2002)</b> Eating behaviours and attitudes following prolonged exposure to television among ethnic Fijian adolescent girls.
	<b>Bastian et al. (2011)</b> Cyber-dehumanization: violent video game play diminishes our humanity.
	<b>Capafóns et al. (1998)</b> Systematic desensitisation in the treatment of the fear of flying.
Clinical Psychology: schizophrenia (compulsory)	<b>Carlsson et al. (2000)</b> Network interactions in schizophrenia – therapeutic implications.
<i>Clinical Psychology: depression</i>	<b>Kroenke et al. (2008)</b> The PHQ-8 as a measure of current depression in the general population.
	<b>Williams et al. (2013)</b> Combining imagination and reason in the treatment of depression: a randomised control trail of internet based cognitive bias modification and internet-CBT for depression.
<i>Clinical Psychology: anorexia</i>	<b>Scott-Van Zeeland et al. (2013)</b> Evidence for the role of EPHX2 gene variants in anorexia nervosa.
	<b>Guardia et al. (2012)</b> Imagining one’s own and someone else’s body actions: dissociation in anorexia nervosa.

<i>Clinical Psychology: OCD</i>	<b>Masellis et al. (2003)</b> Quality of life in OCD: differential impact of obsessions, compulsions, and depressions co morbidity.
	<b>POTS (Paediatric OCD Treatment Study) team (2004)</b> Cognitive behaviour therapy, Sertraline and their combination for children and adolescence with OCD.
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	<b>Bradbury and Williams (2013)</b> Diversity and citizen participation: the effects of race on juror decision making.
	<b>Vallentine and Mesout (2009)</b> Eyewitness identification under stress in the London Dungeon.
	<b>Howells et al. (2005)</b> Brief anger management programs with offenders: outcomes and predictors of change.
<i>Child Psychology</i>	<b>Cassibba et al. (2013)</b> Attachment the Italian way.
	<b>Gagnon-Oosterwaal et al. (2012)</b> Pre-adoption adversity and self-reported behaviour problems in 7 year-old international adoptees.
	<b>Li et al. (2013)</b> Timing of high-quality child care and cognitive, language and preacademic development.
<i>Health Psychology</i>	<b>Mundt et al. (2012)</b> Peer selection and influence effects on adolescent alcohol use: a stochastic actor-based model.
	<b>Dixit et al. (2012)</b> Biosocial determinants of alcohol risk behaviour: an epidemiological study in urban and rural communities of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.
	<b>Pengpid et al. (2012)</b> Screening and brief intervention for alcohol problems in Dr George Mukhari Hospital out-patients in Gauteng, South Africa: a single-blinded randomized controlled trial protocol.

**Issues and debates in the synoptic review of studies section:**

Issues and debates are listed in each topic area in the specification and are summarised in Topic 9: Psychological Skills. Issues and debates are the third part of the Psychological Skills topic area and are explained below. They are also used when considering the classic studies in this second part of the Psychological Skills topic area, so it is useful not only to review the issues and debates as philosophical issues, but also to consider them within the classic studies.

This approach differs from GCE 2008 in that it is included in a specific section of the GCE 2015 specification, whereas it was not specified in GCE 2008, although it could be expected. In GCE 2015 there is more emphasis on drawing together the classic studies including linking in issues and debates.

Issues and debates can also be asked about when looking at an unseen actual study.

For a list of issues and debates, see page 25.

**Unseen studies:**

GCE2008 used unseen material in examinations to ask candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding and to use evaluation skills. Sometimes in GCE 2008 unseen material was modelled on actual studies (and referenced as 'adapted from').

GCE 2015 also uses unseen material. This part of the Psychological Skills topic area uses actual studies, adapted to suit reading time and information required. Therefore, this is not a change. However, it is probably fair to say that the use of actual studies occurs more often in GCE 2015, because of this specific section in the specification.

## Resources and references

The classic studies can often be found on the Internet directly, and otherwise are available through inter library loan or by purchasing a copy using the Internet.

### A) References for the studies

References for the classic studies are found in Table 6 and references for the contemporary studies are found in Table 7.

**Table 6 references for the classic studies** (optional topic areas are indicated by italics)

Topic area	GCE 2015 classic study references
Social Psychology	Sherif, M., Harvey, O.J., White, B.J., Hood, W., & Sherif, C.W. (1961) <i>Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment</i> . Norman, OK, The University Book Exchange. pp. 155–184.
Cognitive Psychology	Baddeley, A.D. (1966b) Working memory model: the influence of acoustic and semantic similarity on long-term memory for word sequences. <i>Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology</i> , 18, 302–309.
Biological Psychology	Raine, A., Buchsbaum, M. & LaCasse, L. (1997) Brain abnormalities in murderers indicated by positron emission tomography. <i>Biological Psychiatry</i> , 42(6), 495–508.
Learning Theories	Watson, J.B. & Rayner, R. (1920) Little Albert: conditioned emotional reactions. <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i> , 3( 1), 1–14.
Clinical Psychology	Rosenhan, D.L. (1973) On being sane in insane places. <i>Science, New Series</i> , Jan 19, 1973, 179(4070), 250–258.
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	Loftus, E. F., & Palmer, J. C. (1974). Reconstruction of auto-mobile destruction: an example of the interaction between language and memory. <i>Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour</i> , 13, 585–589.
<i>Child Psychology</i>	van IJzendoorn, M.H & Kroonenberg, P.M. (1988) Cross-cultural patterns of attachment: a meta-analysis of the strange situation. <i>Child Development</i> , 59, 147–156.
<i>Health Psychology</i>	Olds, J., & Milner, P. (1954) Positive reinforcement produced by electrical stimulation of septal area and other regions of rat brain. <i>Journal of Comparative Physiological Psychology</i> , Dec. 1954, 47(6),419–27.

**Table 7 references for the contemporary studies** (optional topic areas are indicated by italics)

Topic area	GCE 2015 contemporary study references
Social Psychology	Burger, J.M. (2009) Replicating Milgram: would people still obey today? <i>American Psychologist</i> , Jan 2009, 64(1), 1–11.
	Reicher, S. D. & Haslam, S. A. (2006). Rethinking the psychology of tyranny: the BBC prison study. <i>British Journal of Social Psychology</i> , 45, 1–40.
	Cohrs, J. C.; Kämpfe-Hargrave, N. & Riemann, R. (2012) <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , Aug 2012, 103(2), 343–361.
Cognitive Psychology	Schmolck, H., Kensinger, E.A., Corkin, S., & Squire, L.R. (2002) Semantic knowledge in patient HM and other patients with bilateral medial and lateral temporal lobe regions. <i>Hippocampus</i> , 12(4), 520–33.
	Steyvers, M. & Hemmer, P. Reconstruction from Memory in Naturalistic Environments (2012), in Ross, H.B. (Ed.) <i>The Psychology of Learning and Motivation</i> , 2012, Vol. 56. Elsevier Publishing, pp. 126–144.
	Sebastián, M.V. & Hernández-Gil, L. (2012) Developmental pattern of digit span in Spanish population. <i>Psicothema</i> , 24(2) 183–187.
Biological Psychology	Li Qiang, Yang Wei-chuan, Wang Ya-rong, Huang Yu-fang, Li Wei, Zhu Jia, Zhang Yi, Zhano Li-yan, Qin Wei, Yuan Kai, von Deneen, K. M., Wang Wei & Tian Jie (2013) Abnormal function of the posterior cingulate cortex in heroin addicted users during resting-state and drug-cue stimulation task. <i>Chinese Medical Journal</i> , 126(4), 3171–3174.
	Brendgen, M., Dionne, G., Girard, A., Boivin, M., Vitaro, F. & Perussé, D. (2005) Examining genetic and environmental effects on social aggression: a study of 6 year old twins. <i>Child Development</i> , Jul–Aug 2005, 76(4), 930–946.
	Van den Oever, M.C., Spijker, S., Smit, A.B., & De Vries, T.J. (2008) Prefrontal cortex AMPA receptor plasticity is crucial for cue-induced relapse to heroin-seeking. <i>Nature Neuroscience</i> , 11, 1053–1058.
Learning Theories	Becker A.E., Burwell, R.A., Herzog, D.B., & Hamburg, P. (2002) Eating behaviours and attitudes following prolonged exposure to television among ethnic Fijian adolescent girls. <i>The British Journal of Psychiatry</i> , 180, 509–514.
	Bastian, B., Jetten, J., & Radke, H.R.M. (2011) Cyberdehumanization: violent video game play diminishes our humanity. <i>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</i> , 48, 486–491 (Note it says 2011 on the paper though the article is in the Journal 2012).

	Capafóns, J.I., Sosa, C.D., & Averó, P. (1998) Systematic desensitisation in the treatment of the fear of flying. <i>Psychology in Spain</i> , 2(1), 11–16.
Clinical Psychology: schizophrenia (compulsory)	Carlsson, A., Waters, N., Waters, S., & Carlsson, M.L. (2000) Network interactions in schizophrenia – therapeutic implications. <i>Brain Research Reviews</i> , 31(2000), 342–349.
<i>Clinical Psychology: depression</i>	Kroenke, K., Strine, T.W., Spitzer, R.L., Williams, J.B.W., Berry, J.T., & Mokdad, A.H. (2008) The PHQ-8 as a measure of current depression in the general population. <i>Journal of Affective Disorders</i> , Apr 2008, 114, 163–173; doi:10.1016/j.jad.2008.06.026.
	Williams, A.D., Blackwell, S.E., MacKenzie, A., Holmes, E.A., & Andrews, G. (2013) Combining imagination and reason in the treatment of depression: a randomised control trial of internet based cognitive bias modification and internet-CBT for depression. <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> , 81(5), 793-799.
<i>Clinical Psychology: anorexia</i>	Scott-Van Zeeland, A.A., Bloss, C.S., Tewhey, R., Bansal, V., Torkamani, A., Libiger, O., Duvvuri, V., Wineinger, N., Galvez, L., Darst, B.F., Smith, E.N., Carson, A., Pham, P., Phillips, T., Villarasa, N., Tisch, R., Zhang, G., Levy, S., Murray, S., Chen, W., Srinivasan, S., Berenson, G., Brandt, H., Crawford, S., Crow, S., Fichter, M.M., Halmi, K.A., Johnson, C., Kaplan, A.S., La Via, M., Mitchell, J.E., Strober, M., Rotondo, A., Treasure, J., Woodside, D.B., Bulik, C.M., Keel, P., Klump, K.L., Lilenfeld, L., Plotnicov, K., Topol, E.J., Shih, P.B., Magistretti, P., Bergen, A.W. Berrettini, W., Kaye, W., & Schork, N.J.(2013) Evidence for the role of EPHX2 gene variants in anorexia nervosa. <i>Molecular Psychiatry</i> , Advanced online publication, doi: 10.1038/mp.2013,91.
	Guardia, D., Conversy, L., Jardri, R., Lafargue, G., Thomas, P., Dodin, V., Cottencin, O., & Luyat, M. (2012) Imagining one’s own and someone else’s body actions: dissociation in anorexia nervosa. <i>PLoS ONE</i> , 7(8), e43241, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0043241.
<i>Clinical Psychology: OCD</i>	Masellis, M., Rector, N. A., & Richter, M. A. (2003) Quality of life in OCD: differential impact of obsessions, compulsions, and depressions co morbidity. <i>Canadian Journal of Psychiatry</i> , 48, 72–7.
	POTS (Paediatric OCD Treatment Study) team including March et al. (2004) Cognitive behaviour therapy, Sertraline, and their combination for children and adolescence with OCD. <i>JAMA</i> , October 27, 292(16), 1969–1976.
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	Bradbury, M.D. & Williams, M.R. (2013) Diversity and citizen participation: the effects of race on juror decision making. <i>Administration &amp; Society</i> , 45(5), 563–582.
	Valentine, T. & Mesout, J. (2009). Eyewitness identification under stress in the London Dungeon. <i>Applied Cognitive Psychology</i> , 23, 151–161.

	Howells, P., Bubner, S., Jauncey, S., Parker, A., & Heseltine, K. (2005) Brief anger management programs with offenders: outcomes and predictors of change. <i>The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry &amp; Psychology</i> , June 2005, 16(2), 296–311.
<i>Child Psychology</i>	Cassibba, R., Sette, G., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M.J., & van IJzendoorn, M.H. (2013) Attachment the Italian way: in search of specific patterns of infant and adult attachments in Italian typical and atypical samples. <i>European Psychologist</i> , 18(1), 47–58.
	Gagnon-Oosterwaal, N., Cossette, L., Smolla, N., Pomerleau, A., Malcuit, G., Chicoine, J.-F., Jéliu, G., Belhumeur, C., & Berthiaume, C. (2012) Pre-adoption adversity and self-reported behaviour problems in 7 year-old international adoptees. <i>Child Psychiatry &amp; Human Development</i> , 43, 648–660.
	Li, W., Farkas, G., Duncan, G.J., Burchinal, M.R., & Vandell, D.L. (2013) Timing of high-quality care and cognitive, language and pre-academic development. <i>Developmental Psychology</i> , 49(8), 1440–1451.
<i>Health Psychology</i>	Mundt, M. P., Mercken, L., & Zakletskaia, L. (2012) Peer selection and influence effects on adolescent alcohol use: a stochastic actor-based model. <i>BMC Pediatrics</i> , 12(1), 115.
	Dixit, S., Ansari, M.A., Khan, Z., & Khalique, N. (2012) Biosocial determinants of alcohol risk behaviour: an epidemiological study in urban and rural communities of Aligarh, Uttar Prades. <i>National Journal of Community Medicine</i> , Jul–Sep 2012, 3(3), 447.
	Pengpid, S., Peltzer, K., Skaal, L., van der Heever, H., & van Hal, G. (2013) Screening and brief intervention for alcohol problems in Dr George Mukhari Hospital out-patients in Gauteng, South Africa: a single-blinded randomized controlled trial protocol. <i>BMC Public Health</i> , 2012, 12, 127.

**B) Resources – where to find the studies**

Many of the classic and contemporary studies can be found on the Internet and all can be found using the British Library. Other libraries can access the studies through the inter-library loan system. Some studies have the abstract on the Internet and a link to buying the PDF.

Links to the studies are given in Tables 8 and 9, though changes over time might mean those links no longer work. There will be further links made available as the need arises and as available. Some links are to the abstract with the PDF, with a PDF of the complete paper available for purchase. Some links are direct to a study (direct link). Some studies have to be accessed using the library (library access).

Table 8 shows links to the classic studies and Table 9 shows links to the contemporary studies, where available.

**Table 8 classic studies and suggested links** (optional topic areas are indicated by italics)

Topic area	Classic study	Suggested link
Social Psychology	Sherif et al. (1954/1961)	Library access.
Cognitive Psychology	Baddeley (1966b)	Library access.
Biological Psychology	Raine et al. (1997)	<a href="http://www.biologicalpsychiatryjournal.com/article/S0006-3223(96)00362-9/abstract">http://www.biologicalpsychiatryjournal.com/article/S0006-3223(96)00362-9/abstract</a> – PDF available to buy.
Learning Theories	Watson and Rayner (1920)	<a href="http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Watson/emotion.htm">http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Watson/emotion.htm</a> – direct link.
Clinical Psychology	Rosenhan (1973)	<a href="http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1735662?sid=21105175108781&amp;uid=3738032&amp;uid=2&amp;uid=4">http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1735662?sid=21105175108781&amp;uid=3738032&amp;uid=2&amp;uid=4</a> – direct link but check JSTOR copyright.
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	Loftus and Palmer (1974)	<a href="https://webfiles.uci.edu/eloftus/LoftusPalmer74.pdf#">https://webfiles.uci.edu/eloftus/LoftusPalmer74.pdf#</a> – direct link.
<i>Child Psychology</i>	Van IJzendoorn and Kroonenberg (1988)	<a href="http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1130396?sid=21105175108781&amp;uid=2&amp;uid=3738032&amp;uid=4">http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/1130396?sid=21105175108781&amp;uid=2&amp;uid=3738032&amp;uid=4</a> – PDF available to purchase.
<i>Health Psychology</i>	Olds and Milner (1954)	<a href="http://wadsworth.cengage.com/psychology_d/templates/student_resources/0155060678_0155060678_rathus/ps/ps02.html">http://wadsworth.cengage.com/psychology_d/templates/student_resources/0155060678_0155060678_rathus/ps/ps02.html</a> – direct link.

**Table 9 contemporary studies and suggested links** (optional topic areas are indicated by italics)

Topic area	Contemporary study	Suggested link
Social Psychology	Burger (2009)	<a href="http://cms.scu.edu/cas/psychology/faculty/upload/Replicating-Milgram.pdf">http://cms.scu.edu/cas/psychology/faculty/upload/Replicating-Milgram.pdf</a> – direct link.
	Reicher & Haslam (2006)	<a href="http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/resources.php?p=86">http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/resources.php?p=86</a> – PDF can be downloaded.
	Cohrs et al. (2012)	<a href="http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/psp/103/2/343/">http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/psp/103/2/343/</a> – PDF can be purchased.
Cognitive Psychology	Schmolck et al. (2002)	<a href="https://www2.bc.edu/elizabeth-kensinger/Schmolck_Kensinger_2002.pdf">https://www2.bc.edu/elizabeth-kensinger/Schmolck_Kensinger_2002.pdf</a> Direct link..
	Steyvers & Hemmer (2012)	<a href="http://psiexp.ss.uci.edu/research/papers/Bookchapterv14.pdf">http://psiexp.ss.uci.edu/research/papers/Bookchapterv14.pdf</a> – direct link.

	Sebastián & Hernández-Gil (2012)	<a href="http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=72723578001">http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=72723578001</a> – direct link.
Biological Psychology	Li et al. (2013)	<a href="file:///C:/Users/Christine/Downloads/Abnormal%252bfunction%252bof%252bthe%252bposterior%252bcingulate%252bcortex%25">file:///C:/Users/Christine/Downloads/Abnormal%252bfunction%252bof%252bthe%252bposterior%252bcingulate%252bcortex%25</a> – direct link.
	Brendgen et al. (2005)	<a href="http://data.psych.udel.edu/abelcher/Shared%20Documents/4%20Developmental%20Psychopathology%20and%20Risk%20(24)/Brendgen,%20Dionne,%20Girard,%20Boivin,%20Bitaro,%20Perusse%202005.pdf">http://data.psych.udel.edu/abelcher/Shared%20Documents/4%20Developmental%20Psychopathology%20and%20Risk%20(24)/Brendgen,%20Dionne,%20Girard,%20Boivin,%20Bitaro,%20Perusse%202005.pdf</a> – direct link.
	Van den Oever et al. (2008)	<a href="http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/v11/n9/full/nn.2165.html">http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/v11/n9/full/nn.2165.html</a> – direct link through 'research gate' which people can sign up to free.
Learning Theories	Becker et al. (2002)	<a href="http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/180/6/509">http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/180/6/509</a> – can link from here directly to the study.
	Bastian et al. (2011)	<a href="http://www2.psy.uq.edu.au/~uqbbast1/Bastian%20et%20a%20JESP%20in%20press.pdf">http://www2.psy.uq.edu.au/~uqbbast1/Bastian%20et%20a%20JESP%20in%20press.pdf</a> – direct to the study, for educational purposes only.
	Capafóns et al. (1998)	<a href="http://www.psychologyinspain.com/content/reprints/1998/2.pdf">http://www.psychologyinspain.com/content/reprints/1998/2.pdf</a> – direct link.
Clinical Psychology schizophrenia compulsory study	Carlsson et al. (2000)	<a href="http://geza.kzoo.edu/~erdi/skread/Carlsson_2000.pdf">http://geza.kzoo.edu/~erdi/skread/Carlsson_2000.pdf</a> – direct link.
<i>Clinical Psychology: depression</i>	Kroenke et al. (2008)	<a href="http://www.nri-inc.org/projects/SDICC/WorkGroups/Kroenke_phq8.pdf">http://www.nri-inc.org/projects/SDICC/WorkGroups/Kroenke_phq8.pdf</a> – direct link.
	Williams et al. (2013)	<a href="https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237095228_Combining_Imagination_and_Reason_in_the_Treatment_of_Depression_A_Randomized_Controlled_Trial_of_Internet-Based_Cognitive-Bias_Modification_and_Internet-CBT">https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237095228_Combining_Imagination_and_Reason_in_the_Treatment_of_Depression_A_Randomized_Controlled_Trial_of_Internet-Based_Cognitive-Bias_Modification_and_Internet-CBT</a> – direct link through 'research gate' which people can sign up to.
<i>Clinical Psychology: anorexia</i>	Scott-Van Zeeland et al. (2013)	<a href="http://www.readcube.com/articles/10.1038/mp.2013.91">http://www.readcube.com/articles/10.1038/mp.2013.91</a> – direct link, online article.
	Guardia et al. (2012)	<a href="http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0043241">http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0043241</a> – direct link, Plos One article, check copyright.
<i>Clinical Psychology: OCD</i>	Masellis et al. (2003)	Library access.

	POTS (Paediatric OCD Treatment Study) team (2004)	<a href="http://www.ufrgs.br/toc/images/artigos_de_interesse/ensaios_clinicos/POTS%20randomized%20Trial%20JAMA%202004.pdf">http://www.ufrgs.br/toc/images/artigos_de_interesse/ensaios_clinicos/POTS%20randomized%20Trial%20JAMA%202004.pdf</a> – direct link.
<i>Criminological Psychology</i>	Bradbury & Williams (2013)	<a href="http://aas.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/10/07/0095399712459729">http://aas.sagepub.com/content/early/2012/10/07/0095399712459729</a> – Sage Publications to order a copy.
	Valentine & Mesout (2009)	<a href="http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/acp.1463/abstract">http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/acp.1463/abstract</a> – Wiley online and option for school library to obtain a copy.
	Howells et al. (2005)	<a href="http://www.addiction.umd.edu/Psyc434/Howells%202005.pdf">http://www.addiction.umd.edu/Psyc434/Howells%202005.pdf</a> – direct link.
<i>Child Psychology</i>	Cassibba et al. (2013)	Library access.
	Gagnon-Oosterwaal et al. (2012)	<a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22222488">http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22222488</a> – Springer article and PDF can be paid for.
	Li et al. (2013)	<a href="http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/dev/49/8/1440/">http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/dev/49/8/1440/</a> – PDF can be purchased.
<i>Health Psychology</i>	Mundt et al. (2012)	<a href="http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2431/12/115">http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2431/12/115</a> – direct link.
	Dixit et al. (2012)	<a href="http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/83333204/biosocial-determinants-alcohol-risk-behaviour-epidemiological-study-urban-rural-communities-aligarh-uttar-pradesh">http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/83333204/biosocial-determinants-alcohol-risk-behaviour-epidemiological-study-urban-rural-communities-aligarh-uttar-pradesh</a> – link here to order from library.
	Pengpid et al. (2012)	<a href="http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-12-127.pdf">http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-12-127.pdf</a> – direct link.

Where to find ideas about issues and debates is considered in the third section below, where issues and debates are considered in more detail.

### C) Suggested resources

The **full versions** of the studies are mainly the best option but some summarising might be useful. In this section candidates will be expected to know the studies (one classic and one contemporary only, except for clinical where one classic and two contemporary studies are required) in good detail.

**Textbooks** will summarise in reasonable detail, however, where possible it is advised that candidates are able to access the full study.

In some cases results sections are rather complex and full knowledge of all the results are not likely to be expected (unless the results are at a reasonable level of detail).

**Online resources** can be found, summarising studies, such as summarising Raine et al. (1997), however, this is not likely to be the case for all studies. Summaries can be useful but would need to be at a good depth, and often they are not.

Resources to support issues and debates discussions (see below) are likely to be useful in this part of the Psychological Skills topic area, however, there are unlikely to be resources that link (for each study) a study to issues and debates. The aim is

to test the candidate's understanding of: (i) the studies, (ii) issues and debates, and (iii) how the studies illustrate issues and debates.

To support centres with the compulsory studies, Edexcel have published a support document on the website which provides a summary of the studies which are not freely available on the Internet. This document is for guidance only and does not include any application or evaluation material, which may be required in the examination. This document can be found at the following link:

[http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Psychology/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/Selected\\_studies\\_summaries.pdf](http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Psychology/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/Selected_studies_summaries.pdf)

## Delivery approaches

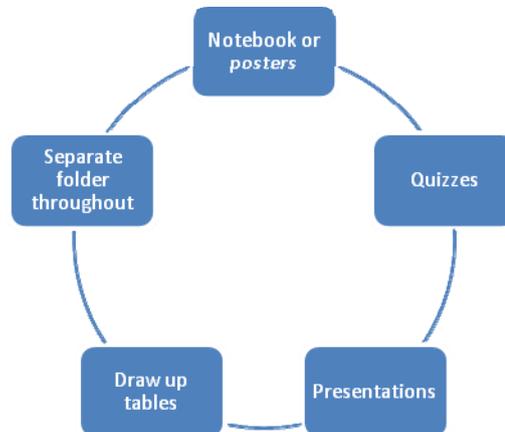
Candidates will have studied the classic studies in detail for the different topic areas in their course and will have revised them for the relevant examinations. They will be able to draw on their preparation in the Psychological Skills topic area.

And they may relate issues and debates to the classic studies when studying the other topic areas, however, in this section of the Psychological Skills topic area, relating issues and debates to the classic studies is a requirement.

Therefore, practising this skill would be useful.

Diagram 4 summarises some ideas for delivering the 'synoptic review of studies' section.

**Diagram 4: ideas for delivering synoptic review of studies**



### Ideas include:

1. For each classic study, go through the list of issues and debates to see which to apply and pick out some evidence in each case. Use a **notebook**, or **posters**, to record the evidence, for revision purposes.
2. In small groups, allocate pairs of classic studies randomly and pick out three things that the two studies have in common and three ways in which they differ. This can include drawing on issues and debates and can include other issues too, such as methodological ones. Prepare a short presentation for the class with their findings and share the **presentations**.

3. Choose an issue/debate and look through all the classic studies to find examples of that issue and debate. Do this for all the issues and debates and make a **poster** or **draw up a table** to display the findings.
4. Use a **separate folder** throughout studying the topic areas, so that notes linking the classic studies to issues and debates are ready for this part of the Psychological Skills topic area. For the 'issues and debates' section of each topic area, use the classic studies to illustrate the points.
5. In small groups devise a **quiz** based on the classic studies and their illustration of issues and debates, say around 20 questions. Each group asks all the other students to complete their quiz and the quiz that gets the best response in a vote is the winner.

## Specification requirements

Specification requirements have been explained. There are three sections in this part of the specification. One section is about candidates being presented with an unseen study or part of a study, and having to apply their understanding of the course to the study. One section is about the classic studies that candidates have covered, and applying their understanding of issues and debates to these studies. One section is about the classic studies and looking at general issues about them, such as comparing and contrasting the studies with a specific area of psychology in mind.

# Issues and debates

## Key Content/topic description

The specification lists 11 issues and debates in each topic area in the same order. In each topic area there are ideas suggested to show how each issue and debate can relate to that topic area.

For the second part of this Psychological Skills topic area, as has been explained, there is a requirement to link the issues and debates with the classic studies, so some evidence for issues and debates in each topic area can come from the classic study in that area. To this extent the second and third parts of this topic area link.

The 11 issues and debates are listed in order in Table 10 below.

### A note on co-teaching with the AS in Year One:

The AS does not include the issues and debates sections of the Year One material but the A level does include issues and debates. If co-teaching, this might be seen as an issue. Covering issues and debates should stimulate interest and understanding in AS candidates. However, issues and debates can be more thoroughly covered in this Psychological Skills topic area if that is preferred.

**Table 10 the eleven issues and debates in the GCE 2015 specification**

Issues and debates in the GCE 2015 specification
• Ethical issues in research (animal and human).
• Practical issues in the design and implementation of research.
• Reductionism in the explanation of behaviour.
• Comparisons between ways of explaining behaviour using different themes.
• Psychology as a science.
• Cultural and gender issues within psychological research.
• The role of both nature and nurture within psychology.
• An understanding of how psychological understanding has developed over time.
• The use of psychology in social control.
• The use of psychological knowledge within society.
• Issues related to socially sensitive research.

These issues are discussed in more detail when looking at the themes in issues and debates.

## Detailed content changes

GCE 2008 had as half of Unit 4 a section called 'Issues and Debates', which was a synoptic section of GCE 2008 and included reviewing the key issues, ethics, research methods, contributions to society of the approaches and applications studied, and some listed 'issues and debates'. It can be seen that the 'Issues and Debates' part of GCE 2008 is very similar to Psychological Skills in GCE 2015.

The 'issues and debates' part of Psychological Skills lists the actual issues and debates to be covered. These issues and debates are found in order, all 11 of them, in each topic area of the 2015 specification, with examples where appropriate to help candidates to develop their synoptic skills ready for Component Three.

GCE 2008 listed ethnocentrism and culture, psychology as a science, social control, and nature-nurture as the issues and debates to be focused on. Eleven issues and debates are listed in GCE 2015 and featured in **Component Guide 3: Psychological Skills**, see Table 10 (page 25).

It might seem that four issues and debates have become 11 and so there is a lot added.

However, where some issues might be asked about, such as how society uses psychology (which was in GCE 2008 as 'contributions'), ethical issues, and themes across topics, these are now listed as 'issues and debates' for 2015.

Comparison between GCE 2008 and GCE 2015 in terms of GCE 2008 'Issues and Debates' and GCE 2015 'Psychological Skills' is found in Table 12 (page 35).

## Issues and debates themes

### Issues and debates linked to methodology in psychology

Methodology is a strong theme throughout the GCE 2015 specification. There are various issues and debates that can be discussed when learning about methodology in psychology as presented in the specification:

- Ethical issues in research (animal and human).
- Practical issues in the design and implementation of research.
- Psychology as a science.

**1. Ethics:** psychological research can be said to be limited by ethical issues, both when using humans and when using animals in research. However, research cannot be carried out without ethical issues being fully explained beforehand and the research being agreed by some sort of ethical committee or person in charge.

Although research psychology has paid attention to safeguarding of children for quite some time, in recent years there have been many changes to the requirements of the codes of research ethics. The types of issues concerning the role of ethics which could be discussed may include: the changes to ethical requirements over time; how research may be limited by ethics; how studies can be carried out ethically; and how ethical principles can be arrived at.

**2. Practical issues:** research methodology is a large and varied field, with the many research questions requiring both differing methods and design decisions. There are practical issues to be considered when doing research in psychology. These can range from whether to choose qualitative or quantitative data, to whether experiments lack the validity sufficient to make them worthwhile (or to be justified in ethical terms). These are some ideas for debates that can be had in the area of practical issues in the design and implementation of research.

**3. Psychology as a science:** the debate about whether psychology is a science or not is an old one, and researchers and academics still take sides on this debate. On the one hand, there is a drive toward more valid data; gathering qualitative and in depth data; hearing the voice of the participant; and having real data on which to form policy decisions. On the other hand, there is the focus on quantitative data and hypothesis testing; looking for reliable data; and producing 'cause and effect'

conclusions from which to build a sound body of knowledge. This hypothesis-testing side of the debate represents the 'science' side, and the more qualitative valid side is the 'non-science' side. This debate is about methodology because it concerns the way in which studies are carried out, for example, whether within a scientific paradigm (positivist) or within a social constructionism paradigm (where reality is constructed by people(s) and as such is there to explore rather than to explain in a scientific manner).

### Issues and debates linked to psychology in society

Psychological research tends to be done for a reason. Sometimes it is to further academic knowledge but often, even if it is also for academic purposes, it is to consider issues around policy and practice in society. If psychological research is used by society, this can help the individual; however, it can also benefit the majority or a particular group to the detriment of the individual:

- The use of psychology in social control.
- The use of psychological knowledge within society.
- Issues related to socially sensitive research.

**1. Social control:** psychology has been used across many societies as a form of social control. Much of the discussion in this area focuses on treatments or therapies, which can be said to control a person's behaviour. As long as an individual is in control of their treatment or therapy this may be considered acceptable, however, there are at least two areas for consideration. One deals with the power of the therapist; if the therapist has power, then the individual probably has not, which does not appear to be an ethical situation. Another area looks at who decides whether a person needs treatment or therapy. When society decides that an individual must undergo treatment there is the issue of the individual's freedom (and possibly dignity) to consider. There are other ways in which psychology can be involved in social control as well, such as in criminological psychology, where a knowledge of the characteristics of the defendant can be used to manipulate a situation.

Discussions may also consider situations where social control can also be used to effect positive outcomes, such as controlling crowd behaviour for the sake of a minority group (e.g. prejudice in psychology) or controlling anti-social behaviour for the sake of members of society (the majority perhaps?).

**2. Using psychological knowledge in society:** issues of social control are about using psychological knowledge in society, but there are wider applications of psychological knowledge too. The key questions considered for each topic area highlight how psychological knowledge is used in society, such as how drug therapy can be used to help those with drug addiction (Biological and Health Psychology).

**3. Issues related to socially sensitive research:** much research in psychology is socially sensitive, though perhaps some is more socially sensitive than other research. Milgram carried out studies to see if the Germans were different, and he found that they were not. Americans were found to be willing to give electric shocks of what they believed to be a high voltage to people they did not know, in obedience to orders from an authority figure. Imagine what would have happened if Milgram had found that Germans (for example) were different? Of course he did not, it is important to remember that. However, asking these sorts of questions shows how psychology can involve socially sensitive issues. Social psychology includes socially sensitive issues around obedience and prejudice. The causes of drug addiction (Health Psychology) and crime (Criminological Psychology), as well

as developmental issues such as with autism (Child Psychology), may all address socially sensitive areas such as the role of the family.

### More philosophical issues and debates around knowledge

Psychology grew from philosophy and the sciences. It is a relatively new subject and maintains its philosophical roots. Some issues and debates fit into the 'philosophy' side of psychology, though issues and debates do not tend to fit neatly into packages. This is separated in this part of this document to enable discussion rather than to say certain 'issues and debates' fit into certain area alone.

- Cultural and gender issues within psychological research.
- The role of both nature and nurture within psychology.
- Reductionism in the explanation of behaviour.

**1. Culture and gender:** although issues of culture and gender can relate to society (we call these 'social constructs'), they also link to wider issues around fairness and equality, which can be seen as philosophical ideas to be debated.

Culture can affect the individual in how they see the world, such as with regard to how mental health is diagnosed (Clinical Psychology), or which attachment type is most common (Child Psychology). Cross-cultural studies can help to see what can be considered in humans to be a 'universal law', and what is culturally given or learned.

Gender is also said to be constructed rather than a given. We can say that sex is allocated at conception according to genes (Biological Psychology). Gender behaviour, however, can be driven by environment and culture and can link to issues such as mental health disorders like anorexia nervosa (Clinical Psychology).

As culture and gender both involve discussion about how they are constructed and issues around nature-nurture, they are combined into one issue and debate in this specification.

**2. Nature-nurture:** the role of nature-nurture is also a philosophical debate, though linked to methodology in psychology. We assume that who we are and who we become comes from our nature and biology or our nurture and environmental influences. The issue is how far we are 'nature' and how far we are 'nurture'. Generally the discussion is around specific issues such as personality (Social Psychology and other areas), gender (Social Psychology and other areas), developmental issues like autism (Child Psychology), and mental health issues (Clinical Psychology). The division is not as clear cut as it might seem as environment issues affect the growing foetus and biological issues affect the developing child and adult.

**3. Reductionism:** reductionism is about methodology in many ways, and links to how studies are done as well as whether psychology is a science or not. However, it also fits into a philosophical debate about reductionism and holism. Reductionism is about looking at the parts of something or someone and from the parts building up knowledge to understand the whole person. Holism is about considering the whole thing, the whole person, for example. A holistic view considers all aspects of a subject: nature and nurture, as well as culture and gender. Holistic research could involve an ethnographic study or a case study, to cover all aspects of an individual (such as a case study of someone with schizophrenia in Clinical Psychology). A lot of psychology is reductionist, following its scientific focus. A reductionist approach is seen in experiments looking at the unreliability of eye witness memory (Criminological Psychology) or seeing how recreational drugs work at the synapse (Biological and Health Psychology).

**General issues and debates around psychology**

As well as issues about methodology, philosophical issues and issues around how psychological understanding is used in society, there are a few other issues and debates mentioned in this specification. The first is about how psychology has developed over time, from its philosophical underpinnings. The second is about how different themes are used to explain behaviour. This is not just about the themes of nature and nurture, but about the different disciplines in psychology:

- An understanding of how psychological understanding has developed over time.
- Comparisons between ways of explaining behaviour using different themes.

**1. Development over time:** psychology has developed over time both in its areas of research interest and in its methodology.

With regards to the research areas, the specification includes examples of this development, such as Milgram's work on obedience in 1963 and Burger's work to replicate Milgram in 2009 (Social Psychology). In Biological Psychology, Freud's views about aggression are considered, to contrast with the biological ideas relating to how the brain is linked to behaviour. A psychodynamic theme can help to explain aggression, as can a biological one (or more than one biological explanation). Freud worked at the turn of the twentieth century and work on uncovering causes of aggression has developed since that time (biological approach). This example compares the different ways in which aggression can be explained using different themes and shows how psychological understanding has developed over time. There are many other examples in the specification of how psychology has changed over time

Methodology has changed over time too. Scientific approaches, such as experiments and quantitative data that can be statistically tested, have been predominant in psychology for a long while. In 1920, Watson and Rayner used controls and a single case experiment to look at how a phobia might develop using principles of classical conditioning (Learning Theories). Elizabeth Loftus is still carrying out experiments to look at the unreliability of eye witness memory (Criminological Psychology). In addition, there has been a growth in the use of qualitative data in many areas, particularly in childhood studies (Child Psychology) but also in other areas, such as outcome studies with regard to cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and other therapies (Clinical Psychology). Having started from an approach of introspection in the late 1800's, and then looking at measurable behaviour from around 1930, psychology has now gone back to wanting to find out about people's feelings, attitudes and experiences.

**2. Using different themes:** as has already been discussed, both psychodynamic and biological psychology can explain aggression (Biological Psychology), and other features of human behaviour can be similarly explained using different themes. Within a subject area there can be different theories based on a different set of assumptions. For example, there are two theories of prejudice in the specification, which whilst they draw on some similar assumptions have different focuses (Social Psychology). Memory is explained using four different theories, within which there are many different themes used to explain mental health disorders (Clinical Psychology).

Table 11 presents the 11 issues and debates, with examples from the Social Psychology topic area to illustrate where evidence for each issue and debate can be found. Examples are also given for the other topic areas in the specification to illustrate where evidence can come from.

**Table 11 the eleven issues and debates with examples from Social Psychology**

Issue/debate	Examples from Social Psychology
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When researching obedience and prejudice.</li> <li>• Implications of findings in both areas.</li> </ul>
Practical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues around informed consent and deception for Milgram.</li> <li>• Designing questionnaires and interviews, and social desirability.</li> </ul>
Reductionism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The risk of reductionism when drawing conclusions from social data.</li> </ul>
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two theories of prejudice: social identity and realistic conflict.</li> </ul>
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social desirability in questionnaires.</li> <li>• Issues of validity in questionnaires.</li> </ul>
Culture/gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether prejudice and obedience are influenced by cultural factors, or according to gender.</li> </ul>
Nature-nurture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of personality in obedience compared with the role of the situation.</li> </ul>
Over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using Burger's work replicating Milgram and comparing with Milgram's work.</li> <li>• Looking at Tajfel's ideas and a contemporary study.</li> </ul>
Social control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing prejudice.</li> <li>• How people obey someone in authority/uniform.</li> </ul>
Using psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing conflict in society.</li> </ul>
Socially sensitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racism or cultural differences in Social Psychology.</li> </ul>

## Resources and references

There are resources that relate to issues and debates in general. And there are resources for specific issues and debates.

### A) General resources

1. Gross, R. *Themes Issues and Debates*, 2009, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., Hodder Education, UK, pp. 400 – a book by Richard Gross, who has written for A level.
2. Tyson, P.J., Jones, D., & Elcock, J. *Psychology in a Social Context: Issues and Debates*, 2011, BPS Blackwell – this book provides useful information as well.
3. Textbooks written for the course will also address issues and debates.
4. There are podcasts and videos that link to issues and debates.

### B) Specific resources

#### Ethics:

1. [http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code\\_of\\_ethics\\_and\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/documents/code_of_ethics_and_conduct.pdf) – the BPS code of conduct (2009) is a good resource, not only for information about ethics but as a starting point for discussions.
2. [http://www.psy.ed.ac.uk/psy\\_research/research\\_ethics.php](http://www.psy.ed.ac.uk/psy_research/research_ethics.php) – a link to the University of Edinburgh website, which makes interesting reading about the issues that must be considered.
3. [http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code\\_of\\_human\\_research\\_ethics.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf) A link to a BPS document relating to risk management
4. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/291350/Guidance\\_on\\_the\\_Operation\\_of\\_ASPA.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291350/Guidance_on_the_Operation_of_ASPA.pdf) – the ethics of using animals is covered well in the Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986.
5. [http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/guideline\\_for\\_psychologists\\_working\\_with\\_animals\\_2012\\_rep55\\_2012\\_web.pdf](http://www.bps.org.uk/system/files/images/guideline_for_psychologists_working_with_animals_2012_rep55_2012_web.pdf) – a booklet on the subject of using animals in research from the BPS (British Psychological Society).
6. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan03/animals.aspx> – the ethics of using animals are discussed on the American Psychological Association (APA) site.

### Practical issues in doing psychology:

These will have been considered throughout the specification in the different topic areas and these resources will be useful when reviewing this issue.

### Reductionism:

1. [www.apa.org/monitor/sep06/sd.aspx](http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep06/sd.aspx) – a discussion from the American Psychological Association about reductionism and psychology.
2. Reductionism is covered Gross (2009) as referenced earlier.

### Themes:

1. <http://psychology.umd.edu/index.html> – explains three main themes that the University of Maryland use. This can help to illustrate that 'themes' is a wide term and there is room for interpretation about what 'themes' mean.
2. Gross (2009) includes themes when discussing 'themes, issues and debates'.
3. <http://www.psyking.net/id29.htm> – a site that discusses themes and has some interesting ideas to help discussion.

### Science

1. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/under-the-influence/201308/the-psychology-the-psychology-isnt-science-argument> – a post from *Psychology Today* on the scientific nature of psychology
2. <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/the-curious-wavefunction/2013/08/13/is-psychology-a-real-science-does-it-really-matter/> – a *Scientific American* blog on whether psychology is a science.

### Culture and gender

1. Magnusson, E., & Marecek, J. *Gender and Culture in Society: Theories and Practices*, 2012, Cambridge University Press, New York – a book which may have too much depth but is worth a look.
2. David Matsumoto has written books on culture and psychology which might be useful, and there are other books too such as by L. Vaughn.
3. Culture and gender are visited throughout the course, and the resources in individual topic areas (see **Component Guide 1: Foundations of Psychology**

and **Component Guide 2: Applications of Psychology**) can be used in this part as well.

### Nature-nurture

1. There are quite a few books in this area, including by Plomin. There is quite a large choice. They are likely to be in too much depth but issues from the books can be summarised as notes.
2. The books by Tyson (2011) and Gross (2009) covers the nature-nurture debate.
3. Culture and gender are visited throughout the course, and the resources in individual topic areas (see **Component Guide 1: Foundations of Psychology** and **Component Guide 2: Applications of Psychology**) can be used in this part as well. For example, twin and adoption studies in Biological Psychology relate directly to issues of nature-nurture.

### Changing over time

1. Books on the history of psychology will be useful here, to follow the changes in psychology over time.
2. Wertheimer, M., *A Brief History of Psychology*, 2012, 5th edn., Taylor Francis, Hove – a book that is quite short and accessible.
3. <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/> – a site that offers discussion around CHP (Classics in the History of Psychology).

### Social control

1. <http://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-20/edition-7/agents-social-control> – an article in *The Psychologist* (a BPS publication) on psychology used as social control.
2. Use resources that relate to therapies and treatments, such as those used in the topic area of Clinical Psychology for this course, to extrapolate information about: (i) the power of the therapist and (ii) the use of therapy as a form of social control.

### Used in society

1. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/rejoining-joy/201110/positive-society-psychology-i> – a post from *Psychology Today* about positive psychology. It is useful to consider how positive psychology can be used in a way that is different from more problem solving uses.
2. The key contemporary questions in each topic area will be about using psychology in society so resources from those sections (see **Component Guide 1: Foundations of Psychology** and **Component Guide 2: Applications of Psychology**) will be useful.

### Socially sensitive research

1. Banyard, P. & Flanagan, C. *Ethical Issues and Guidelines in Psychology*, 2005, Routledge, Hove – this book contains a chapter on socially sensitive research and is also useful on ethics in general.
2. Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L., & Liamputtong, P. *Undertaking Sensitive Research in the Health and Social Sciences: Managing Boundaries, Emotions and Risks*, 2008, Cambridge University Press, UK, pp. 168 – this book contains a chapter on socially sensitive research. An excerpt is accessible at: [http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/18233/excerpt/9780521718233\\_excerpt.pdf](http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/18233/excerpt/9780521718233_excerpt.pdf)

## Delivery approaches

Delivering the issues and debates requirements for this part of Psychological Skills involves revision more than delivery of new material, since students will have already covered these, with examples, from the issues and debates listed at the end of each topic area.

Diagram 5 summarises some revision ideas for issues and debates.

**Diagram 5 revision ideas for issues and debates**



### Revision ideas for issues and debates:

1. In small groups focus on one issue/debate each, prepare a **presentation** giving as much evidence from the course as possible and then present to the class and offer a copy of notes to the class.
2. In small groups have an issue/debate each and gather together the examples through all of the topic areas for that issue/debate (all listed in the specification so these could be cut and pasted). The whole class pools their work, so that there is one **table** giving a list of examples for each issue/debate across the specification.
3. **Debate** the issues and decide a winner. Such as one side for 'nature' and one for 'nurture', or one side for 'science' and one for 'non science'. Each debate to provide evidence (such as twin studies and conclusions about nature-nurture).
4. Review any **audio visual materials** used for issues and debates throughout the course, to refresh.
5. Review notes on key contemporary questions through all the topic areas so that there are **notes** on 'using psychology in society'. Then use the same notes if possible for 'issues of social control' and 'socially sensitive research'.
6. **Make a list** of key questions that is as short as possible to address the three 'social' issues in 'issues and debates' to see that the same evidence can be used for different issues and debates.

7. **Practice essay** writing using broad topics, such as 'discuss the nature-nurture debate' or 'how far is psychology reductionist?'. This helps to gather evidence and material together.

## Specification requirements

The issues and debates section in the Psychology Skills topic area is a synoptic part of the specification and so requirements are rather broad.

Candidates need to thoroughly understand the issues and debates listed (11 of them) and to be able to draw on different topic areas in the specification to discuss and illustrate the issues and debates.

The issues and debates themselves are explained on pages 26-29, with examples to illustrate these. And the specification topic areas each have the same list of issues and debates, presented in the same order, and with examples where possible, to help candidates to prepare.

As with the methods and the synoptic review of studies sections of Psychological Skills, the issues and debates section does not involve the addition of any new material (remember to look at the process of peer review in methods though). What is required is synoptic. At the end of this two-year course, candidates need to be able to stand back and discuss various issues and debates within psychology, before hopefully going on to study the subject further.

Any of the content in the specification for 9PS0/03 could be assessed using either a single assessment objective (AO) or a combination of assessment objectives (AOs). Any of the taxonomy (command words) could be used to assess any of the content in the specification.

If you have specific queries please contact either the Subject Advisor for Psychology or use the Ask the Expert service. Remember that whilst endorsed material (e.g. text books) or Internet websites can be helpful, the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance. Use of original sources (e.g. journal articles) are encouraged when delivering the specification as endorsed resources (e.g. text books) will not be used as a source of material for any assessment set by Pearson.

Please take note of page 5 in the A-level specification too which gives an important 'Assessment overview' and states the following relevant to all areas of the specification:

- Students should be able to define any terms given in the specification
- Students may be required to respond to stimulus material using psychological concepts, theories and research from across topic areas.
- Students may be asked to consider issues of validity, reliability, credibility, generalisability, objectivity and subjectivity in their evaluation of studies and theories.

## Mapping to 2008 specification

Changes from GCE 2008 have been explained on pages 3-8. This section offers a brief overview of those changes, with regard to Component 3: Psychological Skills.

In general the Psychological Skills component of GCE 2015 is found in the Issues and debates part of Unit 4 of GCE 2008 and a great deal is similar. This is the synoptic element of GCE 2015 and the synoptic element of GCE 2008 was the Issues and debates half of Unit 4.

In GCE 2015, the issues and debates are linked to each topic area for the A level (not for the AS) and are presented in the same order, together with examples to illustrate them. This is to embed them, so that at the end of the course issues and debates are used to draw together themes.

**Table 12 comparison of Psychological Skills in GCE 2015 and GCE 2008**

Section	Changes to GCE 2015
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covers the methodology sections of all approaches.</li> <li>Includes the method areas in Issues and Debates, part of Unit 4 of GCE 2008.</li> <li>Includes peer reviewing, in addition to GCE 2008 material.</li> <li>There is a greater focus on mathematical skills in the examination.</li> <li>Type I and Type II errors are added.</li> <li>Meta analysis is added.</li> </ul>
Synoptic review of studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This appears to be new to GCE 2015.</li> <li>However, issues such as ethics or nature-nurture could have been asked about within the Issues and Debates part of Unit 4 in GCE 2008.</li> <li>Unseen studies could have been presented as stimulus material in the GCE 2008 exam papers, just as in this section.</li> <li>Classic studies could have been asked about in the GCE 2008 Issues and Debates papers.</li> <li>This section for GCE 2015 is specified, whereas it was not in GCE 2008, and there is a greater focus on it, but it is not new as such.</li> </ul>
Issues and debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The GCE 2015 issues and debates were mostly in GCE 2008 as part of the Issues and Debates section of Unit 4.</li> <li>In addition to the issues covered in GCE 2008, the following are now included: gender, socially sensitive research, and how psychology has developed over time.</li> <li>There is also a focus on reductionism – though this could have been covered within 'psychology as a science' in GCE 2008.</li> <li>Other issues, such as applying themes and using psychology in society, are in GCE 2015 as issues and debates, whereas these were not specified in GCE 2008. However, the ability to apply psychology in these ways may have been expected in GCE 2008.</li> </ul>

## Assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE A Level in Psychology is structured into nine topic areas. Topics 1-4 focus on the four topic areas which have helped to lay the foundations of modern psychological understanding. Topics 5-8 focus on how our understanding of psychology is applied today. The final topic covers the psychological skills which psychologists use when conducting research.

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 GCE A Level in Psychology consists of three externally examined papers.

**Component Guide 3: Psychological Skills** focuses on Paper 3, the psychological skills part of the specification. A summary of all three papers is given here, followed by more detail on Paper 3.

Paper 1: Examination		*Paper code: 9PS0/01
Title: Foundations in Psychology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally assessed</li> <li>Availability: May/June</li> <li>First assessment: 2017</li> </ul>	35% of the total qualification	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Psychology</li> <li>Cognitive Psychology</li> <li>Biological Psychology</li> <li>Learning Theories.</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2-hour written examination, worth 90 marks</li> <li>Students must answer all questions from two sections</li> <li><b>Section A</b> has 70 marks comprised of a mixture of question types, covering the topic areas of Social, Cognitive, Biological Psychology and Learning Theories</li> <li><b>Section B</b> has 20 marks comprised of two extended response questions, covering the issues and debates in psychology.</li> </ul>		

\*See the specification for description of this code and all other codes relevant to this qualification.

<b>Paper 2: Examination</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>*Paper code: 9PS0/02</b></span>	
<b>Title: Applications of Psychology</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally assessed</li> <li>Availability: May/June</li> <li>First assessment: 2017</li> </ul>	<b>35% of the total qualification</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of content</b></p> <p>Compulsory content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clinical Psychology</li> </ul> <p>Optional topics (students must cover one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criminological Psychology</li> <li>Child Psychology</li> <li>Health Psychology.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2-hour written examination, worth 90 marks</li> <li>Students must answer all questions from Section A, and all questions from a choice of three optional topic areas in Section B</li> <li><b>Section A</b> has 54 marks comprised of mixed question types, including data and stimulus response, short-answer and extended response questions with one 20-mark response, covering the topic area of Clinical Psychology</li> <li><b>Section B</b> presents students with a choice of one from three optional topic areas – Criminological, Health or Child Psychology – each totalling 36 marks comprised of a mixture of question types, including stimulus and data response, short-answer and extended response questions.</li> </ul>	

\*See the specification for description of this code and all other codes relevant to this qualification.

<b>Paper 3: Examination</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>*Paper code: 9PS0/03</b></span>	
<b>Title: Psychological Skills</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Externally assessed</li> <li>Availability: May/June</li> <li>First assessment: 2017</li> </ul>	<b>30% of the total qualification</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methods of conducting research</li> <li>Reviewing psychological studies</li> <li>Issues and debates in psychology.</li> </ul>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Overview of assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2-hour written examination, worth 80 marks</li> <li>Students must answer all questions from three sections</li> <li><b>Section A</b> has 24 marks comprised of a mixture of question types, including stimulus and data response and short-answer questions covering the topic area of research methods.</li> <li><b>Section B</b> has 24 marks comprised of a mixture of question types, including</li> </ul>	

stimulus and data response and short-answer questions based on psychological studies and one extended response question based on classic studies given in Topics 1-5.

- **Section C** has 32 marks comprised of two extended answer questions, covering the topic of issues and debates.

\*See the specification for description of this code and all other codes relevant to this qualification.

## Paper 3: More information

### Research methods

Questions can be in stimulus material format, where studies are presented and questions asked about research methods relating to the studies. In a way these can be 'flawed studies' where candidates think about issues such as controls or ethics. There can be results presented, where candidates discuss issues of analysis. Candidates can be asked to redesign a study perhaps, which might involve synopticity. The aim is to test understanding of the methods studied across the specification.

Section A carries 24 marks, out of a total of 80 for Paper 3.

### Synoptic review of studies

There are likely to be two questions here and there are three parts, so possibly not every part will be tested in each examination paper. Questions can involve a stimulus piece which is a summary of an actual study. Candidates can be asked questions about the study, including issues and debates that might relate to the study, or other questions. These can be 'method' questions. Questions can involve the classic studies and applying issues and debates to them. Questions can involve comparing or otherwise discussing the classic studies, without specific emphasis on issues and debates.

Within Section B of Paper 3, there will be one extended open response question which is allocated 16 marks, out of the 24 marks for Section B. This question will be based on the classic studies given in Topics 1-5.

### Issues and debates

Section C of Paper 3 ends with a 20 mark extended writing question. There are 11 issues and debates to be assessed. Issues and debates can be assessed separately, or compared, or asked about in other ways. There can be stimulus material.

As this is a synoptic part of the specification, candidates should be ready to draw on knowledge and understanding (and other skills) from other topic areas.

Section C carries 32 marks, out of a total of 80 for Paper 3.