



Examiners Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel
GCE Psychology 8PS0/01
Paper 1: Social and Cognitive Psychology

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

June 2025

Publications Code 8PS0_01

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2025

Introduction

The 8PS0 01 examination requires candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the social psychology and cognitive psychology content from the AS level specification. In addition, they need to apply their knowledge of these topics to novel scenarios and investigations described on the examination paper, including using the prescribed mathematical content. Candidates must also be able to evaluate material as instructed; for example, by explaining their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of theories from social and cognitive psychology. Each AO can be assessed via short, medium and extended open response questions.

Section A is worth 29 marks and examines the social psychology content. There is a mix of short and medium open response questions for students to respond to. At the end of this section there is an essay that is worth 8 marks.

Section B is worth 29 marks and examines the cognitive psychology content. There is a mix of short and medium open response questions for students to respond to. At the end of this section there is an essay that is worth 8 marks.

Section C comprises of a single 12-mark essay question that requires candidates to draw on their knowledge from across social and cognitive psychology.

In this series, examiners saw candidate work across the full ability range. Often good psychological knowledge and understanding, and application of this was evident in candidate work, although evaluation skills continue to be weaker for some candidates. Examiners were particularly impressed with candidate work in the essay on the working memory model. Mathematical skills were often very good, with candidates able to correctly calculate the value of T in the Wilcoxon test.

Comments on Individual Questions and Examiner Comments

Section A - Social Psychology

Question 1

This question required candidates to define the term 'qualitative data', using an example.

For this question, 1 mark was available for a basic definition of the term, and another was available for the example provided. Each mark could be awarded independently.

Acceptable examples included stating something about a *type* of qual data, e.g. responses to open-ended questions, or data gained from diary entries. Specific examples of responses to open ended questions were also creditworthy, for example 'explaining *why* you would obey'. Many candidates were able to score both marks.

The response below was awarded two marks:

1 Using an example, define what is meant by 'qualitative data'.

It is data that gives in-depth details for the researcher to be able to interpret from it, such as open-ended questions like "Why ~~do~~ you think females are more obedient than males?" in questionnaires

(Total for Question 1 = 2 marks)

Examiner comments:

In this question, it was tempting for some candidates to tell us that qualitative data is *not*, i.e. that it is *not* numerical. Whilst true, the examiner was only able to credit what qualitative data is, such as that it is descriptive or word-based data. Candidates are advised to avoid telling us what something is *not*.

Candidates can draw examples from the studies they have learnt about in social psychology, from their own practical work, or they can create fictitious examples in questions such as this.

Question 2a

For this part-question, candidates were asked how Mo could use opportunity sampling to gather his participants. For this question, there were two marks available. One for explaining where Mo could be to encounter Luncaster fans, and the second for explaining that Mo would need to approach them and ask them to take part, until he had obtained 50 participants. Note that each part of the response required contextualisation to the scenario presented in the question.

Many candidates were able to score both marks because they recognised that opportunity sampling was based on the availability of prospective participants and that the researcher would need to approach them.

The response below was awarded two marks:

(a) Describe how Mo could use an opportunity sampling technique to gather participants for his investigation.

(2)

Mo could go directly to ~~a~~ ^{the} rugby match involving Luncaster and Melwich and gather the first Luncaster fans he sees to ask them to participate in the investigation. If the rugby match has already ended, he can find Luncaster fans lurking around in the area that the match took place in and find 50 of them from there.

Examiner comments:

Candidates should ensure that they can distinguish between the different types of sampling given in the specification. In this question, a common error was for candidates to describe volunteer sampling, for example they suggested that Mo advertised for Luncaster fans to take part in his investigation.

Q02b

For this part-question, candidates were asked to draw a bar chart for the data given in Table 1, which was data that Mo had collected from the rugby fans.

The marking of this question followed a standard format that has been used to mark similar questions in the past. There were three marks that could be independently awarded:

- One mark for the title which needed to include Luncaster fans, Melwich and Luncaster players, and mean rugby skill score.
- One mark for the two appropriately labelled axes and a suitable scale on the Y axis.
- One mark for accurate plotting of the two data points.

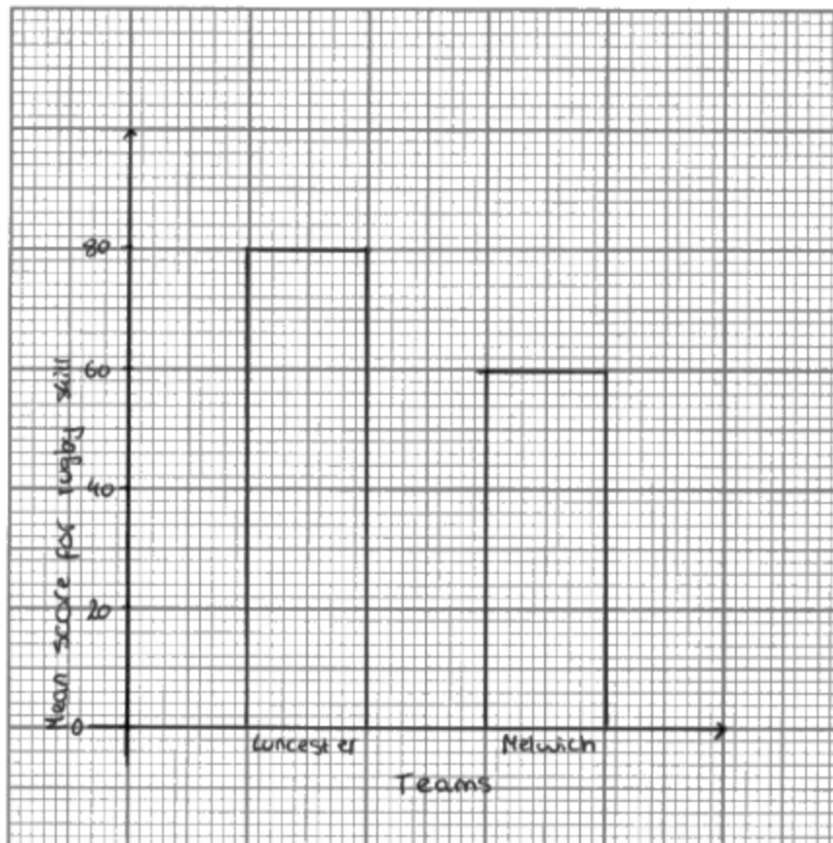
The response below was awarded three marks:

Draw a bar chart to represent the data in **Table 1**.

(3)

Title

Mean score for rugby skills given by
Luncheon fans to Luncheon and Melwich
players



Examiner comments:

Candidates should be mindful of their accuracy when completing all the required elements of a bar chart.

Question 2c

This question required candidates to suggest a weakness of Mo's investigation. Candidates could write about any weakness that was consistent with the information provided about on the question paper. As is usual, candidates were required to contextualise their responses.

Suitable responses included the suggestion that the data might be biased as only Luncheon fans were questioned, or that the investigation lacked representativeness as

only Luncaster fans who were at this particular rugby match could take part.

The response below was awarded two marks and is an example of the most common problem that candidates chose to write about. The response very clearly demonstrates the impact that this weakness would have on the data Mo collected:

(c) Explain **one** weakness of Mo's investigation.

(2)

One weakness of mo's investigation is that
that his sample was biased as he only used
luncaster fans. This makes the results ~~less valid~~
lower in validity as the information gathered
doesn't represent everyone's opinion and
luncaster fans are more likely to favour their
own team and say they are more skillful
than the opposition team.

(Total for Question 2 = 7 marks)

Examiner comments:

When justifying a weakness, candidates are advised to consider the impact that their chosen weakness might have had on the data collected or on any conclusions drawn in the investigation.

When they are asked to write about weaknesses of investigations, candidates should *avoid* suggesting improvements as these cannot be credited.

Question 3a

In this part-question, candidates were asked to explain the behaviour of Hina (which had been described in the scenario) using agency theory. There were up to two AO1 marks available for knowledge of agency theory, and up to two AO2 marks available for using agency theory to explain Hina's behaviour. The answer did not need to cover all aspects of Hina's behaviour for full credit, although doing so increased candidates' chances of scoring highly.

Examiners found this question to be comparatively low scoring when compared to similar questions asked in previous series. This year, many candidates failed to give their knowledge of agency theory (the AO1 points) and instead gave only AO2 content. Examiners did work to the benefit of candidates, crediting AO1 content that was embedded within AO2 parts of candidates' responses, however they were not able to 'double credit' work, so this could only be done when the maximum AO2 marks had been awarded.

The response over the page was awarded four marks. The candidate has clearly stated their knowledge about both the agentic and autonomous states (2 x AO1), before going on

to apply this to Hina's behaviour at work and at home.

- 3 Hina lives with her son, Dai. At home, if Dai does not eat all his food at mealtimes, Hina allows him to leave the table and go outside to play.

Hina also works at a nursery. The nursery manager has a rule that the children must eat all their food at mealtimes before they are allowed to go outside to play. The nursery manager has a meeting with all the members of staff and instructs them to impose this rule while they are at work.

Despite worrying that the children's parents will complain about her, Hina follows the nursery manager's instructions and imposes the rule anyway.

- (a) Using agency theory, explain Hina's behaviour.

(4)

The agency Theory states that an individual is very likely to obey an authority figure if she is an agent. Someone who is an agent is someone who obeys or follows the instructions + rules of an authority figure. Someone who is in an autonomous state will not follow an A.F. however, they will ~~obey~~ and do what they think is right. In this case Hina, at work, is an agent to her Manager as her manager is the ~~an~~ authority figure, whereas at home Hina has no authority figure above her so she is in an autonomous state and lets her child go outside after mealtime and this is why she follows the rules at work, because she is an agent to the A.F. (her manager and also the parents of the children).

Examiner comments:

Candidates must be aware that four-mark questions of this style require them to give their knowledge of the elements of the required theory which they should then apply to explaining the scenario on the paper. The candidate work above is an excellent example of how this style of question should be answered.

Question 3b

Overall, this question was answered well, however some candidates overly-complicated their responses by believing they needed to consider strengths and weaknesses about agency theory in their responses. In a scenario for Q03b. This was not the case here, where a generic strength and weakness were required.

Creditworthy strengths included using accurate knowledge of research conducted by Milgram to suggest the theory was valid / credible; this was understandably a common response. Other candidates gained credit by explaining how agency theory could be considered a suitable explanation for real world behaviour.

Knowledge of alternative theories to explain obedience e.g. social impact theory (SIT) were acceptable for weaknesses of agency theory, when used to suggest that agency theory is an incomplete explanation of obedience. Dispositional alternatives such as the authoritarian personality were also seen by examiners and were also creditworthy. Some candidates questioned the validity of moral strain as an integral part of agency theory using Hofling et al (1966) where no moral strain was observed; this was also considered creditworthy.

The response over the page was awarded four marks. The candidate has written about using agency theory to understand real life behaviour and justified this by explaining how it can help us prevent it in the future. They have also made the point about the absence of moral strain as seen in Hofling et al 1966. This response was considered well developed and fully justified in terms of both the strength and the weakness.

(b) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of agency theory as an explanation of obedience.

(4)

Strength

Agency theory explains why events like the Holocaust occur and it makes sure that we understand how to prevent another similar event by explaining the agent's shifts. This helps bring awareness to the Holocaust and other genocides.

Weakness

A weakness is that it ~~does~~ doesn't include individual differences like authoritarian personality, in which people enjoy following orders and being prejudiced to those below them in status, meaning they may not experience moral strain whereas agency theory assumes that we do.

(Total for Question 3 = 8 marks)

Examiner comments:

Candidates should take care to read questions carefully. Although Q03a required contextualisation to the scenario about Hina, Q03b did not. Candidates who did not realise this often over-complicated their responses which ultimately cost them marks.

Question 4

This question required candidates to explain two strengths of social identity theory (SIT).

Overall, this question was answered well. Candidates commonly wrote about the credibility of the theory, justifying it using Tajfel et al. (1971) minimal groups study – this was one of the example responses given in the mark scheme.

The application of SIT to reducing prejudice was also often given as a strength. When learners gave an example of the theory being used to reduce prejudice to illustrate their point, this was often enough to allow the examiner to award two marks. The response over the page illustrates this.

Some candidates explained that SIT is an improvement on realistic conflict theory (RCT) because it also explains how prejudice can arise even in the absence of competition for limited resources. However, candidates sometimes failed to score marks when SIT and RCT were confused, for example they believed that SIT says that prejudice arises over competition for scarce resources, or that SIT can explain reduction in prejudice via the introduction of superordinate goals.

The response over the page was awarded four marks.

4 Explain **two** strengths of social identity theory as an explanation of prejudice.

- 1 Social Identity Theory is credible because it's backed by research evidence. When a group of boys in Latané's experiment were grouped based on meaningless things such as their liking of an artist and then asked to rank each group, they consistently favoured their own group - highlighting that social categorisation is enough to cause discrimination and prejudice.
- 2 Social Identity Theory can be readily applied to many real world contexts. For example, schools can get ahead of things such as bullying by creating 'whole-year' workshops, aimed at making the year group feel like one group instead of allowing them to categorise into small groups that discriminate against and bully each other.

(Total for Question 4 = 4 marks)

Examiner comments:

Using a real or imagined example of how a theory might be used to reduce prejudice in the real world can be a useful way to justify a strength of social identity theory. The candidate work above suggests how SIT could be used for this purpose in a school setting.

Question 5

This essay question asked candidates to evaluate their chosen social approach contemporary study in terms of generalisability and validity. Given the command word was 'evaluate', the AOs being tested were AO1 and AO3. Knowledge of the study was required, as were the strengths and / weaknesses of the study specifically in relation to generalisability and validity.

Burger (2009) was overwhelmingly the most common study that candidates wrote about; Cohrs (2012) and Reicher and Haslam (2006) may not be being taught by many centres. Consequently, the commentary that follows relates to Burger (2009).

Examiners often found good evidence of knowledge and understanding of the sample obtained by Burger, including reference to the screening processes employed, the number of participants obtained and the age range. Similarly, the procedure was well understood by many, although only better responses could distinguish this from Milgram's original work which Burger (2009) partially replicated.

Candidates seem to have found the evaluation more difficult, as is often the case. In this essay the difficulty may have been compounded by the question requiring specific evaluation points; the intention was for candidates to write a 'focused' rather than a 'broad' essay. Almost all candidates managed this to an extent, although one common error markers found was the suggestion that Burger's sample had a limited age range, which was incorrect given ages 20-81 years covers all stages of adulthood. The best candidate responses were able to explain the impact of the screening process on validity and / or generalisability. The best candidates were also able to consider how the study might be high in one type of validity (e.g. internal validity), yet potentially low in another (e.g. ecological validity).

The response below and over the page was awarded 6 marks in level three of the levels-based mark scheme. The response was accurate but not thorough in terms of AO1; there are further elements of Burger's procedure that are distinct from Milgram's that needed to be included to make the response thorough. In terms of AO3, whilst the candidate has been able to contrast Burger with Milgram in terms of generalisability the response is not fully balanced because the impact of the validity issues on Burger's conclusions are not fully explained.

5 In social psychology, you learned about one of the following contemporary studies:

- Burger (2009)
- Reicher and Haslam (2006)
- Cohrs et al. (2012).

↑ G 10 ppts 29 male 41 female
volunteers paid \$50

↓ task (mundane realism)

Evaluate your chosen contemporary study in terms of generalisability and validity.

↑ screening
2+ psych
college
(8) court

Chosen study

Burger (2009)

Burger (2009) aimed to test if Milgram's findings were accurate, but using a more ethical procedure. He put a confederate in a room with a 'teacher' (the participant), and the learner ~~on~~ in another

room. Before the study began, Burger reminded the participants of their right to withdraw once and another 2 times on paper, he then gave them an electric shock of 15 volts (less than the 45 volts in Milgram's Study) to make the participant believe the electric shock generator worked. This shows high internal validity as the participant would truly believe the learner was in pain when they were being 'shocked'. Therefore it tests the obedience of the participant and establishes the cause and effect of the participant following the instructions. The learner then had to answer questions and everytime they got an answer wrong the participant would give them an electric shock (increasing by 15 volts

each time. This has low task validity as shocking someone is not something that the participants would do in everyday life. Therefore ~~therefore~~ the results wouldn't represent their natural behaviour. As well as this, the study is

a lab experiment, which isn't the usual setting participants would be in, therefore their natural behaviour won't be shown and they are more likely to show demand characteristics.

However, Burger had high ~~external~~ validity as he screened the participants before the study to check their mental health and also if they had any knowledge of Milgram's study or had completed 2 or more psychology courses at college. This meant that the participants were less likely to guess the aim of the study and show demand characteristics.

Burger's sample consisted of 70 participants (41 females, 29 males) who volunteered through newspaper adverts offering them \$50 to take part. This sample shows high generalisability as Milgram's sample consisted of all male participants. Therefore Burger's study is more representative of both genders and a wider population. However, no gender differences in obedience were found.

Examiner comments:

Candidates need to be prepared to write focused evaluations / assessments of theories in studies in addition to more general ones in the examination. This means they should understand studies and theories in terms of validity, reliability, credibility, generalisability, objectivity, subjectivity and ethics.

Section B - Cognitive Psychology

Question 6a

This part-question asked candidates to describe two features of short-term memory. There were two available marks.

Examiners found this question was accessible to most candidates. It was common for them to score both available marks. Creditworthy responses included accurate reference to capacity, duration and encoding for short term memory, also the impact of rehearsal and chunking on short term memory. There seemed to be no common misconceptions, although some candidates were inaccurate, for example giving a response other than '7 +/-2' for the capacity of the short-term store.

The response below was awarded two marks. Although there is an erroneous reference to long-term memory in this response, there are more than enough creditworthy points about the features of short-term memory to gain both marks.

6 Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) proposed the multi-store model of memory.

(a) Describe short-term memory according to the multi-store model of memory.

(2)

Short term memory takes information from the sensory register that is paid attention to and holds it for 18 to 30 seconds. It can hold 7 ± 2 pieces of information and any information that is elaboratively rehearsed will enter the long term memory. The short term memory is also encoded acoustically, as discovered by Baddeley.

Examiner comments:

If a question focuses on one memory store, there can be no extra credit for adding information about another store. Given the limited time available in the examination, time taken doing so is better spent on other questions.

Question 6b

This part-question asked candidates to give one weakness of the multi-store model of memory (MSM). Note that this weakness was not limited to the short-term memory, as was

the case in question Q06a, however a weakness of the short-term memory aspect of the MSM a suitable response.

Suitable responses included reference to the overly simplistic nature of the MSM, this could be justified using appropriate case studies from neuropsychology or laboratory experiments that suggest memory is more complex. Responses using these justifications were often seen, and thus examiners could often award both available marks.

The response below was awarded two marks. The candidate has fully justified their chosen weakness, which is that the long-term memory as described in the MSM is too simplistic.

(b) Explain **one** weakness of the multi-store model of memory.

(2)

Multi-store model (MSM) assumes that LTM is a single store, however, research ~~at~~ such as Tulving, and case studies, such as Clive Wearing, suggests that Long term memory (LTM) is divided into different types. Clive Wearing ~~has~~ suffered from amnesia and has lost his episodic memory, he could not remember past events, however he could still play the piano, meaning his procedural memory was intact. This is a weakness as MSM does not ~~differentiate~~ differentiate between the ~~three~~ three types of LTM enough (procedural, episodic, semantic). (Total for Question 6 = 4 marks)

If LTM was a single store, all types would function and be affected in the same way.

Examiner comments:

Candidates can use findings that support arguably better theories / models to support a weakness of the one they are writing about. The candidate response above shows how this can be done.

Q07a

This part-question required candidates to state the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) for the practical investigation that they carried out as a part of their course. As centres and candidates are given a large amount of autonomy over the choice of cognitive practical they conduct, there were a great many creditworthy responses. Many candidates were able to score both available marks.

It was rather unusual to see candidates confusing the two types of variables, which was pleasing to examiners. However, on rare occasions the responses given did not clearly relate to an experiment, which is a requirement for this practical. A small number of candidates claimed to have undertaken unethical practical work, such as investigating the effect of alcohol on some aspects of cognition.

The response below was awarded two marks. This seemed to relate to a practical being done by many students in many centres.

7 In your studies of cognitive psychology, you will have completed a practical investigation.

(a) State the independent variable (IV) and the dependent variable (DV) for your practical investigation in cognitive psychology.

(2)

Independent variable (IV)

The acoustically similar and the acoustically dissimilar word lists - the type of word list is the IV.

Dependent variable (DV)

The DV was the amount of words recalled for each list.

Examiner comments:

Practical activities conducted for all psychological approaches at AS level should be ethically permissible. Centres should ensure this is the case before allowing candidates to embark on their data collection.

Question 7b

This part-question asked candidates to explain one strength and one weakness of their practical investigation in cognitive psychology. Again, in order to score both marks for each of the strength and the weakness, the candidates needed to fully justify their responses.

Suitable responses again were varied due to the autonomy that centres and candidates have over their choice of cognitive practical, however examiners needed to be sure that the response related to the cognitive practical and that this had been an experiment. Many candidates wrote about the composition of their sample and explained why this was

either a strength or a weakness of their practical. Ethical strengths were also credited; however, ethical weaknesses were not as there is a requirement that student practical work is ethical.

As has been previously suggested in this report, often a suitable way to justify a strength or a weakness is to explain the impact that this had on the data collected or conclusions reached.

The response over the page was awarded four marks as the strength and the weakness of a suitable practical investigation in cognitive psychology. Both points have been fully justified.

(b) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of your practical investigation in cognitive psychology.

(4)

Strength

Our practical investigation was a replication of Baddeley's Study. One strength of our practical investigation is that it had many controls such as the type of words in each word list, the number of words in each word list and the interference task. This is a strength because it increases the reliability of the investigation, as the investigation is able to be repeated with the same controls.

Weakness

One weakness of our practical investigation is that we included a couple of psychology students as participants. This is a weakness because it increases demand characteristics, as the psychology students will try harder to guess the aim of the investigation or to remember the words, or they might have special techniques to remember the words. This all can cause a low internal validity.

Examiner comments:

When questions ask about the practical investigation that students conducted in cognitive psychology, examiners must be given enough information to be sure that the investigation

being written about was both from cognitive psychology and was an experiment. If candidates do not do this, they will lose marks for what might be an otherwise correct response.

Question 8

This question asked candidates to give two strengths of using case studies to study brain damaged patients when researching memory.

Candidates appeared to find it difficult to give two strengths in their responses; often they could give one well-justified response, but a second response was either weaker or absent. Examiners were able to accept examples within the justifications given. Responses about the longitudinal nature of case studies and why this could be a strength were accepted, as were answers about studying individuals in depth / incorporating various methods.

The response was awarded three marks. The first strength given was creditworthy for one mark but was not justified in their response in terms of the benefits this brings to research in memory. The second response scored two marks because it included how case studies allow us to understand the functioning of specific parts of the brain; this is justified by means of an illustration using the case of HM in relation to understanding memory.

8 Explain two strengths of using case studies of brain-damaged patients when researching memory. ✓ link areas

1 One strength is that it enables psychologists to gain detailed insights to special cases. ~~For~~ example, the case study of HM allowed psychologists to obtain an in-depth analysis of ~~patient~~ brain damaged patients. This is because case studies enable psychologists to

2 Another strength of using case studies of brain damaged patients is that it allows psychologists to link areas of the brain to specific functions. For example, HM was found to have poor long term memory for episodic memory, but his semantic memory was fine. He did not need the concept of a dog explained to him, but did not recall getting a dog.

(Total for Question 8 = 4 marks)

Examiner tip:

Candidates are often asked to give a strength and a weakness; however, they can also be asked to give two strengths or two weaknesses. Candidates are advised to be prepared for this, and to have learnt at least two strengths and two weaknesses for all the points on the specification.

Candidates were required to calculate the median (middle) value from the specified data set for this part-question. Most candidates were able to do this, although a small number calculated the mean instead.

The response below was awarded one mark for correctly calculating the median.

(a) Calculate the median number of words written in the description of the cartoon
on the day the cartoon was watched.

(1)

SPACE FOR CALCULATIONS
~~22, 28, 29, 38~~ (41) ~~44, 45, 46, 58~~

Median: 41

Examiner comments:

Candidates should ensure that they know which method of central tendency (mode, median mean) is which, and how to calculate each of them.

Question 9b

This part-question required candidates to calculate the Wilcoxon 'T' value for the data provided. A table was given for candidates to record their working at each stage of the calculation.

Many candidates were able to select the appropriate equation from the front of the paper and understood how to perform the stages of the test in order to calculate the correct value. Some candidates made errors in the ranking / rank if positive / rank if negative parts; this limited their marks or prevented them from scoring any marks.

Over the page is an example of a response to this part-question that was awarded four marks for correctly calculating 'T'.

Complete Table 3 and calculate the Wilcoxon signed ranks test for Nyasha's data.

(4)

Participant	Number of words written on the day the cartoon was watched	Number of words written one week after the cartoon was watched	Difference	Rank	Rank if positive	Rank if negative
A	45	35	-10	3		3
B	49	26	-23	9		9
C	29	9	-20	7		7
D	44	22	-22	8		8
E	22	25	+3	2	2	
F	53	39	-14	4		4
G	41	26	-15	5		5
H	33	17	-16	6		6
I	28	30	+2	1	1	
Total:					3	42

Table 3

SPACE FOR CALCULATIONS

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨
2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23

Wilcoxon T value 3

Examiner comments:

Candidates should make full use of the various examples of statistical tests questions on the various past papers and SAMs to practice calculating the values.

Question 9c

For this part-question, candidates were asked to suggest an improvement that Nyasha could have made to her investigation.

There were many acceptable improvements that could gain credit. These included suggestions about diversifying the sample Nyasha used, using a cartoon that is unlikely to

have been seen by the participants, and improved way of measuring children's memories for the cartoon. So long as the candidate fully justified the suggestion, they could score up to two marks. Once again, suggesting how the improvement could impact the data collected or conclusions drawn was often an effective way to justify the suggestion.

The response below was awarded two marks. The candidate has given a creditworthy suggestion of an improvement, and they have justified this in terms of generalisability of the findings of Nyasha's study.

(c) Explain **one** improvement Nyasha could make to her experiment.

(2)

Nyasha could take a sample of a wider variety of children and not just british children. She could have taken different ethnicities such as American children, Spanish children. This would make her sample more representative and therefore generalisable to the population.

Examiner comments:

Candidates must ensure they suggest an improvement, *not* a weakness for this type of question.

Question 10

This essay question asked candidates to assess the usefulness of the working memory model (WMM).

Examiners were pleased to see that many candidates answered this question very well, and they were often able to award marks in level four of the levels-based mark scheme. Examiners often reported that AO3 was the strongest component in the work they saw.

However, in weaker responses, candidates limited themselves by simply naming the components of the WMM, rather than describing their hypothesized features and functions.

Over the page is an example of a response to this question that was awarded 7 marks, in level four of the levels-based mark scheme. AO1 was considered accurate and thorough. Despite a few minor errors, the candidate presented us with a range of different studies accurately and in depth to support their conclusions. Furthermore, they introduced balance into their work by attempting to challenge the usefulness of the model.

(WMM)

10 Assess how useful the working memory model (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974) is as an explanation of memory.

(8)

The WMM describes memory as being ^{with slave systems e.g.} from multiple different stores. The Central executive, which is modality free, distributes and allocates info to slave systems, and directs attention. Has limited capacity, as it doesn't store info, can pass info to either the phonological loop or visuospatial sketchpad. Phonological loop ^(VS) handles spoken and written info temporarily, whilst the VS handles movement and spatial info. It's useful because it offers a more detailed description of memory than the multi store model, e.g. being able to explain how people can remember ~~some~~ ^{only partial} long term memory. ~~Baddeley and~~ Evidence of this is shown in Paulsen et al (1998), showing through neuroimaging PET scans, how the phonological loop is ~~in the~~ located in the supramarginal gyrus, and the visuospatial sketchpad in Broca's area. Also useful as ~~it~~ unlike the multi store model, it takes into account the different types of memory, e.g. how we remember phone digits, due to our phonological loop allowing us to hold up to 2

Second worth of speech ~~in our~~ and allows for subvocal rehearsal ~~connecting written info~~. Also allows for episodic retrieval, e.g. remembering and being able to visualise our old bedroom etc, so is much more detailed than the MSM by Atkinson and Shiffrin⁽¹⁹⁶⁸⁾. Also HM in 1953, Henry Molaison, had ~~STM~~ LTM memory impairments, but STM was fine, so backs up. Shallice and Warrington (1974), KF, who had a phonological loop impairment, with a digit span of 1, but his visual memory was intact. Therefore, shows they must have separate stores. Has led to great application too, such as chunking, in helping students learn, and ~~just~~ added an episodic buffer in 2000, however this could show the model was and still may be incomplete, so makes it lack validity. In conclusion, it does have strong applications and is applicable to real world scenarios, offering a much detailed overview of how our memory works.

(Total for Question 10 = 8 marks)

When candidates choose to use studies in their assessments they are advised to explain how each study supports or challenges the usefulness of the model or theory in question. This is no different to the expectation that they must justify their points in 'stand-alone' AO3 questions elsewhere on the paper.

Section C

As always, the final section of the paper was comprised of a single essay question that concerned both cognitive psychology and social psychology. The essay is worth a

maximum of 12 marks. In this year's essay, all three AOs were being assessed.

Question 11

Candidates were asked to evaluate how social impact theory and Tulving's (1972) explanation of long term memory could explain the context presented in the scenario.

Whilst this question was a stretch and challenge for many candidates, it was pleasing to see that many did engage with the scenario well and address the question using both the required theories.

Candidates often gained most of their marks for their AO1 and AO2 content. AO3 was often weaker and sometimes absent all together. If an essay uses the command word 'evaluate' as this one did, AO3 content will always be expected in the responses. We know from other questions, particularly the 'stand-alone' strengths and weakness questions earlier in the paper that this cohort could use studies to support points of strengths and weakness, so it is a shame this didn't always carry through to this essay. However, examiners are aware of the time constraints that candidates face, and this may have affected performance here.

One error that examiners repeatedly saw was candidates using reconstructive memory rather than Tulving's long term memory in their responses when explaining the differences in Marsha's and Abbie's memories. Reconstructive memory could have been a credible alternative theory to explain their memories for AO3 credit but could not be credited when it had simply been confused with Tulving's long term memory.

Over the page is an example of a response that scored 8 marks, placing it in level 3 of the levels-based mark scheme. This was one of the better responses seen by examiners, indeed level 4 responses were very rarely seen. Unusually, in this response, the AO2 and AO3 were thought to be more developed than the AO1; both AOs were placed at the top of level 3, whilst the AO1 was placed at the top of level 2. Overall, it was felt that the candidate had however done enough to be awarded mid-level 3, 8 marks.

SECTION C *episodic*

- 11 Marsha and Abbie are friends and are remembering a day from their childhood when they were 10 years old.

Marsha remembers they were picking apples from a tree at the bottom of her garden. The apples tasted juicy and sweet. She remembers her mum calling all the way from the house, telling them to come inside. Marsha remembers going inside.

Abbie remembers the day too. She remembers it was hot and sunny so it must have been summertime. However, Abbie remembers they were picking pears, not apples. Abbie also remembers Marsha's mum calling all the way from the house, telling them to come inside. However, Abbie remembers staying outside.

Evaluate how social impact theory and Tulving's (1972) explanation of long-term memory can explain Marsha and Abbie's memory of the day from their childhood.

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(12)

Social Impact theory states that 3 factors affect obedience; the strength of the source, immediacy, and number. The strength of the source refers to if the person sees the commander as ~~an~~ a legitimate authority figure. Marsha may have viewed her mother as an authority figure and therefore obeys her when she tells her to come inside; however Abbie may not have seen Marsha's mum as an authority figure because it's not her own mum and therefore didn't listen to her and stayed outside. Immediacy refers to how close the authority figure is to you either physically or emotionally. Marsha may have listened to her mum calling her inside because she is emotionally close to her; however Abbie may have not listened to Marsha's mum because she was calling them from "all the way in the house" which is far away from Abbie and therefore she may not feel pressure to listen.

Social impact theory is supported by research evidence such as Sedelides and Jackson who found that people at a zoo would not lean on the railing when an authority figure was nearby, proving that immediacy plays a role in obedience. However, Social impact theory is too reductionist and doesn't explain all kinds of obedience which means it may not fully explain Martha and Abbie's behaviour.

Tulving's Longterm memory (LTM) theory suggests that LTM is broken down into 3 parts; episodic memory, semantic memory, and procedural memory. Martha and Abbie are both recalling ~~a semantic~~ an episodic memory which is a memory of past events which is time-stamped and detailed. Martha and Abbie both remember a time where they were picking fruit in the garden and Abbie remembers it being summer because it was sunny which is a time-stamped episodic memory.

Tulving's LTM theory is supported by research evidence, case studies into brain damaged patients such as HM who had severely damaged episodic and semantic memory but ~~his~~ ^{his} procedural memory was intact. However, these are not generalizable as they were only done to one person.

Examiner comments:

Candidates should try to leave themselves enough time in the examination to produce their best work for this challenging synoptic essay. Some future candidates might like to consider turning to the back of the examination paper and making this the first part of the question they answer.

