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# GCSE Psychology 2017

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## Introduction

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The 2017 Psychology qualification for GCSE is designed to be taught as a 120-hour guided learning course. The course is most likely to be delivered over a two-year period, although other methods of delivery are feasible. A two-year course allows learners to develop their understanding at a steady pace, so that they become more confident with the subject matter and skills over time. The shorter, one-year option can leave learners still developing their understanding of the subject and thus less able to develop their thinking and understanding under examination conditions. A three-year option for delivery is also included. A three-year programme provides learners with a longer time frame in which to develop their understanding, however the length of time from starting the course to the examinations means that more effort will be required to ensure that not too much of the early material is lost over the passage of time. Thus, while acknowledging that centres may often have sound reasons for not selecting a two-year programme of study, it is the two-year course that is recommended as the optimal strategy by Pearson Edexcel.

The aim of the course is to introduce students to psychology as a subject area, to develop their scientific skills and understanding, and to provide understanding and learning that is both enjoyable and worthwhile. In common with all the 2017 GCSE specifications in all of the sciences, there is a much greater emphasis on scientific methodology and mathematics. This can either be embedded with the subject material or taught as a separate section. Two different versions of the two-year programme are provided: one that integrates the research methods and one which keeps the research methods separate. In addition, there is a three-year model for those schools who prefer to start the GCSE programme in Year 9, as well as a one-year course for those offering an intensive programme of GCSEs.

The course contains five compulsory topics, as follows:

- developmental psychology (focusing on cognitive development)
- memory
- psychological problems (focusing on depression and addiction)
- the brain and neuropsychology
- social influence (focusing on obedience and conformity).

In addition, students will study two of the optional topics. These are:

- criminal psychology
- the self
- perception
- sleep and dreaming
- language, thought and communication.

## Order of delivery

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The order followed in the course planners is the same as in the published specification. The order of the compulsory units can be easily changed as they are all designed to fit into a standard-length slot. There is an advantage in leaving the optional topics until later as it will give you an opportunity to get to know the students and to decide which topics will work best for them. By keeping the optional topics separate, the division between material for Paper 1 and Paper 2 is made somewhat easier to emphasise. Finally, differences between the optional topics mean that it is not suggested that any research methods material be delivered within the optional topics. Thus it would seem better to keep the compulsory units together if the research methods are integrated.

## Teaching the research methods

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### Integrating the research methods

Integrating the research methods with the general content allows students to understand how material fits together. For example, ethical issues make more sense when students are learning about studies undertaken by psychologists. However, it is much more difficult to ensure that all aspects of research methods are covered and that students appreciate how concepts transfer across material if those concepts are taught only in one context. Ideally, once a concept has been learned then it will be brought up at every opportunity. Thus, in the integrated plan, ethical issues should be introduced very early to emphasise the importance of good ethical practice in psychology. However, it would be surprising if the ethical issues are not repeatedly considered when new studies are introduced.

### Teaching the research methods as a discrete unit

Teaching the research methods separately means that focus can be maintained and the interrelated aspects of the methodology can be built upon. It could be argued that – in an ideal world – research methods would be integrated and taught as a discrete unit. Unfortunately most teachers are unlikely to be able to create sufficient extra time for this luxury and will need to go down one route or the other.

## Modes of delivery

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### One-, two- or three-year programme?

	One year	Two years	Three years
Pro	<p>Good for those who cannot afford to spend too long gaining qualifications.</p> <p>Will suit more mature students.</p>	<p>Pace of delivery enables students to develop thinking and understanding.</p> <p>Length of time for each topic is sufficiently short that it can be seen as a coherent whole.</p>	<p>Gives time to thoroughly develop understanding and knowledge.</p> <p>More opportunity to look at issues in depth.</p>
Con	<p>Intensive, so students will need to do quite a lot of self-study.</p> <p>Gives a relatively short time for thinking and understanding to develop.</p>	<p>Time will need to be spent going over material covered in the first year of the course once the new academic year starts after the summer break.</p>	<p>Need to consolidate learning in preparation for the final examinations as it will be two and a half years since first material was covered.</p>

## Option 1: Year 1 – for teaching over two years with research methods integrated

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	What is psychology? A general introduction to the subject What is meant by <b>developmental psychology</b> ?
	2	Developmental stages Early brain development.
	3	Piaget's developmental theory including evaluation of theory Ethical issues of research including working with children
	4	Observation as a research method Study: Piaget and Inhelder (1956)
	5	Dweck's mindset theory
	6	Study: Gunderson <i>et al.</i> (2013) Correlation, drawing and interpreting scatterplots
	7	Willingham's learning theory of development
Christmas		
Term 1 second half	8	Evaluation of Willingham's theory Issues and debates: moral development
	9	Complete moral development End-of-topic test
	10	<b>Memory:</b> the information processing approach; stages of memory including short-term and long-term memory Bar charts and histograms
	11	The Multi-store Model of Memory Normal distribution, percentages and fractions
	12	Experiments as a research method Study: Peterson and Peterson (1959)
	13	Bartlett's Theory of Reconstructive Memory
	14	Study: Bartlett's (1932) War of the Ghosts Variables in research and controlling them
Christmas		
Spring Term 2	15	Amnesia
	16	Designing studies: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs
	17	Reductionism & holism End-of-topic test
	18	<b>Psychological problems:</b> introduction to mental health issues, depression and addiction; description of symptoms Diagnosis and International Classification of Diseases (ICD) Reliability and validity

		Primary and secondary data
	19	Depression: genetic explanation
	20	Depression: cognitive explanation Study: Caspi <i>et al.</i> (2003) Writing hypotheses Drawing and interpreting frequency graphs
	21	Addiction: genetic explanation
	22	Addiction: learning explanation
	23	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as a therapy or both depression and for addiction
	24	Drug treatments Study: Young (2007) Sampling A recap of arithmetic and numerical computation
	25	Nature/nurture issues End-of-topic test
	26	<b>The brain and neuropsychology:</b> anatomy of the brain
<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	Synapses and neurotransmitters
	28	Brain lateralisation
	29	Brain lateralisation Study: Sperry (1968)
	30	Neurological damage and its effects
	31	Neurological damage and its effects
	32	The case study method Study: Damasio <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	33	Historical perspectives and psychology End-of-topic test
	34	<b>Revision</b>
	35	End-of-year examinations
	36	End-of-year examinations
	37	
	38	

## Option 1: Year 2

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	<b>Social influence:</b> bystander behaviour
	2	Factors affecting bystander behaviour including personal and situational factors Study: Piliavin <i>et al.</i> (1969) Mean, median, mode and range Convert data between tables and graphs
	3	Conformity Factors affecting conformity including personal and situational factors
	4	Study: Zimbardo's prison experiment (1973) Qualitative and quantitative data, questionnaires and interviews
	5	Obedience. Factors affecting obedience including personal and situational factors
	6	Behaviour of crowds, deindividuation, pro- and anti- social behaviour
	7	Blind obedience and how to prevent it
Term 1 second half	8	Cultural, social, personal and situational factors round-up End-of-topic test
	9	<b>Option 1 (see table 1)</b>
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Christmas		
Winter Term 2	15	End-of topic test
	16	Revision for mock examinations
	17	Mock examination
	18	Mock examination
	19	<b>Option 2 (see table 1)</b>
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	25	End-of-topic test
	26	<b>Revision</b>
<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	Revision
	28	Revision
	29	Revision
	30	Revision
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**Table 1: Optional topics – two topics selected from those below**

Note: this table is exactly the same for both integrated and teach-alone research methods (Option 2).

Wk	Criminal	The self	Perception	Sleep and dreaming	Language, thought and communication
1	Operant conditioning	Self-concept (Lewis)	Monocular and binocular cues	Function of sleep	Language–thought issues
2	Social Learning Theory	Rogers Maslow	Illusions and constancies Study: Haber and Levin (2001)	Internal and external factors affecting sleep Study: Siffre (1975)	Piaget
3	Study: Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) Study: Charlton <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Study: van Houtte and Jarvis (1995) Erikson, Baumeister	Gregory's theory	Sleep disorders	Vygotsky



4	Biological explanation of criminality (Eysenck)	Study: Vohs and Schooler (2008) External and internal factors	Gibson's theory of perception	Freud's theory of dreaming	Language relativism and language determinism Study: Boroditsky (2001)
5	Punishment and recidivism	Measuring personality	Perceptual set	Study: Freud's Little Hans (1909) Hobson & MacCarley theory	Aitchison's criteria Darwinian view of NVC
6	Treating offenders	Trait theories of personality	Study: Carmichael <i>et al.</i> (1932)	Hobson and McCarley's theory	Non-verbal communication Study: Yuki <i>et al.</i> (2007)
7	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test

## Option 2: Year 1 – for teaching over two years with research methods taught separately

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	What is psychology? A general introduction to the subject What is meant by <b>developmental psychology</b> ?
	2	Developmental stages Development of the brain Piaget's developmental theory
	3	Evaluation of Piaget's theory Study: Piaget and Inhelder (1956)
	4	Dweck's mindset theory Study: Gunderson <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	5	Willingham's learning theory of development
	6	Issues and debates: moral development
	7	End-of-topic test
Christmas		
Term 1 second half	8	<b>Memory:</b> the information processing approach, stages of memory including short-term and long-term memory The Multi-store Model of Memory
	9	Study: Peterson and Peterson (1959)
	10	Bartlett's Theory of Reconstructive Memory
	11	Study: Bartlett's (1932) War of the Ghosts
	12	Amnesia
	13	Reductionism and holism End-of-topic test
	14	<b>Psychological problems:</b> introduction to mental health issues
Christmas		
Spring Term 2	15	Depression and addiction: description of symptoms Diagnosis and International Classification of Diseases (ICD)
	16	Depression: genetic and cognitive explanations
	17	Study: Caspi <i>et al.</i> (2003) Addiction: genetic explanation
	18	Addiction: learning explanations Drug therapies
	19	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as a therapy for both disorders. Study: Young (2007)
	20	Nature/nurture issues End-of-topic test
Christmas		

	21	<b>The brain and neuropsychology:</b> anatomy of the brain
	22	Synapses and neurotransmitters
	23	Brain lateralisation
	24	Neurological damage and its effects
	25	Study: Sperry (1968) Study: Damasio <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	26	Historical perspectives and psychology End-of-topic test
<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	<b>Social influence:</b> bystander behaviour
	28	Factors affecting bystander behaviour including personal and situational Study: Piliavin <i>et al.</i> (1969)
	29	Conformity Factors affecting conformity including personal and situational
	30	Study: Zimbardo's prison experiment (1973) Obedience Factors affecting obedience including personal and situational
	31	Behaviour of crowds and individuals within crowds. Effect of collective behaviour.
	32	Blind obedience and how to prevent it
	33	Cultural, social, personal and situational factors round-up End-of-topic test
	34	<b>Revision</b>
	35	End-of-year examinations
	36	End-of-year examinations
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## Option 2: Year 2

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	<b>Research methods</b> Ethical issues of research Designing studies: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs	
	2	Experiments Variables in research and controlling them	
	3	Writing hypotheses Mean, median, mode and range Normal distribution, percentages and fractions Bar charts, histograms and frequency graphs	
	4	Questionnaires and interviews Qualitative and quantitative data	
	5	Observations, case studies, primary and secondary data	
	6	Reliability and validity Sampling	
	7	A recap of arithmetic and numerical computation Convert data between tables and graphs	
Christmas			
Term 1 second half	8	End-of-topic test	
	9	<b>Option 1 (see table 1)</b>	
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	12		
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Winter Term 2	14		
	Christmas		
	15	End-of-topic test	
	16	Revision for mock examinations	
	17	Mock examination	
	18	Mock examination	
19	<b>Option 2 (see table 1)</b>		
20			
Christmas			
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	25	End-of-topic test
	26	<b>Revision</b>
<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	Revision
	28	Revision
	29	Revision
	30	Revision
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### Option 3: Year 1 – for teaching over three years with research methods partially integrated

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	What is psychology? A general introduction to the subject What is meant by <b>developmental psychology</b> ?
	2	Developmental stages Development of the brain
	3	Piaget's developmental theory
	4	Piaget's developmental theory including evaluation of theory
	5	Ethical issues of research including working with children Study: Piaget and Inhelder (1956)
	6	Observation Correlation, drawing and interpreting scatterplots
	7	Dweck's mindset theory
Christmas		
Term 1 second half	8	Study: Gunderson <i>et al.</i> (2013)
	9	Willingham's learning theory of development
	10	Evaluation of Willingham's theory
	11	Moral development
	12	Revision End-of-topic test
	13	<b>Memory:</b> the information processing approach
	14	Stages of memory including short-term and long-term memory
Christmas		
Spring Term 2	15	The Multi-store Model of Memory
	16	Study: Peterson and Peterson (1959)
	17	Bar charts and histograms Normal distribution, percentages and fractions
	18	Experiments as a research method Variables in research and controlling them
	19	Designing studies: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs
	20	Bartlett's Theory of Reconstructive Memory
Christmas		
	21	Study: Bartlett's (1932) War of the Ghosts
	22	Amnesia
	23	Reductionism and holism
	24	Revision

		End-of-topic test
	25	<b>Psychological problems:</b> introduction to mental health issues, depression and addiction; description of symptoms
	26	Diagnosis and International Classification of Diseases (ICD) Reliability and validity Primary and secondary data
<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	Depression: genetic explanation
	28	Depression: cognitive explanation
	29	Study: Caspi <i>et al.</i> (2003)
	30	Writing hypotheses Drawing and interpreting frequency graphs
	31	Addiction: genetic explanation
	32	Addiction: learning explanation
	33	<b>Revision</b>
	34	Revision
	35	End-of-year examinations
	36	End-of-year examinations
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## Option 3: Year 2

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	Recap of course so far: <b>developmental psychology</b>
	2	Recap of course so far: <b>memory</b> and <b>psychological problems</b>
	3	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as a therapy for both depression and addiction Drug treatments
	4	Study: Young (2007)
	5	Nature/nurture issues
	6	Revision End-of-topic test
	7	<b>The brain and neuropsychology:</b> anatomy of the brain
Christmas		
Term 1 second half	8	Synapses and neurotransmitters
	9	Brain lateralisation
	10	Brain lateralisation
	11	Study: Sperry (1968)
	12	Neurological damage and its effects
	13	Neurological damage and its effects
	14	The case study method
Christmas		
Winter Term 2	15	Study: Damasio <i>et al.</i> (1994)
	16	Historical perspectives
	17	Revision End-of-topic test
	18	<b>Social influence:</b> bystander behaviour
	19	Factors affecting bystander behaviour
	20	Study: Piliavin <i>et al.</i> (1969)
Easter		
	21	Conformity
	22	Factors affecting conformity.
	23	Study: Zimbardo's prison experiment (1973)
	24	Qualitative and quantitative data, questionnaires and interviews
	25	Sampling A recap of arithmetic and numerical computation
	26	Mean, median, mode and range Convert data between tables and graphs
Easter		



Summer Term 3	27	Obedience
	28	Factors affecting obedience
	29	Behaviour of crowds
	30	Blind obedience and how to prevent it
	31	Cultural, social, personal and situational factors round-up.
	32	End-of-topic test
	33	<b>Revision</b>
	34	Revision
	35	End-of-year examinations
	36	End-of-year examinations
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## Option 3: Year 3

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	<b>Option 1 (see table 1)</b>
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Term 1 second half	8	
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	11	End-of-topic test
	12	<b>Option 2 (see table 1)</b>
	13	
	14	
<b>Christmas</b>		
Winter Term 2	15	
	16	<b>Revision for mock examinations</b>
	17	Mock examination
	18	Mock examination
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	25	<b>End-of-topic test</b>
	26	Revision
<b>Easter</b>		
Summer Term 3	27	Revision
	28	Revision
	29	Revision
	30	Revision

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**Table 2: Optional topics – two topics selected from those below**

For delivery as part of Option 3.

Wk	Criminal	The self	Perception	Sleep and dreaming	Language, thought and communication
1	Operant conditioning	Self-concept (Lewis)	Monocular and binocular cues	Function of sleep	Language–thought issues
2	Social Learning Theory	Rogers Study: van Houtte and Jarvis (1995)	Illusions and constancies	Function of sleep	
3	Study: Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961)	Erikson, Baumeister	Study: Haber and Levin (2001)	Internal and external factors affecting sleep	Piaget
4	Study: Charlton <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Study: Vohs and Schooler (2008)	Gregory’s theory	Study: Siffre (1975)	Vygotsky
5	Biological explanation of criminality (Eysenck)	Humanistic explanation of self (Maslow and Rogers)	Gregory’s theory	Sleep disorders	Language relativism and language determinism
6		External and internal factors	Gibson’s theory	Freud’s theory of dreaming	Study: Boroditsky (2001)

7	Punishment and recidivism	Measuring personality	Gibson's theory	Freud's theory of dreaming	Aitchison's criteria
8			Perceptual set	Study: Freud's Little Hans (1909)	Darwinian view of non-verbal communication (NVC) NVC
9	Treating offenders	Trait theories of personality	Perceptual set	Hobson and MacCarley's theory	NVC
10			Study: Carmichael <i>et al.</i> (1932)	Hobson and McCarley's theory	Study: Yuki <i>et al.</i> (2007)
11	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test	End-of-topic test

## Option 4: One-year course

Autumn Term 1 first half	1	<b>Developmental:</b> stages of development Early brain development Ethical issues, observation
	2	Piaget's developmental theory Study: Piaget and Inhelder (1956)
	3	Dweck's mindset theory Study: Gunderson <i>et al.</i> (2013) Correlations and scatterplots
	4	Willingham's learning theory Moral development
	5	<b>Memory:</b> information processing, stages of memory, short-term and long-term memory Experiments
	6	The Multi-store Model of Memory Study: Peterson and Peterson (1959) Bar charts, histograms, frequency graphs, normal distribution, percentages and fractions
	7	Bartlett's Theory of Reconstructive Memory Study: Bartlett's (1932) War of the Ghosts Variables in research and controlling them
Term 1 second half	8	Designs of studies: independent groups, repeated measures, matched pairs Amnesia Reductionism and holism
	9	<b>Psychological problems:</b> diagnosis and International Classification of Diseases (ICD) Reliability and validity Depression: genetic and cognitive explanations Study: Caspi <i>et al.</i> (2003)
	10	Addiction: genetic and learning explanations Primary and secondary data
	11	Drug treatments Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as a therapy for both disorders Study: Young (2007) Writing hypotheses
	12	Sampling, arithmetic and numerical computation Nature/nurture issues
	13	<b>The brain and neuropsychology:</b> anatomy of the brain, synapses, neurotransmitters

	14	Brain lateralisation Study: Sperry (1968)
<b>Christmas</b>		
<b>Winter Term 2</b>	15	Neurological damage and its effects
	16	Case study method Study: Damasio <i>et al.</i> (1994) Historical perspective
	17	<b>Social influence:</b> cultural, social, personal and situational factors Bystander behaviour Factors affecting bystander behaviour including personal and situational
	18	Study: Piliavin <i>et al.</i> (1969) Mean, median, mode and range Convert data between tables and graphs Qualitative and quantitative data, questionnaires and interviews
	19	Conformity Factors affecting conformity including personal and situational Study: Zimbardo's prison experiment (1973)
	20	Obedience Factors affecting obedience including personal and situational Behaviour in crowds Blind obedience and how to prevent it
<b>Easter</b>		
	21	<b>Optional topic 1</b>
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	25	<b>Optional topic 2</b>
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<b>Easter</b>		
<b>Summer Term 3</b>	27	
	28	
	29	<b>Revision</b>
	30	Revision
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**Table 3: Optional topics for Option 4 – two topics selected from those below**

Wk	Criminal	The self	Perception	Sleep and dreaming	Language, thought and communication
1	Operant conditioning and Social Learning Theory	Self-concept (Lewis, Rogers)	Monocular and binocular cues Illusions and constancies Study: Haber and Levin (2001)	Function of sleep Internal and external factors affecting sleep	Language–thought issues Piaget and Vygotsky
2	Study: Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) Study: Charlton <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Study: van Houtte and Jarvis (1995) Erikson, Baumeister	Gregory's theory	Study: Siffre (1975) Sleep disorders	Language relativism and language determinism
3	Biological explanation of criminality (Eysenck)	Study: Vohs and Schooler (2008) Humanistic explanation of self (Maslow and Rogers) External and internal factors	Gibson's theory	Freud's theory of dreaming Study: Freud's Little Hans (1909)	Study: Boroditsky (2001) Aitchison's criteria
4	Punishment and recidivism Treating offenders	Measuring personality Trait theories of personality	Perceptual set Study: Carmichael <i>et al.</i> (1932)	Hobson and MacCarley's theory	Darwinian view of non-verbal communication (NVC) NVC Study: Yuki <i>et al.</i> (2007)