

# Psychology



## Psychology

Exam board: AQA

Specification: 7181 (AS) / 7182 (A Level)

**This is a two year linear A level course** - The AS content forms the first half of the A level content and can be assessed at the end of Year 12 to provide an AS Level qualification if the student is dropping the subject and believes they can get a strong grade. Otherwise the two years of content are assessed at the end of Year 13 to give the A level grade.

### Course Delivery:

A Level Psychology is taught through exercises, experiments and discussions in small groups and through guided reading of texts. Video and internet research as well as ICT activities are used to consolidate material. Active learning is the key approach to teaching and students are expected to read outside of class time in order to develop application of material and key skills during lesson time.

### Course Content:

Human behaviour is viewed through the perspective of a number of different psychological approaches, and students learn how to apply these approaches to give explanations of why we do what we do. The emphasis is on applying knowledge rather than just acquiring knowledge, thereby developing students' transferable skills of analysis, evaluation and critical thinking. There is a video link at the end of the flyer which explains the whole course in an accessible way.

We follow the AQA specification which covers the following topics:

**Cognitive psychology** – including the study of how memory works and how fragile the eyewitness memories of crimes are

**Social psychology** – studies of obedience and authority – why do some people unquestioningly obey orders even if it means hurting others?

**Developmental psychology** – looking at infant attachment behaviour and parenting – how does culture or being raised in an institution affect the development of a child

**Biological psychology** – looking at structures and chemical activity within the brain as well as ways of learning about the brain such as surgery and brain scans

**Abnormal psychology** – understanding mental health and ways to treat psychological disorders. We also look at both medical treatments and the use of other therapies.

**Research methods** – Methods and techniques used in psychological research, designing investigations, ethical issues and the scientific process. Also includes mathematics – descriptive statistics, graphs, statistical testing and distribution curves. This form 25% of the course.

### **A Level year 2:**

Students will revisit some of the year 1 content but study it at a more advanced level. Students will also study the following topics:

Issue and debates in psychology such as the nature vs nurture debate, determinism, reductionism and gender bias

Approaches in psychology – biological, social, cognitive, behaviourist, humanistic and psychodynamic explanations of behaviour

Topics in psychology including gender, schizophrenia and aggression.

Students will also study research methods and mathematics to a more advanced level.

### **Mathematics and science:**

Psychology is classified as a Science. This means it counts towards UCAS applications for courses that require Science A Levels (at most universities). Therefore, students become familiar with scientific methods of investigation and data analysis by carrying out and writing up small scale research projects, as well as learning about psychological theories and research. The new specifications are also much more focused on mathematical understanding – therefore 10% of the assessment for both AS and A2 courses will contain mathematical skills at GCSE equivalent and above. 30% of the assessment for both courses will assess skill, knowledge and understanding of research methods. It is essential that students have both the enthusiasm and competence to continue to study scientific and mathematical content at this level.

### **Entry requirements:**

If the subject is taken at GCSE it should be passed at 5 or above and at least one English/Humanities/Social Science subject should be passed with a 6. In addition a grade 5 is required in Maths and in Science or Biology.

### **Skills & personal qualities required / developed by course:**

The ability to look at material and ask questions about it is essential; how do we know this is true? Why do we do that? What is wrong with this? To not accept all you read and are told as gospel, but instead, to question and criticise, analyse and evaluate. These are essential skills. You must have a hunger for answers and a need to make sense of the world around you in order to do well. MOTIVATION is the key!

### **Resources:**

All students will be able to access to a digital textbook and handbook of all course information, teaching schedules, exam information, etc.  
Plenty of interactive ICT material available including quizzes, games and activities to assess and increase knowledge and understanding.

### **Want to know more?**

Here is a great video introduction to the A level psychology course – we recommend that everyone watches this before selecting this subject:

<https://youtu.be/p4f22sXf4UU>

### **Recommended reading:**

Psychology: A very short introduction – Gillian Butler

The Rough Guide to the Brain – Barry Gibb

Tutor2U also offer a free online transition course for students about to start Psychology – this can be completed over the summer

<https://ondemand.tutor2u.net/students/transition-to-aqa-a-level-psychology-skills-booster>

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