



Wath Sixth Form Subject Preparation Pack

PSYCHOLOGY

World-class learning

World-class learning every lesson, every day

The highest expectations

Everyone can be successful; always expect the highest standards

No excuses

Create solutions not excuses; make positive thinking a habit

Growth mindset

Believe you can improve; work hard and value feedback

Never give up

Resilience is essential; be relentless in the pursuit of excellence

Everyone is valued

Diversity is celebrated; see the best in everyone

Integrity

Be trustworthy and honest; deliver on promises and walk the talk

A Level Psychology Transition Pack

Contents

- What is Psychology?
- Why should I study Psychology?
- What careers could A Level Psychology lead to?
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What is Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of the human mind and behaviour. A common misconception is that the study of Psychology allows you to read people's mind, however, this is not the case. What it will allow you to do is understand the reasons why individuals think the way they do and the possible reasons why they show certain behaviours. The A Level Psychology course focuses heavily on the explanation and treatment of mental health problems but the study of Psychology in general links to all aspects of life including criminal behaviour, parenting strategies, teaching practices and business policies to name a few.

Why should I study Psychology?

Psychology is always a useful subject to study as it involves an increased understanding of people and, in a world where we interact with hundreds of others on a daily basis, the benefits of this are limitless. Additionally, at A Level, it develops several essential skills that will benefit your study of other A Levels, a future university course and future employment. These include but are not limited to:

- Critical thinking
- Reasoning and logic
- Communication
- Independent research skills
- Data analysis and interpretation of data
- Empathy
- Oracy

What careers could Psychology lead to?

Due to the nature of the subject – understanding people – it is impossible to put together a definitive list of careers that Psychology would benefit. That said, below are some of the most common careers of Psychology students:

- Health sector – clinical psychologists, nursing, doctors
- Legal sector – Police officers, barristers, lawyers, probation officers, prison officers
- Education sector – teacher, SENCO, educational psychologist, safeguarding roles
- Business sector – business owner, CEO, managing director, human resources, occupational psychologist
- Sport sector – sport psychologist, personal trainer, coach, professional sports person.
- Social services

What will I study?

At Wath Academy we cover the AQA Psychology syllabus which covers a breadth of knowledge split across 3 papers.

Paper 1

Social influence

Provides explanations of how behaviour is influenced by social groups and authority figures.

Attachment

Explains how attachments are formed between children and primary caregivers as well as the impact of disruption to these relationships.

Memory

Focuses on explaining how memory works including why we forget and how memories can be distorted by internal and external factors.

Psychopathology

Understanding the characteristics, explanation and treatment of depression, OCD and phobias.

Paper 2

Approaches

Fundamental assumptions of various different approaches to explaining behaviour including biological, learning, social, cognitive and psychological theories.

Biopsychology

Develops an understanding of the physiological processes that may influence behaviour including the nervous and endocrine systems, brain function and the influence of brain injury as well as biological rhythms such as the sleep and menstrual cycles.

Research methods

Builds a knowledge of the different ways to conduct psychological research including the analysis of data and reporting of findings.

Paper 3

Issues and debates

Exploration of key questions and debates within Psychology such as "Is behaviour a result of nature or nurture?"

Gender

Considers various explanations for gender differences in behaviour as well as gender identity disorder and atypical gender development

Schizophrenia

Assess the usefulness of the Schizophrenia diagnostic criteria as well as providing a range of explanations and treatments for the disorder.

Addiction

Develops an understanding of various explanations and treatments of nicotine and gambling addiction

How will I be assessed?

AQA assesses all content at the end of the course meaning that you will sit 3 x 2 hour exams in the summer of Y13. As a department, we conduct ongoing assessment throughout the two years which will reflect the full spectrum of skill and question styles assessed by the exam board. This ranges from 1 mark multiple choice questions to 16 mark essay based questions.

Meet the team

Mrs Heselden – Head of Psychology

I've been teaching at Wath since September 2009 and I have stayed at Wath for my whole teaching career, I think that says a lot about Wath as an academy. I did my psychology degree at Nottingham Trent University which is still ranked as one of the best universities for psychology in the country - I would recommend it!

I love psychology and very much enjoy helping students to develop a passion for it too. I particularly enjoy teaching the topic of Schizophrenia (a severe mental illness where contact with reality and insight are impaired). The topic involves an in depth study of the explanations and treatments of the disorder. I highly recommend the book 'Hidden Valley Road' by Robert Kolker as a great introduction to schizophrenia.

Outside of school I enjoy spending time with my husband and two young children, exercising and reading.

Miss Slasor – Psychology Teacher – Associate Assistant Vice Principal (Head of Sixth Form)

I have been teaching at Wath Academy since June 2014, however, my Wath journey began in September 2000 when I joined as a Y7 student. I think the fact that I returned to work at the same school I attended as a pupil twice, once as departmental support and then again as a qualified teacher, is a testament to the positive experience and support available at Wath Academy. I studied psychology as an A Level at Wath then continued to study the subject at undergraduate level at Newcastle University.

I love that psychology can be applied to almost all things, almost all of the time due to the diversity of its various branches. There is not a day goes by where I do not encounter a situation that I can apply my psychological knowledge to. Teaching is also a great passion of mine and I genuinely love being in the classroom. I take pride in seeing students develop their knowledge and confidence both within and outside of the classroom before taking their next steps into the wider world knowing they are equipped to achieve phenomenal things.

When I'm not teaching, I enjoy walks in the sunshine with my little boy, lodge weekends with woodland walks and movie nights with my family.

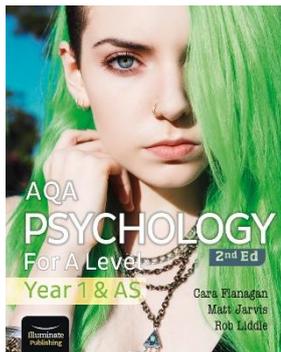
Miss Walker – Psychology teacher – Head of Life Skills

I started my teaching career at Wath in September 2020. I have plenty of experience in the field of Psychology having studied it at university for 5 years. My background is primarily Occupational Psychology (Psychology of the workplace), but I am most interested in Social Psychology and interactions between people.

When I'm not teaching you will find me in the kitchen. I love cooking and baking so look forward to some sweet treats – my signature is gingerbread biscuits.

Recommended resources

AQA Psychology for A Level Year 1 – Illuminate publishing



This is the textbook predominantly used by school. You may wish to purchase this to help with the tasks in this booklet and to support your learning over the next two years, however, this is not essential. If you are unable to purchase a copy of this, please refer to a wealth of free, high quality online resources below.

Simply Psychology

www.simplypsychology.com This website provides clear information on every topic within the A Level specification. It is presented in a detailed yet accessible way making it a student's number one 'go to' online resource.

Tutor2u

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference>. This website offers bitesize information or 'study notes' that can be easily found by using the search bar. They also offer free webinar videos available on Youtube. Simply load Youtube and search "Tutor2u psychology" to access a wide range of resources.

Psych Boost

www.psychboost.com This website offers free video lectures for the whole A Level course. These videos are also available via Youtube.

Additional resources

The following resources may or may not link directly to the specification but are useful in developing your wider understanding of psychological theories and concepts.

Netflix

Babies
The Mind Explained
Mindhunter
100 humans
The Stanford Prison Experiment

Reading

The Jigsaw Man – Paul Britton
The Blank Slate – Steven Pinker
Why We Sleep – Matthew Walker
The Gendered Brain – Gina Rippon
Hidden Valley Road – Robert Kolker

Films

We Need to Talk About Kevin
Three Identical Strangers (Documentary)
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
A Beautiful Mind
Minority Report
Silver Linings Playbook

Transition Tasks

Aim: The aim of these tasks is to develop your understanding of key psychological content and key terms to ease the transition into the study of a new subject at A Level standard. As a new subject/course you will be exposed to a lot of key terms and studies – some of which can be quite daunting especially when surrounded by GCSE students who may already be fluent in Psychology specialist terminology. By completing the tasks below, you will consolidate or develop knowledge of important content which will inevitably aid your understanding of the course over the next term.

Research methods

Key terms

Define each of the key terms below (in relation to Psychology, not their general definition)

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/research-methods-key-term-glossary>



Key term	Definition
Independent variable	
Dependent variable	
Extraneous variable	
Causality	
Validity	
Internal validity	
Ecological validity	
Replicable	
Reliability	
Demand characteristics	
Social desirability	
Sample	

Target population	
Representative	
Generalisable	
Ethical issues	
Ethical guidelines	
Protection from harm	
Deception	
Informed consent	
Confidentiality	
Right to withdraw	

Experiments

Use the link below to help you or search 'Experiments – Research Methods (7.01) Psychology AQA paper 2' on Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whwwocI57nw&list=PLUQ8QDGvbAwhFY-fZkcJ3k4R2NCnZlqB4>



	Explanation	Strengths	Limitations
Lab			
Field			
Natural			

Sampling techniques

When completing psychological research it is impossible to study every single person. As a result, we need to collect a small number of people to conduct the research on. These people are known as the sample and there are different ways to gather these people. Use the link below to complete the table



<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/sampling-techniques>

	Explanation	Strengths	Limitations
Random			
Stratified			
Systematic			
Volunteer			
Opportunity			

Ethical Guidelines

The British Psychological Society (BPS) is a representative body for psychologists and psychology in the United Kingdom. The Society aims to raise standards of training and practice in psychology, raise public awareness of psychology, and increase the influence of psychology practice in society including the ethical conduction of psychological research.

The BPS publish and regularly update a Code of Ethics that all psychologists should follow. Most research institutions, like universities, have ethical committees that are required to assess and approve research projects to ensure they meet the criteria set by the BPS. However important the issue under investigation, psychologists need to remember that they have a duty to respect the rights and dignity of research participants.

Why do you think it is important that there is a governing body monitoring and approving psychological research?

Although the guidelines produced are extensive, below are a few concepts that you need to be aware of.

Confidentiality

Participants' data should not be disclosed to anyone unless agreed and stored securely. Participants should not be identifiable in the study.

How could a researcher ensure that participants are not identifiable?

Right to withdraw

Participants can withdraw themselves or their results at any time before, during or after the research until the point of publication.

Debrief

All relevant details of the study should be given to participants after the study. They should tell them the true aim and explain that they can withdraw their data still. This is particularly important if deception has had to be used.

In which type of experiment might it be difficult to complete a debrief? Why?

Deception

Withholding information from the participants or intentionally informing them of the wrong aim/purpose should be avoided.

Why might it sometimes be necessary to not tell participants the true aim of a study?

Protection from harm

Investigators have a responsibility to protect the participants from psychological and physiological harm. Risk of harm should be no greater than in ordinary life

Informed consent

Researchers should give participants sufficient details of the investigated so they can make a considered choice if they wish to take part. Parental consent should be gained for those under 16 and those under influence of drink/drugs or otherwise unable to make decisions also cannot give their own consent.

Why is it important that additional consent is needed when conducting research on certain individuals e.g. children?

Social influence

Key terms

Define each of the key terms below (in relation to Psychology, not their general definition).

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/social-influence-glossary>

Key term	Definition
Conformity	
Obedience	
Confederate	
Normative social influence	
Informational social influence	
Dehumanisation	
Social roles	

Conformity

Watch the following videos then briefly explain what happens in each of the studies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDDyT1IDhA>



Asch's conformity study

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/reference/conformity-asch-1951>



How many people conformed at least once?

Why do you think people changed their response to give an incorrect answer even though the correct answer was obvious? _____

Who did Asch conduct his experiment on? (Who were the sample)? _____

Why might this sample lack generalisability? (refer to the key term table in the research methods section)

Explanations for conformity

Psychologists generally accept two main explanations for conformity: informational and normative social influence

1. Informational social influence - when a person conforms to gain knowledge, or because they believe that someone else is 'right'. For example, if your friend is better at Maths than you has a different answer, you may change your own response to avoid being wrong.

2. Normative social influence - when a person conforms to be accepted, or belong to a group. Here a person conforms because it is socially rewarding, or to avoid social punishment, for example, being ridiculed for not 'fitting in'.

Conformity to social roles

Zimbardo and his colleagues (1973) were interested in finding out whether the brutality reported among guards in American prisons was due to the sadistic personalities of the guards (i.e., dispositional) or had more to do with the prison environment (i.e., situational).

For example, prisoner and guards may have personalities which make conflict inevitable, with prisoners lacking respect for law and order and guards being domineering and aggressive.

Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment

Research Zimbardo's Stanford prison experiment and briefly explain how it was conducted and what he found below.

What are the main ethical issues associated with Zimbardo's study?

How could Zimbardo's findings be used?

Obedience

Obedience refers to following an order given by an authority figure. Milgram is the psychologist most associated with research into obedience. Milgram was influenced to conduct such research after WWII when he wanted to know why so many Nazi soldiers seemed to blindly obey such drastic orders.

Watch the video below and make notes on Milgram's study

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kzd6Ew3TraA>



Additional information can be found here: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html>

Milgram's obedience study

Although no one was actually hurt in the experiment (the shocks were fake), the participant believed that they were shocking another person and left the experiment knowing that they were capable of administering a potentially fatal shock. How might this make the participant feel?

Which ethical guideline may this be considered a breach of?

When participants told they experimenter they no long wanted to be a part of the experiment they were told "The experiment requires you to continue". Which ethical guideline might this be considered a breach of?
