

A Level Psychology Introduction Project



This research-based project is designed to give you an ideal grounding for your A Level Psychology course.

Research and complete the tasks independently over the summer to get a head start and prepare for the key topics within A Level Psychology.

Present the tasks either using word on a computer or writing by hand and bring it with you to your first lesson after the summer.

Good luck and Enjoy ☺


Mrs Courtley



The AQA Course

<u>Paper 1</u>	<u>Paper 2</u>	<u>Paper 3</u>
Social Influence	Biopsychology	Compulsory: Issues and Debates
Memory	Research Methods*	Option 1: Relationships Gender Cognition and Development
Attachment	Approaches	Option 2: Schizophrenia Eating Behaviour Stress
Clinical Psychology and Mental Health	*Research methods is examined in every paper	Option 3: Aggression Addiction Forensic Psychology

Each exam is 2 hours long. All exams will take place at the end of the course in Year 13. This course is 100% exam, 0% coursework.





Task 1: Marvellous Memory...

Mini Experiment:

In this experiment you can test as many or as little people as you like (if you have access to more than one participant, try to use more than one). As the experimenter you should read out one line at a time of the triangle of numbers below to your participant. When you have finished reading out the line, your participant should recite back to you as many of the numbers they can remember. Record how many numbers they recall correctly on each line.

6
27 35
10 28 22
38 46 10 11
52 8 19 81 17
55 38 29 13 8 71
75 17 20 61 82 5 12
61 38 17 40 49 84 57 8
71 22 31 89 47 5 1 16 94
18 95 48 30 89 67 18 11 15 17
76 83 40 28 25 12 15 53 95 49 20
16 9 11 17 49 50 28 69 24 53 78 10
77 53 49 76 19 94 87 64 23 19 15 51 2
78 56 34 19 27 20 80 42 38 64 29 10 79 31

Now think about :

- 1) What was the maximum amount of numbers each of your participants could recall from any line?
- 2) Find the mean, median, mode and range of the maximum amount of numbers your participants could recall (show your working)
- 3) What do your results suggest about memory?





Task 2: Approaches in Psychology

As you should have gathered from our taster lesson, psychologists don't just have ONE view or answer to explain human behaviour. 'Approaches' can also be understood as, 'perspectives/theories/ideas' to explain human behaviour. Psychologists can differ on which approach they think best explains human behaviour.

AQA require you to understand FIVE approaches in psychology. This holiday task will ask you to read, research and summarise the 5 approaches.

The five approaches are: Biological, Learning Theory, Cognitive, Psychodynamic and Humanistic. The first approaches we require you to know are **Biological, Learning Theory and Cognitive**, your homework will only be on these 3.

For the task, you will need: pen, A4 paper, internet/psychology textbook, and your brains!

For each of the approaches (Biological, Learning Theory and Cognitive), make notes on each of the 3 approaches. Use textbooks, the internet and the brief overview of the three approaches following this to make your notes. To ensure your notes are sufficient, the following should be used to organise your response, please make sure you respond to the following points:

1. **How would this approach explain human behaviour?**
2. **What key words are associated with this approach?**
3. **BRIEFLY describe the study that supports the approach.** (*e.g. Who did it? What did they do? What did they find?*)
4. **What treatment would be offered from this approach?** (*i.e. If the behaviourist approach believes that the cause of violence is you having learnt that such behaviour has positive consequences so you will do it again, so what would they do to treat people who have learnt to be violent?*)
5. **Can you think of one strength and one weakness of the approach?** (*e.g. One strength of the cognitive approach is that it is researched/studied in highly controlled laboratory experiments. This means that results are more objective and valid. However, one weakness is...*)

BIOLOGICAL THEORY

This approach is also referred to as Physiological approach as it is concerned with the biological basis (or physiological) of behaviour and relates out actions to events taking place within the body, particularly in the brain and nervous system. This perspective differs from other viewpoints because principles are drawn from biology, and it therefore attempts to explain psychological principles in terms of biological ones. **So human behaviour is the result of a person's INNATE, (born with it) PHYSICAL TRAITS (such as genes which explain similarities of behaviours that run in families, or levels of neurotransmitters (chemicals such as hormones) which can explain changes in behaviour and the very structure of the brain where damage to an area can cause abnormal behaviours.**

They may explain anxiety through the flight/fight explanation which claims anxiety occurs when the body produces hormones to help us in flight/fight situations when it doesn't need to. Or schizophrenia may be explained through the over-production of the hormone dopamine.

LEARNING THEORY

Behaviourist

One way to try and explain behaviour is in terms of learning. It is based on the principles of conditioning. There are two types of conditioning that can explain behaviour.

Classical conditioning

Ivan Pavlov (a Russian physiologist) found that in an experiment he was doing with dogs, the dogs would start to salivate as soon as he opened the door to give them food. He realised that the dogs had learned that 'opening door' signalled 'food coming soon'. The dogs had learned a link between 'door' and their reflex response (salivation). This is known as classical conditioning.

Operant conditioning

Edward Thorndike extended the classical conditioning theory to include operant conditioning. He suggested that learning could take place through trial and error, rather than just through association as in classical conditioning. He demonstrated this by putting a hungry cat in a 'puzzle box' with a fish hanging nearby. The cat screeched and clawed and meowed to try and get out, and eventually, by accident tripped the latch of the box and jumped out. The next time the cat was placed in the box, it went through the same random behaviours but took less time to escape from the cage. After a few more trials the cat had learned what to do, and each time it was imprisoned, it would release the latch immediately. He summed his theory up by stating that acts that are followed by positive state of affairs are more likely to recur than acts followed by an annoying or negative state of affairs. In short:

Positive effects (rewards) led to the ***stamping in*** of behaviour

Negative effects (punishments) led to the ***stamping out*** of behaviour

SLT

Unlike CC and OC, SLT doesn't believe you have to do it yourself to learn it. You can learn from watching others get rewarded or punished for their behaviours.

All 3 behaviourist explanations would say that behaviour is *LEARNED through learning consequences and then we repeat behaviours where we LIKE the consequences and not repeat behaviour where we don't like the CONSEQUENCES.*

So, Behaviourist theory would explain something like aggression by stating that we LEARN such behaviours because of the positive and negative rewards attached to such behaviours.

COGNITIVE THEORY

This approach concerns itself with the study of all internal mental processes. It is the study of how the mind works and therefore covers the whole of psychology. It compares the mind to a computer (Mind-Computer analogy). We put data in, it's processed and we have output (this is where A.I began!). Cognitive psychologists are concerned with HOW we process information from the environment. So, behaviour could be the result of someone's 'faulty thinking'; they process information incorrectly.

This approach believes that human behaviour is the result of the way we INTERPRET/PROCESS the world around us. Our thought processes of any situation can explain our behaviour in that situation. They may explain eating disorders by stating that the way in which the very thin person INTERPRETS their reflection (how THEY process the reflection) is what causes eating disorders.



Task 3: Psychology? A Science? Really?

Now to the biggest and most controversial debate of them all....

Most people assume Psychology is an easy or 'soft' subject which cannot possibly be a science. But is it?

Research arguments for and against Psychology as a Science and fill out the table below. Use the resources below.

Consider:

- 1) The Approaches
- 2) Research Methods Used

FOR Psych as a Science 😊	AGAINST Psych as a Science ☹

Useful Resources & Further Reading

- **AQA Psychology Specification**
<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level>
- **Youtube** have a number of really good factual clips. In particular 'Crash Course' have produced a number of introductory videos to key elements in Psychology.
- **Simply Psychology** has all the relevant key information for A Level Psychology.
- **Tutor2u – Psychology** has a whole host of free resources, webinars and other materials.
- **Textbook** Illuminate 'green hair girl' textbook