

# A Level Psychology

Year 11 Taster Pack 2020



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# WELCOME TO A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY!

Hi Year 11. Welcome to A level Psychology! Congratulations on choosing a taster pack which investigates this fantastic, interesting, and enjoyable course. Psychology exam results in 2019 at LA placed the subject in the **top 25% of Psychology departments** in the whole UK for progress that our student made.

In this pack you will learn all about what Psychology is, get a flavour of what A level Psychology involves and complete 4 Tasks with different activities over 4 weeks. All of the activities are based on work you will really learn and complete in the A level. The more you engage with it the more you will get out of it!

Each task should take **3 hours** and be completed over **one week**.

All of the contact details and deadlines for your work are in the table below.

Task to complete	Start day	Hand in deadline
Task 1	Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2020	Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 4pm
Task 2	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 4pm
Task 3	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> 2020	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 4pm
Task 4	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2020	Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 4pm

# What is Psychology?

Psychology is the study of people, the mind and behaviour using **scientific methods**. It is about understanding what makes people tick and how this understanding can help us address and solve many of the problems in society. As a science psychology is dedicated to the study of human behaviour through **observation, measurement, and testing**, in order to form conclusions that are based on sound scientific evidence.

You will be taught theories and research about different aspects of behaviour. You will also be asked to evaluate these theories and this research. You must ask yourself 'Does this theory/research explain why people behave like this?' This will help you to examine the content of your studies in an analytical and evaluative way. Only when you analyse theory and research can you access the highest marks in your exams.

Psychology is everywhere and in everything. On the course you will be expected to apply your learning to new situations and case studies. You will also have opportunity to plan and carry out Psychology experiments. You will find your hard work rewarding and enjoyable so be prepared for each learning opportunity you are given. Enjoy the pack and please email me if you have any questions.

# Psychology A level key information

**Exam board:** AQA

**Assessment:** Three 2-hour exams. A mixture of multiple choice, short questions and essays.

**Topics:** On the two-year course we study the following topics:

• <b>Social influences</b> 	Investigates how a person's opinion, behaviour and emotions are affected by others. The social influence topic looks at four key areas including: conformity, obedience, minority influence and social change.
• <b>Memory</b> 	Explores how humans process and store information; the factors that affect the accuracy and reliability of eyewitness testimony; and how information is lost or forgotten.
• <b>Attachment</b> 	Examines the formation of the emotional bond between two people, usually mother and child. We learn about Animal studies of attachment and the influence of early attachment on later adult relationships.
• <b>Psychopathology</b> 	Considers different explanations for various psychological disorders like depression, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder. We look at how Psychologists decide who is abnormal and needs treatment.
• <b>Approaches</b> 	Reviews the different beliefs of psychologists who make up the different approaches. This includes the behaviourist, cognitive, social learning, biological, psychodynamic, and humanistic approaches.
• <b>Biopsychology</b> 	A branch of psychology concerned with physiology and how biology influences behaviour, thoughts and feeling. We investigate areas of the brain, the nervous system, and the sleep cycle.
• <b>Relationships</b> 	Examines attraction, the factors that affect the start, continuation and breakdown of romantic relationships, online relationships and one-way relationships with celebrities.
• <b>Schizophrenia</b> 	This topic examines Schizophrenia's symptoms, causes and treatments. This is done using different Biological and Psychological theories.
• <b>Forensic Psychology</b> 	Applies psychological theories and principles to different stages of the criminal justice system, including understanding causes of crime (biological and psychological) and deciding on ways to deal with offenders.
• <b>Research methods</b> 	The different tools and methods psychologists used to conduct psychological research, analyse data and draw conclusions. This is worth 25 – 30% of your whole A level and so is very important!

# Psychology A level quotes from students

*"The best thing about studying psychology is the variety of topics. You learn about human behaviour in all aspects such as in childhood, relationships, forensics and more. This inspired me to pursue a career in Psychology"*

Jennifer in Year 13 says...

*"One tip I would give yr11s is they need to be willing to put the time and effort to memorize heavy content"*

Liam in Year 13 says...

*"The best thing about studying A level psychology at LA is: the inestimable assistance and guided feedback you're given throughout the duration of your course is second to none. Lessons are engaging and stimulating which makes the subject much more enjoyable"*

Faiza in Year 13 says...

*"The best thing about studying A level psychology at LA is Mr Hemming's enthusiasm and dances which helped us all remember the content"*

*"One tip I'd give to year 11 starting the course is to make flash cards of each topic from the very beginning, so it's easier to revise for in year 13!"*

Marian in Year 12 says...

Joanna in Year 13 says...

*"The best thing about studying A level psychology at LA is you can get all the help you need from the teacher"*

*"One tip I would give to the year 11's starting psychology is that it's never too early to start revision - at least 20 minutes a day from the start is the best thing you could do!"*

Katerina in Year 12 says...

*"The best thing about A level psychology is that there is different aspects that you wouldn't think of in the course which means it's very interesting as well as the teaching."*

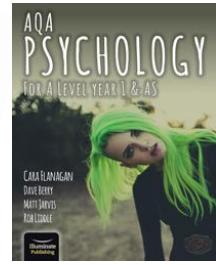
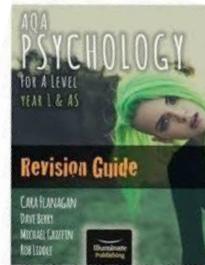
*"One tip I would give to a year 11 starting this course is that ORGANISATION IS KEY and I empathise that highly!"*

# Psychology A level Resources

If you choose to study Psychology, you will find there are a massive range of resources online you can access and buy. This is because in Psychology you are required to memorise many key details and facts about the different research studies you learn about. Just relying on one textbook is not a smart idea so here is a list of some great resources I ask my students to use:

## Textbook & Revision guide

As the absolute minimum you will need to buy this revision guide and textbook from illuminate publishing. We start using **both** from week 1 in September. Search **AQA Psychology A level year 1** illuminate publishing.



## Tutor 2U

2Tutor 2U is an amazing website and YouTube Channel where you can find notes, videos and quizzes. Click the link to view.

<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>

## Exampro

Exampro is a huge online database of exam questions, mark schemes and reports from the examiner. As a Psychology student you will have access to these for each topic we study. Click the link for an example:

<https://QACEPEG.exampro.net>



## Psychology video channel

You will have access to a range of video lessons which have been created by your teacher. Here is an example, log in with your school email address and password.

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/01659371-0440-441a-a2cf-1c82ca79fe52?list=studio>

# Task 1: Introduction to Psychology

## Learning Objectives

**Know:** Areas and careers in Psychology.

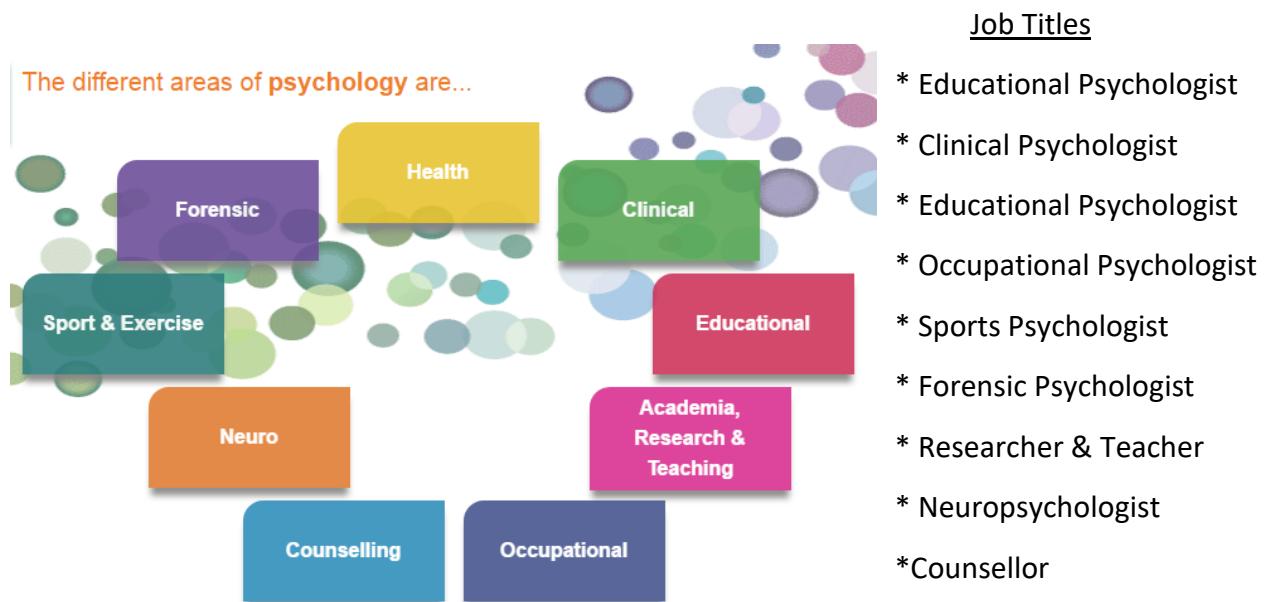
**Understand:** Meaning of experiments and theories.

**Be able to:** Use AO1 skills to write about research.

## Task 1 Part A: Careers in Psychology: a subject with many applications.

The world of Psychology is vast as it works on studying the human mind and behaviour. There are thousands of well-paid Psychology – related jobs everywhere covering many different industries. This includes business, economics, health, education, sport, criminal justice and teaching to name a few. This means that there are many different career routes in Psychology that lead to different job titles.

In this first task you will have opportunity to research the different areas of Psychology and find about people who get to call themselves Psychologists.



Research two of three of the job titles above using the British Psychological Society Website <https://careers.bps.org.uk/> and the Prospects website <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/browse-a-to-z>.

Create three job profiles using the format on the next page. Each profile should be 300 words minimum and include all of the sections below.

## Example Layout: Job Profile 1

Job Title.

Summary of role.

Qualifications you need.

Where they work.

How much they get paid.

Experience and skills needed.

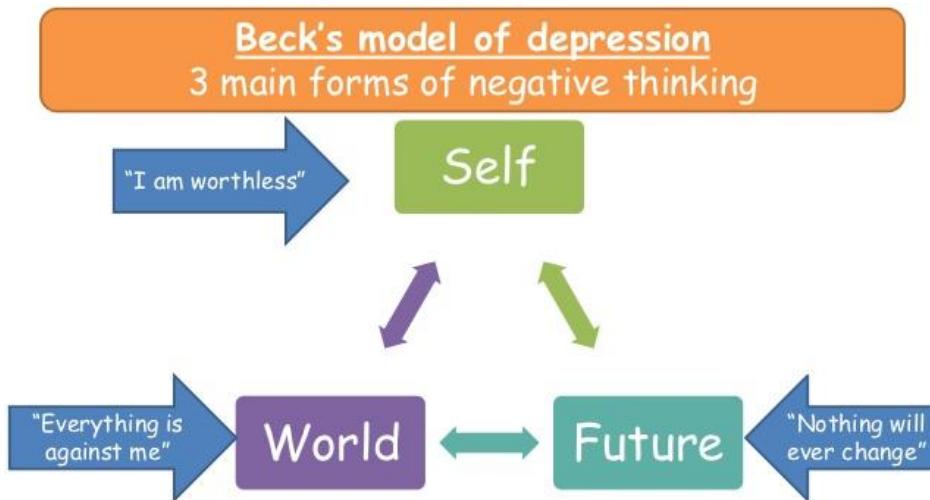
## Task 1 Part B: Outlining Experiments, studies and theories in Psychology (AO1)

In A level Psychology we learn about experiments and studies that have been conducted by Psychologists investigating different human behaviours. For each study you need to know the:

Background and Aim(s)	What the psychologist is trying to investigate and the purpose of the study.
Procedure & sample	How the Psychologist conducted the study and who took part. We call these people 'participants'.
Results	Data generated from the study. This could be numerical or qualitative (in words).
Conclusion	What the Psychologist said the results meant about behaviour.

This information is called '**AO1**'. It is all about **describing** or **outlining** something. This may be describing a study like above, but it could also be an explanation, a theory or a model instead. Here is an example of a model or theory explaining depression that we learn about in year 12.

## Negative Triad



The Cognitive Psychologist [Aaron Beck](#), suggested people suffering from depression thought in a negative way. Beck (1967) identified three mechanisms for vulnerability to depression. He suggested depressed people attend to negative aspects of a situation ignoring positives, have negative ideas about themselves and interpret new information about ourselves, the world and the future in a negative way. He called this the **Cognitive Triad of Negative thoughts**. There are many Psychology experiments which support Beck's Theory. Psychologists cannot make a theory about anything without scientific evidence.

## Research Task

You now need to research each of the famous Psychology experiments at the bottom of this page. For each one write an AO1 summary that is a minimum of **150 words in length**. Remember to include the following parts.

1. the aims
2. the procedure
3. the results
4. the conclusions.

An example is written below for Solomon Asch's study. I have labelled each part to show you how it is done. The word count is 170 words.

**AIM** - Soloman Asch investigated conformity in group situations to see if an individual will conform to a group even though they disagree with others in the group.

**PROCEDURE** – He tested conformity by showing participants two large white cards at a time. On one card was a 'standard line' and on the other three 'comparison lines'. There were 123 American male undergraduates in the study. Each was tested individually with a group of six to eight confederates who gave the wrong answer to the task. The naïve participant was not aware they were confederates and at first they gave right answer but then they started to make deliberate errors to the task in 12 out of 18 trials.

**RESULTS** - Asch found that naïve participants gave the wrong answer 36.8% of the time where all the confederates gave the wrong answer and that 75% of them conformed at least once.

**CONCLUSION** - The 'Asch effect' has been used to describe this result – which means how much participants will conform to a group when the situation is ambiguous

Now it is your turn. Click the links and enjoy reading the notes and watching the videos before writing your 150 word summary for each experiment.

- Experiment 1: Milgram's study of obedience.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html>
- Experiment 2: Loftus and Palmer's study of Eyewitness Testimony.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/loftus-palmer.html>
- Experiment 3: Zimbardo's Stamford Prison experiment.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/zimbardo.html>
- Experiment 4: Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/mary-ainsworth.html>
- Experiment 5: Hazan and Shaver's love quiz  
<https://psychologyhub.co.uk/the-influence-of-early-attachment-on-childhood-and-adult-relationships-including-the-role-of-the-internal-working-model/>

# Task 2: Approaches in Psychology

## Learning Objectives

**Know:** Key ideas of two approaches in Psychology.

**Understand:** Evaluation (AO3) and application (AO2) in Psychology).

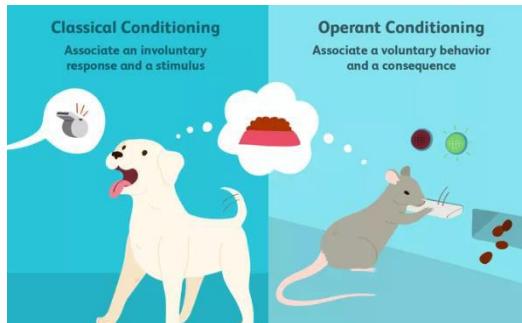
**Be able to:** Write using Psychology AO2 and AO3 skills.

## Task 2 Part A: Approaches in Psychology & Evaluation (AO3)

There are many difference **approaches in psychology**. Each approach has a different outlook on human behaviour. Read through the information below and summarise the **biological** and **behavioural** approach in psychology.

### Behaviourist approach

The assumption of the behaviourist approach is that only observable behaviour can, and therefore should, be investigated, as it cannot be known what is happening in 'the mind'. As humans and non-human animals are governed by the same basic processes, animal behaviour can be studied and applied to human behaviour.



**Classical conditioning:** Studied by Ivan Pavlov, this is the idea that learning takes place through association. Pavlov demonstrated this through experimenting on dogs. When he presented an unconditioned stimulus (food) alongside a neutral stimulus (ringing a bell), the dogs salivated (unconditioned response) at being presented with the food. Once the unconditioned and neutral stimulus were paired a few times, the dog salivated just at the sound of the bell being rung. The bell had become a conditioned stimulus, producing the conditioned response of salivation. The dog had associated the bell with the food.

Studied by BF Skinner, this is the idea that learning takes place through rewards and punishments. Positive reinforcement is when a reward is given in response to a behaviour, making that behaviour more likely to be repeated. Negative reinforcement is when something unpleasant is avoided in response to a behaviour, making that behaviour more likely to be repeated. Punishment (an unpleasant consequence) makes a behaviour less likely to be repeated. Skinner tested these concepts using rats and pigeons. In the 'Skinner Box', rats were placed in a box with a lever, light, and electrified floor. If the rat pressed the lever when the light was off, it would receive a shock,

and if it pressed the lever when the light was on, it received a food pellet. The rats quickly learned to push the switch only when the light was on.

### Evaluation in Psychology:

Evaluation information in Psychology is called '**AO3**'. It is all about **Analysing, interpreting, or evaluating** something. This may involve writing about criticisms or strengths of a study, theory, or approach like in the example below.

<b>S</b> upporting research <small>What evidence is there to support?</small>	When you evaluate in Psychology you must carefully structure your writing and use SCOUT to help think of relevant points you want to make.
<b>C</b> ontradictory research <small>What evidence goes against the theory/approach?</small>	Students often say evaluation is quite hard because you have to remember more content and arguments that supports or criticises the study, theory or approach you are writing about.
<b>O</b> ther explanations <small>Is there an alternative explanation that is better? Why is it better?</small>	For example, in essays in Psychology you need to remember 3 evaluation points for every possible question and write a paragraph for each.
<b>U</b> sefulness <small>Any Applications to real life? Any implications?</small>	Don't worry though, the revision guide and other resources on page 4 will really help you remember.
<b>T</b> estability <small>Any ethical issues? Methodological problems?</small>	

### What evaluation points (AO3) can we make about the Behaviourist approach?

1. Behaviourism uses the scientific method, enhancing the replicability and validity of the conclusions drawn.
2. Behaviourist principles have useful real-world applications, for example in developing treatments for phobias (therapies) and token economy systems, where rewards are given for desirable behaviours in patients with mental illnesses. This increases the usefulness of behaviourism.
3. The approach has been criticised for being too mechanistic, and discounting the role of thought processes in behaviour, instead seeing humans as passive responders to the environment. This is an over-simplistic explanation.

Summarise the behaviourist approach in a table like this:

<b>What is classical conditioning? (AO1)</b>	
<b>What is operant conditioning? (AO1)</b>	
<b>What are the strengths and limitations of this approach? (AO3)</b>	

# Biological approach

## Evolution and the genetic basis of behaviour

Charles Darwin's publication – On the Origin of Species (1859) – described the process of **natural selection**; characteristics that are not suited to a species' environment will die out as it struggles to survive, and with time will **evolve** over generations so that only **adaptive** characteristics remain in future offspring. **Genes** are the genetic information carried by **DNA** in **chromosomes**, found within a cell's nucleus; they are passed on through generations of a species if individuals survive and successfully reproduce. In line with Darwin's theory of evolution, it might also follow that genes form a basis of behaviour, as both behaviour and genes appear to be **heritable**. An example might be aggressive behaviour, in light of obvious survival benefits such as warding off predators and competing for resources.



## Nature-nurture debate

The **genotype** describes the genetic configuration of an individual, whereas **phenotype** describes the *combined* effects of genetic makeup and surrounding environment on behaviour. The **nature-nurture debate** highlights a key argument in psychology, over the relative influence of biology and environment on the characteristics of an individual; an extreme biological approach assumes that these are determined solely by nature.

## Effects of brain physiology and neurochemistry

Interactions between regions of the brain help to control different functions, which biological psychologists assume to be significant in determining our actions. For instance, the occipital lobe is involved heavily in processing sight, along with the frontal lobe, which is thought to be involved in control and attention.

Electrical impulses enable an important means of internal communication that directs our behaviour, travelling around the brain and to/from the body via the **nervous system**. Impulses are transmitted between **neurons** (nerves) at **synapses**, junctions where **neurotransmitters** are released that **inhibit** or **excite** other neurons to achieve different responses. Neurochemical imbalances in the brain are often associated with abnormal behaviour – for instance, evidence suggests that imbalances of dopamine (a neurochemical linked with the brain's natural 'pleasure' system) are associated with mood disorders such as depression.

The **endocrine system** is a slower-acting communication system that regulates the circulation of **hormones**, released by **glands** into the bloodstream. For example, cortisol and **adrenaline** are key hormones that facilitate the **fight or flight response**, a key evolutionary survival mechanism whereby the body primes itself for imminent danger (e.g. increasing heart rate, initiating sweating to cool down, dilation of pupils, sharpened sense of hearing).

### Research methods used by the biological approach

**Animal studies** – used to investigate biological mechanisms that govern human behaviour, often where ethical guidelines would not allow human participation. Many species (e.g. rats) are thought to have a similar biological makeup to humans, such that studies' conclusions can be generalised to humans. However, this methodology still raises ethical debate, and some argue that complex human behaviour cannot be replicated in non-human animals like rats, and thus cannot be investigated.

**Case studies** – can investigate normal behaviour by observing behavioural abnormality alongside corresponding changes in biology. A very early example is the apparent personality alteration observed in Phineas Gage (mid 1800s) after a railroad construction accident drastically changed his physiology by forcing an iron rod through his brain's frontal lobe.

**Drug therapy** – behaviour can be manipulated by altering an individual's biochemistry, a research method that can ultimately lead to developing drug applications to improve health and wellbeing. Initial phases of research are usually conducted on non-humans.

**Family studies** are useful for investigating the heritability of behaviour. For instance, research can investigate the likelihood that both of two twins develop a characteristic, known as a concordance rate. However, these studies can be time-consuming, due to long delays often required before follow-up data is collected. It is also difficult finding a large sample of participants for twin studies.

### Evaluation of the biological approach

#### **Strengths**

1. Scanning research techniques are useful for investigating the functions of the brain: an organ with obvious involvement in our behaviour that would otherwise be unobservable.
2. The approach presents the strong nature viewpoint of the nature-nurture debate.
3. The experimental methods used (gathering empirical [i.e. observable] evidence) make this approach very scientific.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. The approach is considered reductionist; complex behaviour, thoughts and emotions are all equally explained by low-level biological mechanisms such as biochemicals and nerve impulses.
2. An extreme biological approach does not account for the wide base of evidence that points to the influence of our environment (e.g. culture and society).

Summarise the biological approach in a table like this:

<b>What are the key assumptions of the biological approach? (AO1)</b>	
<b>How does this approach investigate humans? (AO1)</b>	
<b>What are the strengths and limitations of this approach? (AO3)</b>	

## Task 2 Part B: Approaches and Application (AO2)

Application in Psychology is called '**AO2**'. It is all about **Applying** your understanding of Psychological ideas, processes and techniques to new contexts. This may involve reading a scenario in the exam about a person/s and then explaining why they are behaving in a particular way using the Psychology that you know. It can also mean reading about an experiment or study in the exam and explaining what research methods the Psychologist used.



Psychology



STEM

When you apply knowledge to person in Psychology you must carefully structure your writing and use a Psychology / STEM structure.

**Psychology** - Talk about the Psychology theory that is relevant to the scenario or person first.

**STEM** - Then talk about how this relates to the person's situation in the scenario (STEM).

Don't worry in lessons we will have plenty of practise at doing this.

### Let's practise applying (AO2) the Behaviourist and Biological approach to a scenario (a STEM).

Rebecca has a phobia of dogs. Her fear stops her from going anywhere where she might see cats. This means she has to work from home and doesn't go out the house much. When she was younger Rebecca was scratched and bitten by a cat so badly, she had to go to hospital.

How would the **behaviourist** approach explain Rebecca's phobia? Try to refer to classical and operant conditioning in your answer (4 marks).

#### Example answer



Psychology

Classical conditioning is when we learn through association. When two stimuli are paired together we learn that one means the other causing us to respond in the same way to both. For example, pain from being bitten (conditioned stimulus) is paired with a cat (neutral stimulus).



STEM

Rebecca's phobia has developed through classical conditioning from her experiences as a child. She has formed an association between the neutral stimulus (cats) and pain from being bitten, causing the response of fear. Fear is now triggered every time she sees a cat or is in a place where she might see one.

**Now it's your turn. Answer the following application (AO2) questions using our P-S structure.**

Q1.

A young woman call Muna says: "When I was 5 years old, I was at a party and a balloon burst with a loud bang in my face. Even after all these years, I cannot bear to go into a room where there are balloons. They terrify me!"

Use your knowledge of the **behaviourist** approach to explain why Muna is terrified of balloons. (4 marks)

Q2.

A man call Steve has a phobia of snakes. He has been afraid of them for long as he can remember but cannot figure out why. He has never had a bad experience with a snake before and has noticed most people are quite scared of snakes too.

Use your knowledge of the **biological approach** to explain why Steve is terrified of snakes. (4 marks)

## Extension 0:

How do you think the different approaches would treat both case studies above?

# Task 3: Topics in Psychology

## Learning Objectives

**Know:** Details of two key topics in Psychology

**Understand:** Requirements for essays in Psychology

**Be able to:** Write your first Psychology essay.

**Task 3 - Part A: Please read the information below on one topic in Psychology. This is about the causes and treatments of OCD and is part of Psychopathology.**

### Explaining Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

The biological approach suggests that abnormal behaviour is caused by something physical happening in the body, which may be the result of genes.

#### Genetic explanations:

Genes may create a vulnerability (risk of developing) to OCD. There is evidence that OCD runs in families. Lewis (1936) found that 37% of patients with OCD had parents with the disorder. The diathesis-stress model suggests that, along with this vulnerability, the environment may trigger OCD. There are many candidate genes involved in OCD (for example, those involved in the serotonin and dopamine systems), and it is polygenic: several genes are involved (perhaps up to 230). OCD is aetiologically heterogeneous, meaning different combinations of genes cause different types of OCD in different people.



#### Evaluation:

- Supporting evidence from Nestadt *et al* (2010) showed that 68% of identical twins were both diagnosed with OCD, compared to 31% of non-identical twins, suggesting there is a genetic basis.
- There are too many candidate genes for OCD- potentially hundreds. This means that finding a definitive genetic cause is very unlikely, reducing the usefulness of this explanation.
- There is evidence from Cromer *et al* (2007) that the environment is very influential- OCD was more severe in patients who had experienced traumatic events in their lives, and even more severe where patients had experienced more than one event. This suggests the environment is more important than biology in developing OCD.



#### Neural explanations:

Low levels of serotonin (a neurotransmitter in the brain) leads to impaired transmission of mood-relevant information, leading to a lowered mood. Low levels of serotonin are also linked to obsessive thoughts. Abnormal frontal lobe functioning leads to impaired decision-making, leading to symptoms of OCD. Abnormal functioning of the left parahippocampal gyrus leads to more processing of unpleasant emotions, which is a feature of OCD.

### Evaluation:

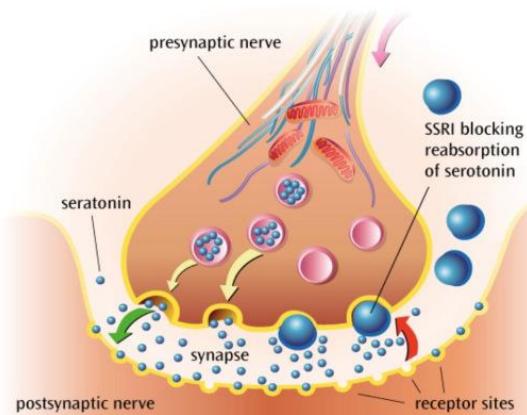
- Supporting evidence from antidepressant studies shows that increasing serotonin levels reduces OCD symptoms, suggesting serotonin has a role in the development of OCD
- There is a lack of understanding what neural mechanisms are involved, making this an incomplete explanation.
- The cause-effect relationship not known- it could be that changes in the brain are a result of OCD, rather than causing it in the first place. This weakens the neural explanation.

### Treating OCD

Drug therapies for abnormal behaviours aim to affect levels of neurotransmitter activity in the brain, by affecting the activity at synapses (gaps between neurons where neurotransmitters are active). Neurotransmitters are released from the pre-synaptic cell into the synapse, then are absorbed by the post-synaptic cell. Excess neurotransmitter is then reabsorbed by the pre-synaptic cell. Drugs increase synaptic activity by causing more neurotransmitter to be released, or introducing a chemical that acts like the neurotransmitter, or preventing reuptake of neurotransmitter. Activity may be decreased by increasing the rate of neurotransmitter breakdown, or blocking off receptors at synapses.

### Drug therapy:

SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) are the most commonly prescribed drugs for OCD. These work by blocking the transporter mechanism that re-absorbs serotonin into the presynaptic cell after it has fired. As a result, more serotonin is left in the synapse to be absorbed by the post synaptic cells. Dosages vary with the patient, and it takes 3-4 months for benefits to show. An example of an SSRI is Fluoxetine. Often SSRIs will be combined with CBT.



Other drugs include tricyclics, for example Clomipramine, which work in the same way as SSRIs but have more side effects. SNRIs work on noradrenaline as well as serotonin, and may also be used. These other drugs will be prescribed where a patient is not responding well to SSRIs.

### Evaluation:

- One strength of drug therapy for OCD was shown by Soomro \_et al \_ (2009). In this study, it was found that SSRIs were significantly better than placebos (fake drugs) at reducing OCD symptoms, showing that the drugs are effective.
- Compared to psychological treatments, drug therapy is easy and non-disruptive, as the patient just needs to take a pill rather than undergoing lengthy therapy sessions. This is a strength because the treatment suits people no matter what their lifestyle, job, and so on.
- A weakness of drugs is that they can have side effects, for example indigestion, loss of sex drive, blurred vision, weight gain and aggression. This weakens the use of drugs because patients may be less willing to take them, therefore their OCD symptoms will return.

Now answer these questions below in full sentences.



- 1) Which of these is not a behavioural characteristic of phobias- panic, avoidance, irrational beliefs, endurance?
- 2) Which aspects of OCD are obsessive?
- 3) According to the two-process model, how are phobias acquired?
- 4) In systematic desensitisation, what do the therapist and patient construct?
- 5) What is Ellis's explanation of depression known as?
- 6) Which neurotransmitter is associated with OCD symptoms?
- 7) What does SSRI stand for?
- 8) Who found that SSRIs were superior to placebos in treating OCD?

## Task 3 Part B: Essays in Psychology

Around half your marks in the Psychology A level come from extended writing. Essay questions are usually 16 marks (450- 500 words) or 8 marks in length (200 – 250 words). Each of your three two-hour exam papers will contain at least two essays.

You can get an essay question in any topic except for research methods and we spend lots of time practising and improving essays in and outside of lessons.

16-mark essays come in two forms.

### 1. Knowledge & evaluation essays

AO1 & AO3  
6m + 10m

### 2. Application essays

AO1, AO2 & AO3  
6m + 4m + 6m

We do not write introductions and conclusions in Psychology essays. We get focused on the details and facts of the research right from the start and then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the research later in the essay. We are going to focus on the first type of essay.

For **AO1 Knowledge**, you use the same structure we learnt in Task 1 to say **six things** about the research study you are writing about and put it all together in two paragraphs (around 150 words). Can you remember the AO1 structure?

1. the aims
2. the procedure
3. the results
4. the conclusions.

Here is the example from task 1 written in two paragraphs. I have used different colours to show the type of content and shown you where you might get your 6 AO1 marks by writing **(1)**.

Solomon Asch investigated conformity in group situations to see if an individual will conform to a group even though they disagree with others in the group. **(1)** He tested conformity by showing participants two large white cards at a time. On one card was a 'standard line' and on the other three 'comparison lines'. **(1)** There were 123 American male undergraduates in the study. Each was tested individually with a group of six to eight confederates who gave the wrong answer to the task. **(1)** The naïve participant was not aware they were confederates and at first they gave right answer but then they started to make deliberate errors to the task in 12 out of 18 trials. **(1)**

Asch found that naïve participants gave the wrong answer 36.8% of the time where all the confederates gave the wrong answer and that 75% of them conformed at least once. **(1)** The 'Asch effect' has been used to describe this result – which explains how participants will conform to a group easily. **(1)**

Next you write AO3 Evaluation and you can use this sandwich structure and sentence starters to write three paragraphs into your essay.

Point	Example	Explain	Link to Question
One problem is...	For example...	This shows that...	Consequently...
One weakness is...	For instance...	This would suggest that...	Subsequently...
One positive feature is...	One example of this...	From this, it can be seen...	As a result...
One appraisal of the theory is...	This was shown by...	These findings show...	In summary...
One criticism is...	This can be seen in...	This is a problem because...	The implication of this is...
One issue is...	This was criticised by...	One explanation of this is...	This raises the issue of...
	This was supported by...	One reason for this could be...	If this is the case then...
		This is a problem because...	If this is correct then...
		This supports/disproves X because...	If this is incorrect then...
			This strengthens...
			This weakens...



Here is an example of one paragraph written for an essay about the Milgram experiment you researched in Task 1. It has been split into the sections to show you how to structure it. The question is:

#### Outline and evaluate the Milgram experiment of obedience (16 marks).

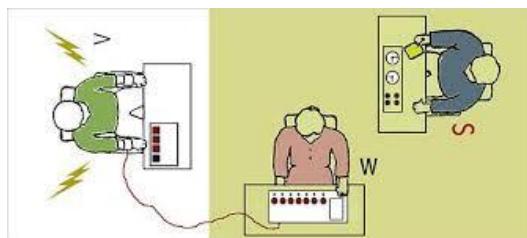
**POINT:** One problem was Milgram's research had many ethical issues

**Example/evidence:** Despite Milgram claiming participants had the right to leave the experiment, the commands or prods from the experimenter made it difficult to leave.

**EXPLAIN:** This shows that participants were deceived about the true nature of the study, believing it to be a study about the effects of punishment on learning.

**LINK:** Consequently, this study highlights the importance of caring for the well-being of participants when conducting psychological research.

In an essay you need to write **three paragraphs** like this. AO3 should be much longer than AO1.

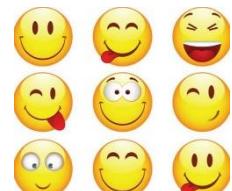


You are now going to read some information about Psychological research on why we forget things. Look carefully for the details of the study (AO1) and for details about evaluation (AO3). You will use this to answer a 16-mark essay question.

### Retrieval failure theory.

This theory suggests that when you store memories they are linked to '*associated cues*' that are stored at the same time. If these cues aren't available when you are trying to remember something you can't retrieve the memory. There are two types of cues:

- **External cues.** These might be things like the **weather, smells or location** when you learn something and when you remember it. Have you ever decided you need something in the kitchen but when you arrive in the kitchen you forget what you needed. You remember as soon as you go back to the room you were in!
- **Internal cues.** These are cues which are about your state of mind. Were you **happy or sad** when you learnt something, or **drunk!**? If you are not in the same mood or state when you try to remember it, you are more likely to forget it.



### Godden and Baddeley's study of forgetting (external cues).

Godden and Baddeley (1975) indicates the importance of setting for retrieval. He asked 18 deep-sea divers to memorise a list of words. He asked deep sea divers to memorise a list of 38 words that they heard twice one of four settings. Later they were asked to remember these words. This happened in one of four ways.

1. Learnt the words **underwater** and then asked to remember them **underwater**.
2. Learnt the words **underwater** and then asked to remember them on a **beach**.
3. Learnt the words **on the beach** and then asked to remember them on the **same beach**.
4. Learnt the words **on the beach** and then asked to remember them **underwater**.



The results show that those who had to remember the words in the same environment in which they had learned them recalled 40% more words than those recalling in a different environment. If the environments were different this led to retrieval failure due to a lack of cues. This suggests that the retrieval of information from memory improves if you are in the same context in which it was learnt.

## Evaluation

- The sample of divers is representative only for other divers. The findings cannot be generalised to cues that non-divers use when learning and remembering. 18 participants is also a small group of people to generalise from. This means more research needs to be carried out with different and larger groups of people before we can be sure the findings are valid.
- The finding of the study have useful application to real life situations. If recall is increased when in the same environment this could be useful to the police when trying to interview eyewitnesses to crimes. Taking them back to the crime scene or asking them to think about the crime scene could lead to more details being remembered.
- The effects of cues are probably not very strong on memory, especially in real life situations away from experiments. The two contexts have to be very different to each other to see a large amount of forgetting. Very few situations in real life are as different as from each other as being underwater and on a beach. This means the experiment doesn't show us much about the effects of different contexts in real life situations.



**You are now going to write a 16-mark essay on this topic. The question is:**

**Outline and Evaluate research into forgetting (16 marks)**

Plan out your essay first remembering to follow the following structures.

Plan what you are going to include in both AO1 and AO3 parts of the essay.

**AO1 structure:**

- the aims
- the procedure
- the results
- the conclusions

2 – 3 paragraphs

150 words in length

**AO3 structure:**

3 paragraphs

70 words each

Point, Example, Explain, Link

300 words in total length

# Task 4: Research Methods in Psychology

## Learning Objectives

Know: Areas of research methods content in Psychology

Understand: Key skills need for research methods

Be able to: apply your knowledge to answer questions and plan experiments

### TASK 4: Part A

Research methods are the different tools and methods psychologists used to conduct psychological research, analyse data and draw conclusions. This is worth 25 – 30% of your whole A level and so is very important! You will need to know these different methods and their strengths and weaknesses. You must be able to identify these in different experiments presented to you in the exam and use them to design your own experiments. Practice is key!

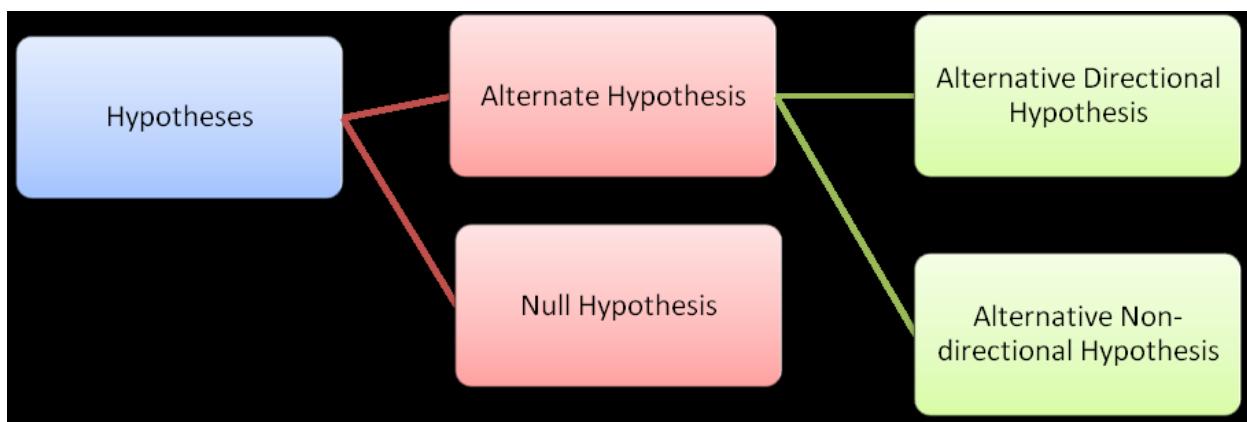
### Aims, Hypothesis & its types

All Psychology studies have an **aim**; an aim is the purpose of the study. Having a written aim makes research more focused. It clarifies what it is that the researcher is trying to discover.

**Definition:** Aim of a study is a general statement of what the researcher intends to investigate. It highlights the purpose of the study.

**Hypothesis** is a precise, testable statement about the expected outcome of a piece of research. It states the relationship between the variables to be investigated.

### Types of hypothesis



- An **Alternative Hypothesis** is the same definition as a hypothesis.
- A **Null hypothesis** predicts there will be **no** difference or relationship between the variables being tested.
- The alternative can be **Directional** or **Non-Directional**. The first gives you more detail and tells you which variable is higher or lower than the other the later does not.

### Example of directional hypothesis in experiments

- Regular exercise will **lower** the risk of health problems compared to a group of people who take no exercise
- High Sun exposure leads to **higher** chances of skin cancer compared to low sun exposure
- Divers who learn and remember words in the same location will remember **more words** than divers who learn and remember in different locations.

Notice they all state a direction of the outcome. They all say which group will be higher or lower, more or less.

You are more confident in the outcome

### Examples of non-directional hypothesis in experiments

- There will be **a difference** in the risk of health problems between those who take regular exercise and those who take no exercise
- There will be **a difference** in the chances of skin cancer between those with high sun exposure and those with low sun exposure
- There will be **a difference** in the number of words divers remember between those who learnt and remember them in the same location and those who learnt and remember

Notice they don't state a direction of the outcome. They only say there will a difference. Not what that difference is.

You are less confident in the outcome

If there is lots of research in the area you are investigating you will choose a directional hypothesis because you will be more confident.

## Variables

A variable is any entity that can 'change' or 'vary.' Variables are used in psychological experiments to determine if changes in one can affect the other.

An **independent variable** (IV) is the variable that is changed/manipulated by the researcher (cause).

A **dependent variable** (DV) is the variable which is measured by the researcher as a result from the above manipulation (Effect).

#### Experiment Example 1:

Participants were asked to complete a puzzle either alone or in a group with three other people. The time they took to complete the puzzle and the number of errors they made was recorded.

**Aim:** To see if time taken and errors made is effected by solving a puzzle alone or in a group.

**The independent variable:** doing the puzzle alone or in a group (the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment).

**The dependent variable:** time taken to solve the puzzle and errors made (the things you measure in the experiment).

**Experiment Example 2:**

The psychologist conducted a study using 10 volunteers from a local gym. Half of the participants were assigned to condition A (run without music) and half to condition B (run with music). They were then asked to run 400m as fast as they could. The psychologist recorded their running times in seconds.

**Aim:** To see if music effects running performance.

**The independent variable:** running with music or without music (the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment).

**The dependent variable:** time taken in seconds to run 400m (the things you measure in the experiment).

**Now it is you turn. Identify the aim, Independent variable, & dependant variable in the following experiments. Answer the questions below the experiment.**

**Experiment 3:**

'can you get people to perform better simply by raising their expectations?'

This was tested by telling musicians in one jazz band that they were playing a piece of music by a well-respected composer. Musicians in another jazz band were told that their piece of music was a composer whose work was negatively reviewed. The first band should play better. However, there is a little problem with the design of the study. What if the first band played better because they were actually better? To overcome this problem, the experiment could be designed so that both bands played two musical pieces- piece 1 and piece 2.

Members of band A were told that piece 1 was by a superior composer and piece 2 by an inferior composer.

Members of band B were told that piece 1 was by an inferior composer and piece 2 by a superior composer.

1. **What is the aim of the experiment?**
2. Can you write a hypothesis for this experiment?
3. **What is the independent variable:** the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment?
4. **What is the dependent variable:** the things you measure in the experiment?
5. If participants did perform better after being told the composer was respected what would you **conclude** from this?

#### Experiment 4:

A cognitive psychologist investigating how memory works gave participants the same word list to recall in one of two conditions. All the words were of equal difficulty

**Condition 1:** Ten participants recalled the words in the same room in which they had learned the words

**Condition 2:** Ten different participants recalled the words in a room that was not the same room as that in which they had learned the words.

The mean number of words that were remembered in each condition was recorded.

1. **What is the aim of the experiment?**
2. Can you write a hypothesis for this experiment?
3. **What is the independent variable?**: the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment?
4. **What is the dependent variable**: the things you measure in the experiment?
5. If participants did remember more in condition 1, what would you **conclude** from this?

#### Experiment 5:

A psychologist was investigating the effects of video games on concentration

**Condition 1:** Ten participants played a video game for 30 minutes then sat a Psychology exam

**Condition 2:** Ten different participants sat in an empty room for 30 minutes then sat a Psychology exam

The mean Psychology test score was recorded in each condition.

1. **What is the aim of the experiment?**
2. Can you write a hypothesis for this experiment?
3. **What is the independent variable?**: the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment?
4. **What is the dependent variable**: the things you measure in the experiment?
5. What would you conclude if participants in condition 1 had a lower mean test score?

Now go back to your research in task 1. Identify the aim, Independent variable, & dependant variable in the following experiments.

- Experiment 1: Milgram's study of obedience.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/milgram.html>
- Experiment 2: Loftus and Palmer's study of Eyewitness Testimony.  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/loftus-palmer.html>

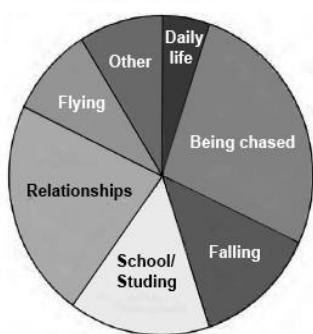
1. **What is the aim of the experiment?**
2. Can you write a hypothesis for this experiment?
3. **What is the independent variable?**: the thing the Psychologist changed in the experiment?
4. **What is the dependent variable**: the things you measure in the experiment?

## Analysing data and Maths in Psychology

10% of your marks in A level Psychology require using Maths skills and analysing numerical data which you have collected from an experiment. You will need to read and draw tables and graphs, and make simple calculations using data you have been given. Here are some examples questions for you to answer.

A psychologist was reading an article about typical dream themes in adults.  
The pie chart below shows the main dream themes identified in the article.

Main dream themes



Q1. Using the pie chart to the left, estimate the percentage of dreams that were reported to be about being chased.

A 4%

B 12%

C 27%

D 42%

Q2. Ten A-level students took part in a study of attitudes to Milgram's research on obedience. They were asked about the value of Milgram's research and about ethical concerns with Milgram's research.

For each student, the researcher recorded two scores out of 10, a 'value of research' score and an 'ethical concern' score.

Student	Value of research score	Ethical concern score
1	6	10
2	8	9
3	9	7
4	5	7
5	2	3
6	6	8
7	7	7
8	9	8
9	6	10
10	6	7

a). How many students have a 'value of research' score of <6? Shade **one** box only.

A 2 students

B 3 students

C 4 students

D 5 students

b) Give the mode for **both** sets of scores in the table above.

Mode for value of research \_\_\_\_\_

Mode for ethical concern \_\_\_\_\_

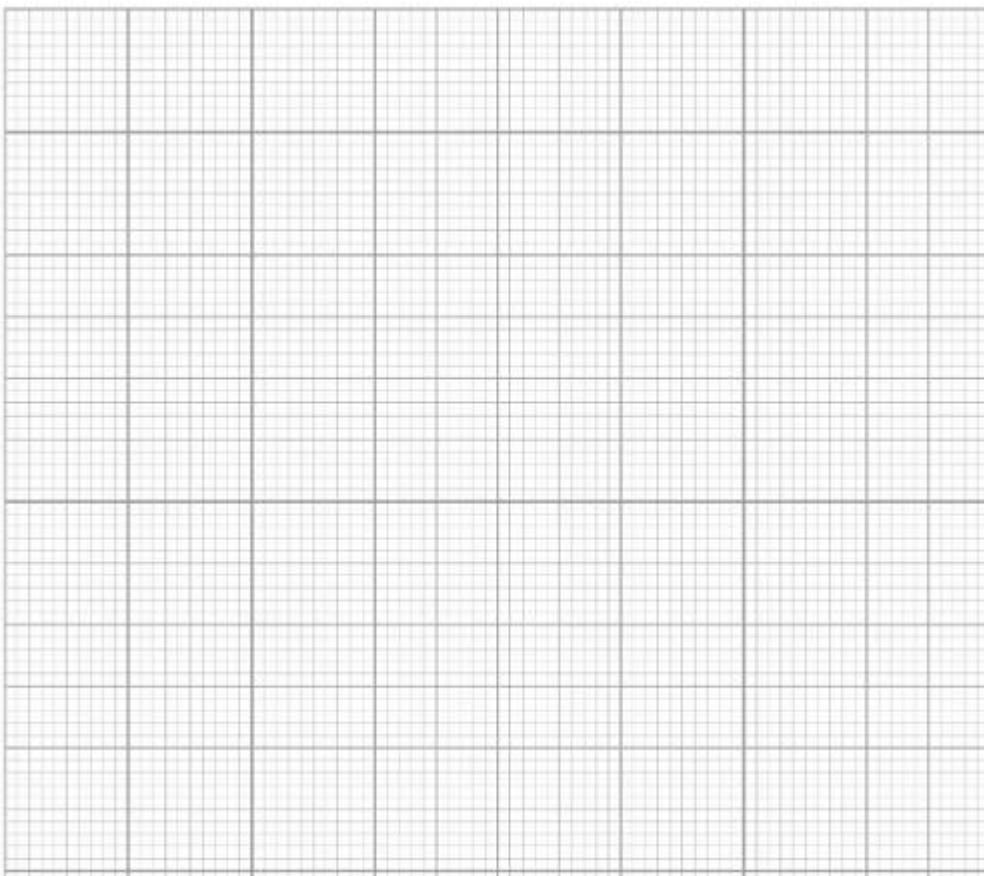
Q3. A Psychologist wanted to test using two different interview techniques. Participants in an experiment were shown a film of a robbery. The participants were then divided into two groups. One group was interviewed using a standard interview technique and the other group was interviewed using the cognitive interview technique. All participants were then given an 'accuracy score' (out of 20) based on how closely their recall matched the events in the film (20 = completely accurate, 0 = not at all accurate).

The results of the experiment are shown in the table below.

**The median accuracy score for the standard interview and the cognitive interview**

	<b>Standard interview</b>	<b>Cognitive interview</b>
<b>Median</b>	10	15

(a) Sketch an appropriate graph to show the median accuracy scores in the table above. Please do this on a piece of paper, take a photo and paste on to your word document.



## **TASK 4: Part B Designing experiments and practical lessons in Psychology**

In Psychology you will learn how to design and run your own Psychology experiments. We run practical lessons each term, conduct an experiment, gather data, and then analyse it.

The exam will also ask you to write about how you would design an experiment. Here is an example question from an exam:



Design an experiment to investigate the effect of indoor plants on mood in office workers.

In your answer you should provide details of:

- Variables and Design
- Materials/Apparatus – describe any special materials required
- Data analysis that could be used – include reference to descriptive and inferential analysis.

Justify your choices.

(12 Marks)

**For your final activity you need to plan 5 studies that investigate different kinds of human behaviour. For each one you need to decide the following:**

(a) What behaviour are you investigating and what is your aim?	e.g. effects of games on aggression, effects of exams on stress levels. It could be any behaviour!
(b) What are your variables?	What are you going to change to see the impact on behaviour (the IV) e.g. type of interview, video game/no game  What are you going to measure (the DV) e.g. time in seconds, score of something
(c) What type of study will you use?	An experiment in a lab or an experiment out in a real-life setting. How will it work?
(d) Who will be your participants and how will you ensure you don't hurt them physically or psychologically?	Age, gender, background. Think about telling them what it involved, getting consent etc.
(e) What is your hypothesis?	What are you predicting will happen?

You can use the template on the next page to write your 5 experiment plans!

## Example Layout: Experiment 1

Aim

Variables (IV and DV)

Type of study (where and how will it work)

Who are the participants? How will you protect them?

What is your hypothesis?

**Congratulations you finished the A level**  
**Psychology taster pack**

