



A-Level Psychology

Exam Board: AQA

Entry Criteria:

- Grade 6 in Maths, Sciences, and English Language GCSE.

Overview

The AQA A-Level Psychology course is designed to explore human behaviour through scientific inquiry. The course is divided into compulsory and optional content, enabling students to develop a comprehensive understanding of psychological theories, research methods, and applications.

Compulsory Content:

- Social Influence:** Study of how individuals are influenced by others, including conformity, obedience, and minority influence.
- Memory:** Investigation into how memory works, including models of memory, memory processes, and factors affecting recall.
- Attachment:** Examines the formation of relationships and the impact of early attachment on development.
- Psychopathology:** Focuses on mental health disorders such as depression, OCD, and phobias.
- Approaches in Psychology:** Study of various perspectives (biological, cognitive, behavioral, etc.) on human behaviour.
- Biopsychology:** Examines the brain, nervous system, hormones, and how biology affects behaviour.
- Research Methods:** Teaches the techniques used in psychological research, including experimental design, data collection, and analysis.
- Issues and Debates in Psychology:** Explores key issues like nature vs. nurture, free will vs. determinism, and ethics in psychology.

Optional Content (choose one option):

- Relationships:** Theories and research into romantic and family relationships, including the role of attachment.
- Gender:** Biological and social theories surrounding gender development and gender identity.
- Cognition and Development:** Explores cognitive development, particularly in children.
- Schizophrenia:** Investigates the symptoms, causes, and treatments of schizophrenia.
- Eating Behaviour:** Examines factors influencing eating habits, including cultural, psychological, and biological perspectives.
- Stress:** Theories of stress and how it affects physical and mental health.
- Aggression:** Theories and research on aggression, including biological and social explanations.
- Forensic Psychology:** Focuses on criminal behaviour and the psychological profiles of offenders.
- Addiction:** Understanding the psychology behind addiction, including factors that lead to substance abuse.

Complementary Subjects

- Psychology complements a wide range of subjects, particularly other **sciences** (such as Biology, Chemistry), **philosophy**, **sociology**, **law**, and **economics**. Psychology also works well with **English** and **Humanities** subjects.

Reading List

Books

- Opening Skinner's Box** by Lauren Slater.
A review of 12 major psychological experiments.
- Blame My Brain** by Nicola Morgan.
An exploration of the teenage brain.
- Sleights of Mind** by Susana Martinez-Conde.
Discusses the neuroscience of magic tricks.
- My Stroke of Insight** by Jill Bolte Taylor.
A neuroscientist's personal experience of a stroke.
- It's All in Your Head** by Suzanne O'Sullivan
Discusses the mind-body connection.
- Kluge: The Haphazard Evolution of the Mind** by Gary Marcus
Examines the evolutionary imperfections in our thinking.
- Why We Make Mistakes** by Joseph T. Hallinan
Explores the cognitive errors people make.



Assessment Breakdown:

The course is assessed via three written exams at the end of the two years:

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

- Duration:** 2 hours
- Mark:** 96
- Weight:** 33.3% of A-Level

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

- Duration:** 2 hours
- Mark:** 96
- Weight:** 33.3% of A-Level

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

- Duration:** 2 hours
- Mark:** 96
- Weight:** 33.3% of A-Level



Super-curricular resources

- Periodicals:** *New Scientist*, *The Economist* (science section).
- Podcasts:** *No Such Thing as a Fish*, *99% Invisible*, *All in the Mind*, *Freakonomics*, *Waking Up*.
- Revision Websites:** *Tutor2u* Psychology, *AQA Psychology*.



Career Progression

A-Level Psychology opens doors to various career paths in both psychology and other fields. Graduates can pursue degrees in **psychology**, **medicine** (e.g., psychiatry), or **social sciences**. Careers in **clinical psychology**, **educational psychology**, **psychotherapy**, **forensic psychology**, **sports psychology**, and **human resources** are possible. Psychology is also beneficial in fields like **marketing**, **healthcare**, and **research**.