



Sandwell Academy

Advanced General Certificate of Education (A- Level) PSYCHOLOGY

WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology is the study of mind and behaviour. Due to psychological investigations many behaviours have been explained allowing us to apply theories in many practical contexts, including areas such as eye-witness testimony and children services. The units are designed to give students a broad understanding of psychology, with the chance of choosing more specialised options as the course progresses. Psychology is a fully recognised university subject and this course provides students with the foundations needed for a career focusing on understanding human behaviour and the influences behind it.

The course prepares students for a range of careers in contexts such as:

Forensic Psychology
Social Work

Clinical Psychology
Police

Personnel
Education

SPECIFIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Grade 6 in GCSE English Language.
- Grade 5 in GCSE Mathematics.
- Grade 6,6 overall for GCSE Combined Science (Trilogy) or a grade 6 overall GCSE Biology (Separate Science).
- If GCSE Psychology taken must have achieved a minimum of a grade 6 (B).

COURSE DETAILS

AQA syllabus: 7181 / 7182

The A Level Psychology course will now be de-coupled meaning you will gain both an AS Level qualification and an A Level qualification.

AQA Subject Content for AS Psychology (6 units)

1. Social Influence

This unit will enable you to develop an understanding of how a person's behaviour, opinions and emotions can be influenced or affected by other people. You will look at conformity and how being part of a group can change your behaviour. You will also consider the reasons for obedience, investigating the role of authority figures. Furthermore, you will research why people may resist social influence.

2. Memory

This unit will provide you with the knowledge of how memory works. You will study the different memory stores and the different explanations of how memory works. You will also consider factors which can affect memory and what causes forgetting. You will also study how useful memory can be, especially in a crime situation and what techniques police use to enhance eye-witness testimony.

3. Attachment

In this unit you will study how bonds between parents and children are formed, involving the role of interaction and play and how these bonds develop and change overtime. You will consider the nature vs nurture debate when discovering the different explanations of attachment, investigating whether attachment is evolutionary or whether it is a result of learning. This unit also investigates how attachment behaviours vary between cultures and you will consider what factors can affect attachment formation and how this may cause issues in adulthood.

4. Approaches to Psychology

This unit will teach you about the difference explanations of behaviour. You will study how behaviour can be explained by many different factors, including learning, our cognitive processes and our biological make-up. This unit will allow you to explore the structure of the brain and how chemical processes influence behaviour as part of Biopsychology.

5. Psychopathology

In this unit you will develop an understanding of maladaptive behaviours and their potential causes. You will investigate the definitions of abnormality and three mental illnesses including OCD, Depression and Phobias. For each mental illness you will consider the explanations and causes as well as the effectiveness of different treatments.

6. Research Methods

This unit will allow you to develop your skills as a researcher. You will discover the different methods psychologists use to investigate human behaviour and develop these skills yourself in a practical scenario.

Examinations:

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology (Units 1 – 3)

Time: 1 hour 30 minute

Weighting: 50% of AS

Paper 2: Psychology in Context (Units 4 – 6)

Time: 1 hour 30 minute

Weighting: 50% of AS

AQA Subject Content for A-Level Psychology (6 units from AS and 4 new units)

Compulsory Content

1. Social Influence
2. Memory
3. Attachment
4. Psychopathology
5. Approaches
6. Research Methods
7. Biopsychology

8. Issues and debates

Optional Content

Option 1	Relationships Gender Cognition and development
Option 2	Schizophrenia Eating Behaviour Stress
Option 3	Aggression Forensic Addiction

In A-Level Psychology you will build upon their AS studies. You will learn new content for Approaches, where 2 new approaches of psychology will be considered and Biopsychology becomes a separate unit from Approaches. In the Biopsychology unit you will build on the biopsychology studies you investigate as part of Approaches and will explore how genes, neural structure and chemicals can influence behaviour. More content will be added to the Research Methods unit, where you will practice how to use statistical tests to analyse data. A new compulsory unit is also introduced which is Issues and Debates. This will allow you to explore the issues surrounding psychological research and the arguments based around Psychology as a Science. Finally, you will get to pick 3 options, one from option 1, one from option 2 and one from option 3.

Examinations:

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology (Units 1 – 4)

Time: 2 hours

Weighting: 33.3. % of A level

Paper 2: Psychology in Context (Units 5 – 7)

Time: 2 hours

Weighting: 33.3. % of A level

Paper 3: Issues and Options (Unit 8 and three topics, 1 from each option group)

Time: 2 hours

Weighting: 33.3. % of A level

