

A Level Psychology

Examination board & syllabus: Edexcel

Minimum Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 5 in Maths, English and Science

Course Outline:

Year 12: This course is split into four topic areas: social psychology, cognitive psychology, biological psychology, and learning theories. The Year 12 course gives an introduction into the four main approaches to psychology, by studying phenomena such as: obedience, prejudice, memory, aggression, brain functioning, neurotransmitter functioning, conditioning, and phobias. Throughout the study of these topics, students will be required to demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures. They will also develop the ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence.

Year 13: This course is split into five further topic areas and the entire nine areas of the course are examined in three separate papers at the end of Year 13.

Paper 1: Foundations in psychology covers four topic areas from Year 12.

Paper 2: Applications of psychology focuses on how our understanding of psychology is applied to today. Topic areas have been chosen to reflect the most important real-life applications of psychology in modern society. These are: clinical psychology, including understanding of the mental health system, as well as an in-depth study of schizophrenia; and then either criminal or child psychology applications.

Paper 3: Psychological skills is a synoptic paper as it summarises the psychological skills and scientific research methods covered throughout the course, as well as consideration of wider issues and debates in psychology, such as the nature-nurture debate.

Assessment/Exams:

Both Paper 1 and Paper 2 are worth 35% of the final A Level grade and last 2 hours. These papers consist of a range of question types (similar to AS) and two extended open response questions. Paper 3 is worth 30% of the final A Level grade and lasts 2 hours. This paper also consists of a range of question types, including four extended open response questions. All papers are taken in the summer.

Topic tests and mock exams will be set at appropriate intervals for both AS and A Level qualifications.

Equipment required / Approx Cost:

Text book for each year (£17-20 each new)

Independent Study Tips:

As well as homework, students should review notes from every lesson independently.

Higher Education Progression:

This A Level is useful for progressing into Psychology degrees (not essential, but will put students at an advantage in terms of knowledge) and is rated highly by top universities.

Career Opportunities:

Further study can lead to a wide variety of careers in Psychology, such as Clinical, Forensic, Occupational. Psychology degrees are valued by a wide range of employers outside of the field of Psychology as the subject provides not only useful subject knowledge but also a range of highly transferrable skills.

Useful Websites: <http://www.bps.org.uk/>

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/psychology-2015.html>