



Kings Langley School

Unlocking Potential for Life

Psychology A level Course handbook

2022-23



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What is expected of me in Year 12?

A level is different to GCSEs in that you are expected to be more of an **independent learner** and the standard is obviously higher. This means taking charge of your learning outside of the classroom. With a subject like Psychology there is a **lot of new key concepts** to learn which you would not be familiar with having not learnt the subject from Year 7. A good way of getting to know these well is to **make lists of key concepts** for each topic as you begin each one and constantly check your understanding of them. They are the building blocks for answering short and long questions and doing well. Non-specialist but sophisticated vocabulary used in Psychology can be perfected by using your Bedrock account.

You are expected to get a **subject folder with dividers** for arranging your notes on each topic where you will also file this booklet, the course outline, revision trackers, marked assignments and topic tests with feedback. You are expected to **respond to this feedback** from your teacher in order to develop your progress in Psychology. This means re-writing answers to questions that you perform poorly on. This will ensure your success.

You are also expected as a minimum to read and **study all the topics covered in your set textbook**. Wider reading and other tasks are found in the **Super Curriculum** booklet (given out separately). This will ensure deeper and wider discovery of the subject, giving ideas for EPQs as well as possible career options in the field of Psychology.

As well as **coming to lessons on time** and immediately doing your quick start in silence at the beginning of your lesson, you are expected to **read at least one topic ahead in your textbooks**. This is preparation to consolidate understanding of lesson content and to enable you to ask questions. In your timetabled private study periods you are expected to **revise key concepts** and make either mind maps or flash cards as a **revision summaries** for each topic as we go through them, recording this progress on your **revision trackers**.

You are expected to use the **Cornell note taking method** in your notes, which has been shown by research to produce better student results. This involves using a wider hand drawn margin and recording extra notes to self on points or examples discussed in class. Examples appear in **Appendix A**. This method will also be discussed in class. All these expectations of you as a sixth form student will be assessed each term using **10 criteria** on the **Academic check tracker, Appendix B**.

In summary, you are expected to :

1. Be an independent learner – in charge of progressing your learning outside the classroom.
2. Write lists of key concepts for each topic and revise them as you go.
3. Complete your Bedrock tasks to improve your use of non-specialist vocabulary.
4. Keep a subject folder with the course specification, dividers for notes on each topic, assignments, revision resources, revision trackers and topic tests.
5. Come to lessons on time and complete the quick start task in silence, ready to learn and complete all classroom lesson tasks for ongoing assessment for learning.
6. Read at least one topic ahead of lessons to familiarise yourself with the topic.
7. Use the Cornell note taking method in lessons.
8. Use your private study periods to read your textbook and use it to; complete key concept lists and learn them, make revision resources and use them to memorise key points, access the Super Curriculum to deepen your knowledge of the subject.



What support will I receive from my teachers?

Your teachers will deliver the full exam board specification in **lessons via power point presentations, handouts and workbooks**. Classwork tasks will be set in each lesson to assess your knowledge in each topic and to practice answering example style questions which meet all of the assessment objectives for Psychology. After delivering lessons, **power points slides** will be made available for reference on **Teams**.

You will be **assessed via a topic test after covering each topic** which will be taken from exam board papers to provide a realistic assessment of your knowledge and progress in the subject and prepare you for full exam papers.

You will receive **specific feedback** on your progress that will enable you to respond to improve your performance. This feedback will allow you to **respond and practice what an A style answer** would be in line with the mark schemes from the exam board and be able to constantly raise your grades in line with your targets.

Your teacher will conduct an **academic check once a term** with you where your folders will be assessed for quality of note taking, general organisation and neatness, evidence of responding to feedback, revision resources and work ethic in lessons. You will be awarded an ATL score of 1-4 for each of the 10 criteria for satisfactory performance as well as reviewing your grades. This will help you know exactly how you are doing and alert you to any areas you need to improve on.

Your teachers are available at any time should you wish to approach them with questions for clarification on any aspect of the course or your performance.

In summary, you can expect your teachers to :

1. Deliver the full exam board specification via power point lesson slides, including classroom and homework assessment tasks to assess your knowledge and understanding as you learn.
2. Make power point slides available on Teams at the end of a topic for references as well as other relevant resources.
3. Give you a topic test that assesses your knowledge of each topic with questions from exam board papers that will increase your exam technique.
4. Provide you with detailed written and verbal feedback on how to increase your performance in line with the top mark bands.
5. Conduct an academic check with you once a term to monitor your progress on 10 criteria for success in the subject and give you feedback to improve your performance.

Course overview

A copy of the AQA specification for A level Psychology (v. June 2019) will be handed out to you separately to file in your folders.

The course is a linear A level course which is taken over two years. Final exams are written at the end of the two year course. However, you will write trial exams in January during Year 12 and Finals in June in Year 12. You will also write trial exams in January during Year 13.



Final Exam paper breakdown

- There will be three final exam papers at the end of Year 13
- Each paper is 2 hours long and worth 96 marks in total
- Each paper is worth 33.3% of the final A level mark

Paper 1 – Introductory topics in Psychology

Each section is worth 24 marks. All questions are compulsory.

Section A : Social Influence

Section B : Memory

Section C : Attachment

Section D : Psychopathology

Paper 2 – Psychology in Context

Sections A and B are worth 24 marks. Section C is worth 48 marks. All questions are compulsory.

Section A : Approaches

Section B : Biopsychology

Section C : Research methods and statistics

Paper 3 – Issues and Options in Psychology

Each section is worth 24 marks. Section A is compulsory. Sections B, C and D contain three topics each but students select only one topic from each section to answer, according to what they have studied.

Section A : Issues and debates in Psychology

Section B : Cognition and Development, Relationships or Gender

Section C : Schizophrenia, Eating behaviour or Stress

Section D : Aggression, Forensic Psychology or Addiction

How will I be assessed and how can I meet the criteria?

There will be three final exams, each have slightly different weightings in terms of how they assess all three assessment objectives. These are described below in a relevant section from the AQA Specification :

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level Psychology specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.
- AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:
 - in a theoretical context
 - in a practical context
 - when handling qualitative data
 - when handling quantitative data.
- AO3: Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:
 - make judgements and reach conclusions
 - develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Assessment criteria breakdown per exam paper



Weighting of assessment objectives for A-level Psychology

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	
AO1	11–14	7–10	9–12	30–33
AO2	6–9	16–19	5–8	30–33
AO3	12–14	7–9	15–17	36–38
Overall weighting of components	33.3	33.3	33.3	100

At least 10% of the overall assessment of Psychology will contain mathematical skills equivalent to Level 2 or above.

At least 25–30% of the overall assessment will assess skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research methods.

Academic check criteria

Apart from summative and formative assessment of lesson content, your ongoing learning and performance will be assessed by 10 criteria for success in Psychology. Each term you will have an academic check according to these 10 criteria and you will be given a score. This score together with an AFL score of 1-4 for each of the criteria will indicate your progress or lack of performance and either count towards or count against you obtaining a Privilege Pass. This entitles you to go home early some days for home study.

The 10 academic check criteria are :

1. Notes are in Cornell format and are complete
2. Revision resources are made for each topic as it is learned e.g. flash cards or mind maps, using the textbook and notes
3. QS, Summary and Practice questions are completed and marked in green
4. Notes are neatly filed in dividers for each topic
5. Topic tests and homework assessments are filed with green pen annotation for improvements
6. Students have responded to feedback in green pen and re-done answers to questions that scored half marks or less
7. Attendance and Punctuality
8. Engagement and work ethic in lessons
9. Meeting deadlines
10. Evidence of past paper practice

Academic check and folder log

You will be assessed on the above 10 criteria once a term. The result of this check will be recorded on a log (**Appendix B**).



As an independent learner you will then take responsibility to improve the areas you scored low on and bring evidence to your teacher as soon as possible in order to have your score updated.

This empowers you to take charge of your learning and development, a skill you will need at university, college or the workplace where you will be expected to be self-motivated and where there will be less guidance but just as much accountability for your performance.

Revision and revision trackers

Revision is something you need to get started from the beginning of the course. While your note-taking will be useful for initial understanding and building your knowledge of the topics, you will also need to memorise it to write the exams.

As lessons progress through the topics you are expected to make revision resources as you go. This means making a mind map ideally or a flash/cue cards which are summaries of large amounts of information which you can memorise more easily to answer questions in the exam (**Appendix C**).

Important – why make flash cards or mind maps when I can just get a revision guide? The work you have to initially do to make these summaries e.g. reading your notes and the textbook to work out the main points to use as a cue, is the first and most important step in revision. You have to understand something well to be able to summarise it. Then when you start to memorise your summaries you already know the content that much better for having summarised it yourself and will get a better grade. All that learning involved in making your own revision cards or maps is missed out on if you just try and memorise reduced content from a study guide that someone else has produced.

Revision trackers will be given to you separately to file in your folders. These are laid out in a checklist format which will help you organise and track your production of revision resources for each topic.

Additional reading and the Super Curriculum

You are expected to use JSTOR which is a journal database and access the Psychology Super Curriculum (**separate booklet**). Our librarian, Ms Hill has obtained access for staff and students. For a subject like Psychology it is very beneficial to be able to look up the original journal articles for many of the key studies you will learn about in the course. Whether you are planning to study Psychology after school or not, it will help your understanding of the course, especially research methods, to look up at least 5 of the key studies you will be learning about and see how research is reported on for the general public to access.

You will be provided with a log for the Super Curriculum and the articles you look up on JSTOR to record brief notes about what you learnt.



coding, capacity + duration of memory

Research on Duration (LTM)
 best consulting at →
 50 photos

BAHRICK et al.
 procedure: high school year books were gathered from participants.
 recall was tested by photo-recognition, some from the participants year book. 2 participants recall the names of their class.

sample: 392 American participants aged between 17-74

Findings: participants tested within 15 years of graduation = 90% accurate in photo recognition. After 48 years, recall declined to about 70% for photo recognition, recall of names findings = 60% after 15 years and 30% after 48 years

5 shows that LTM may last up to a life time for some people.

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EVALUATION of different studies (Jacobs, Milner, Baddeley)
 - idea that STM was mostly acoustic coding and LTM was mainly semantic was an important step in our understanding of the memory system leading to the **multi-store model of memory**

Limitation → Artificial stimuli used rather than meaningful material.
 e.g. the word list had no personal meaning / value to participants
 → suggests that the findings from this study have limited application.

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more than 1 type of short and long term memory.

The working memory model showed that the multistore model was over-simplified.

Explicit = declarative memories, easy to put into words, only recalled in conscious mind

Implicit = non-declarative - not easy to put into words, do not need to be recalled in conscious mind (brushing teeth, driving car)

associated with the prefrontal cortex in the brain

Episodic = specific personal events and their context

Semantic = general knowledge about the world

* Episodic memory gradually moves to semantic as the knowledge is remembered but the experience it was learnt from is not always remembered

Endel Tulving (1989) - memory
 aim = investigate potential differences in processing episodic and semantic memory tasks.
 assess effectiveness of neuro-imaging on investigating mental processes

procedure = 6 volunteers injected with radioactive gold which can be scanned to reveal location.
 • 8 trials for each participant (80 sec each), 4 semantic + 4 episodic memories recalled
 • 2 minutes rest each.
 Participants laid down facing the ceiling and selected topics to think about.
 personal experience (holiday)
 → general knowledge acquired through warning track

retrieval was slight

APPENDIX B – Academic check and folder log example



Date of Academic check :

Codes :

1	Exceeding expectations
2	Meeting expectations
3	Below expectations
4	Serious concerns

Below are the scores of a fictitious student who comes along to lessons punctually, has good attendance, takes notes, writes topic tests and gets assignments in on time. However, he does not have good academic check scores. He is not meeting the expectations of an A level student which are required to achieve a decent grade. He thinks he is being a good enough student but is only meeting expectations on a few of the criteria. Consequently, he has quite a few targets for improvement to meet.

Student Names	1. Notes are in Cornell format and complete	2. Revision resources are made for each topic as it is learned	3.QS, Summary and Practice questions are completed	4. Notes are neatly filed in dividers for each topic	5. Topic tests and homework assessments are filed with green pen annotation for improvements	6. Students have responded to feedback in green pen and re-done answers to questions that scored half marks or less	7. Attendance and Punctuality	8. Engagement and work ethic in lessons	9. Meeting deadlines	10. Evidence of past paper practice and wider reading on log
Joe Blogg	3	4	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	4
Feedback from check	Notes are written but not in Cornell format	No revision resources are made	QS are done and marked but not questions given in class	Notes are stuffed into the back of a writing pad to be filed later	Topic tests were annotated in class with feedback in green pen	No questions have been re-done according to feedback on how to improve	Good	Good	Good	No past paper practice, evidence of wider reading or looking up studies on JSTOR

Targets for improvement :

1. Look at other students' versions of Cornell notes and ask them what works well, implement changes.
2. Start making revision resources using your trackers to keep pace with content covered in lessons.
3. Start completing all questions given in class in writing and marking them in green, do others in the book for practice in private study.
4. Immediately file all your notes according to topic within labelled file dividers.
5. Go back over past tests or assignments and re-do any question you scored half marks or less on.
6. Practice sections of past papers relevant to topics we have covered.
7. Look up journal articles on any key studies we have covered so far, choose something from the Super Curriculum to watch or read.

APPENDIX C – Flash cards and mind map examples

Improving accuracy of EWT Cognitive Interviews

Evaluation

- CI is time consuming
 - more time is needed to answer more with a witness & allow them to reflect
 - also requires special training, but many forces don't have resources to provide it
 - suggests CI not suitable method for police officers to use & may be better to focus on few key elements
- Not all elements are equally useful
 - Minor details found each technique alone produced more info than SP
 - forced combination of report highlighting & simulate context produced better results than other elements or combinations
 - therefore probably decreases availability of CI at some aspects are more useful than others

Improving accuracy of EWT Cognitive Interview

The Cognitive Interview

- developed by Geiselman & Fisher (1984) it is based on communication techniques to improve memory recall
- based on Levinson (1976) idea that there are natural retrieval cues to memory
- also based on Tulving & Thomson's Encoding Specificity Theory

Change the Order - recall events in different chronological order - helps recall of forgotten

Change the Perspective - recall event from another perspective - changes aspect of memory

Generate Context - recall environmental & contextual features of event

Report Everything - recall all info even if it seems irrelevant / unimportant / insignificant in recall

MATCHED PAIRS
- Participants are paired together according to variables e.g. In a memory experiment participants being matched on their IQ
- Then one member of the pair is assigned to a condition A and the other to condition B

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN
- different ways participants can be organized in relation to the experimental conditions.

INDEPENDENT GROUPS DESIGN → participants in each condition are different.

- Two separate groups of participants experience two different conditions of the experiment
- If there are two levels of the IV e.g. Energy drink and water

this means that all participants experience one level of the IV only

E.g. **GROUP 1** of participants drinking the Energy Drink (condition A → the experimental condition)

GROUP 2 of participants drinking water (condition B → The control condition)

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGNS

REPEATED MEASURES
- Participants experience all conditions of the experiment.
e.g. Energy drink as well as water
- participants same for each condition.

COUNTER BALANCING
- An attempt to control the effects of order in a repeated measures design.
Half the participants experience conditions in order A and the other half of the participants in the opposite → Order B.

RANDOM ALLOCATION
- Attempt to control for participant variables in an independent groups design
- ensures that all participants have an equal chance of being in one condition compared to a different condition.