

# PSYCHOLOGY at AS/ A2 LEVEL

## NEW Specification (2008)

EXAMINATION BOARD: AQA Specification A (5181 & 6181)

### WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGY?

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and experience.

### WHY STUDY PSYCHOLOGY?

As the course is taught by independent self study it lays an appropriate foundation for the academic demands of university life. It is a worthwhile course for candidates of various ages and from diverse backgrounds in terms of education and lifelong learning. In addition it provide a good base for further study of Psychology or related subjects in Higher Education. Equally, material studied would be useful for candidates intending to pursue business careers.

### HOW IS PSYCHOLOGY TAUGHT?

Psychology is taught by supported independent self study with a one hour face to face tutorial with your teacher once a week. The teacher gives you a self study unit each week which you work through in your private study time or at home. In the face to face tutorial students debate topical issues related to that week's work. It is supported self study, because you can also contact your teacher by e-mail, phone and there is even a website: [www.advancedsuccess.co.uk](http://www.advancedsuccess.co.uk) to help you. There is also a member of staff in school to provide further reassurance and guidance when necessary.

### ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

This specification is suitable for the diverse range of candidates who wish to develop their interest and enjoyment in Psychology, fostering its value in lifelong leaning.

It is not necessary for candidates to have studied GCSE Psychology before commencing work on this specification and no prior knowledge of Psychology is necessary.

It is desirable for candidates to have achieved Grades A-B in GCSE, or the equivalent, in English and Mathematics before commencing this specification, though no normal formal qualification is required.

### SUBJECT SPECIFICATION

GCE Psychology A (New Specification)

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#### AS Outline

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At AS, candidates will develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the core areas of psychology (social, cognitive, developmental, biological and individual differences) through a range of topics, chosen for their accessibility and popularity.

*The New AS specification has only 2 units:*

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**AS Unit 1: Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Research Methods**

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### Topic list

- Cognitive psychology, including memory and eyewitness testimony
- Developmental psychology, including early social development, attachment and the effects of day care
- Research methods, in the context of the topic areas.

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### Assessment

<b>Written Paper:</b>	<b>1 hour 30 minutes</b>
<b>Weighting:</b>	<b>50% of total AS</b> <b>25% of total A Level marks</b>

Structured compulsory questions based on Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology and Research Methods.

Questions include short answer, stimulus material and one 12 mark question requiring extended writing in which QWC will be assessed.

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### AS Unit 2: Biological Psychology, Social Psychology and Individual Differences

### Topic list

- Biological psychology, including stress, factors affecting stress, coping with stress and managing stress
- Social psychology, including majority and minority influence, obedience and independent behaviour
- Individual differences, including definitions of abnormality, approaches and therapies.

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### Assessment

<b>Written Paper:</b>	<b>1 hour 30 minutes</b>
<b>Weighting:</b>	<b>50% of total AS</b> <b>25% of total A Level marks</b>

Three compulsory structured questions; one based on Biological Psychology content, one based on Social Psychology content and one based on the Individual Differences content.

Questions include short answer, stimulus material and one 12 or more mark question requiring extended writing in which QWC will be assessed.

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### A2 outline

At A2, the specification offers a range of topic-based options which bring together explanations from different psychological approaches and engage students in issues and debates in psychology.

*The A2 specification has only 2 units:*

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### A2 Unit 3: Topics in Psychology

### Topic list

- Biological rhythms and sleep
- Perception
- Relationships

- Aggression
- Eating behaviour
- Gender
- Intelligence and learning
- Cognition and development.

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#### Assessment

**Written Paper:** 1 hour 30 minutes  
**Weighting:** 25% of total A Level marks

Three essay-style questions chosen from the eight topics.

QWC will be assessed in each essay.

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#### Unit 4: Psychopathology, Psychology in Action and Research Methods

##### Topic list

- Biological approach, behaviourism, social learning theory, cognitive, psychodynamic and humanistic approaches
- Comparison of approaches
- Debates in psychology
- Methods in psychology, inferential statistics, issues in research

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#### Assessment

**Written Paper:** 2 hours  
**Weighting:** 25% of total A Level marks

Three sections:

**Psychopathology:** One essay-style question chosen from three. QWC will be assessed in this essay.

**Psychology in Action:** One question chosen from three.

**Research Methods:** One compulsory structured question.

## HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAREER CHOICES

The study of Psychology is useful if you wish to go on to study:

Education  
 Counselling  
 Health  
 Business  
 Sport

or to follow a CAREER as a:

Teacher  
 Counselling Psychologist  
 Psychologist  
 Human Resources Manager  
 Sports and Coaching Manager

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Students and parents requiring further details are most welcome to contact Mrs L Jones, A level Psychology Co-ordinator.