

Introduction to A level psychology

Entry criteria:

- 5 X GCSE's at Grade 5 or above.
- This must include Maths at a grade 5 or above.
- Needed - Grade 6 or above in both Biology and English.

Subject information:

What GCSE's should you have to study Psychology?

- The answer is **science** and **maths**
- Psychology is the study of human behaviour – in a **scientific** way – using **scientific** methodology. This is why it is found under science if you look it up in a university prospectus. You can therefore expect to be using scientific approaches and manipulating data.
- Moreover, the reason why lots of A-level and degree-level courses ask for **mathematics** is not just because of the actual numerical work but because of the understanding needed for the design and interpretation of investigations and their findings.

Specification information:

Have a look at the specification to see more detail about each unit that you will be studying – Link is here: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>

Assessment materials:

Go onto the AQA website to look at past exam papers etc for psychology

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/assessment-resources?f.Sub-category%7CF=Sample+papers+and+mark+schemes>

Textbook information:

Follow this link to see the books that we use in psychology

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level-psychology-textbooks>

Careers information:

[Psychology \(ucas.com\)](https://www.ucas.com/psychology)

Subject content

Compulsory content

- 1 [Social influence](#)
- 2 [Memory](#)
- 3 [Attachment](#)
- 4 [Psychopathology](#)
- 5 [Approaches in Psychology](#)
- 6 [Biopsychology](#)
- 7 [Research methods](#)
- 8 [Issues and debates in Psychology](#)

Optional

Option 1

- [Gender](#)

Option 2

- [Schizophrenia](#)

Option 3

- [Forensic Psychology](#)

Assessments

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 1–4 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section D: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

What's assessed

Compulsory content 5–7 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section B: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section C: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 48 marks

What's assessed

Compulsory content 8 above

Optional content, one from option 1, 9–11, one from option 2, 12–14, one from option 3, 15–17 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Questions

- Section A: multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section B: one topic from option 1, 9–11 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section C: one topic from option 2, 12–14 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks
- Section D: one topic from option 3, 15–17 above, multiple choice, short answer and extended writing, 24 marks

Work that you can undertake to prepare you for Psychology A-Level:

Watch this documentary on YouTube – Zimbardo- Stanford Prison Experiment Documentary

<https://youtu.be/yUZpB57PfHs>

Stretching further - Studies in psychology

We are going to use the websites “simply psychology” to help us here to access the information we need. The web address is <https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

I would like to have you look at 4 studies that show you a bit about psychology, they are;

1. **Hoflings (1966)** Obedience of nurses to doctors. (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/hofling-obedience.html>)
2. **Harlow’s Monkey Studies** (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html#harlow>)
3. **Loftus and Palmer** – Accuracy of eyewitness testimony when using leading questions. (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/loftus-palmer.html>)
4. **Bandura’s Bobo doll study.** (<https://www.simplypsychology.org/bobo-doll.html>)

For each of these studies you should look up to find out the following.

Aim (What were they looking to find out?)

Participants (Who took part in the study?)

Procedure (What they had them do/ what they did to them)

Results (What they found out)

Conclusions (What the learned from there research)

Criticisms (Anything that was not so good about the study)

What else can you do.... The psychodynamic approach.

Psychology is made up of many different approaches, who all try explaining why people are the way they are. We are going to look at the psychodynamic approach, who offer explanations for most aspect in life but are so off the wall that most of the other approaches sprung up as a reaction to it!.

Read through <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psychodynamic.html>

Make notes on,

Who Sigmund Freud is

The 3 parts of the subconscious mind.

The what the Oedipus complex is.

(<https://www.simplypsychology.org/psychosexual.html>)

Who is “little Hans”



Aiming for an A*?... Maths in Psychology.

Psychology is a science and therefore uses the tools of science to discover information about what makes people act the way they do. Part of this means that we use statistics to help us say what is going on.

In the Psychology course you are about to take about 10% of the final marks available are maths skills. In terms of overall marks this equates to about a grade. The Maths skills are an equivalent level to that of Higher GCSE Maths/Stats. This booklet is to help you become more familiar with some of the mathematical content that you will need to know for the course.

Complete the math questions below to help prep you for the maths element of the course.

1) Standard form: Sometimes psychologists will come across very large or very small numbers. Because of the nature of very large numbers, it is often necessary to simplify these using shorthand, this is known as standard form.

Write in standard form

a) 70×10^5

b) 40×10^5

c) 0.8×10^6

d) 0.4×10^8

e) 0.3×10^8

f) 0.7×10^6

g) 150×10^4

h) 480×10^2

i) 0.044×10^5

j) 0.073×10^7

2) Rounding to decimal places

We often have to deal with numbers that go into the decimal points in psychology but we need to be able to round them up in order to make the results more useable in the write up of studies,

Round to 1 decimal place

- a) 0.374
- b) 0.798
- c) 0.393
- d) 0.584
- e) 0.136
- f) 0.138
- g) 0.464
- h) 29.9757
- i) 46.2317
- j) 79.0919

Round the numbers in the table.

Number	1 decimal place	2 decimal places
0.181	0.2	k)
8.928	l)	m)
0.4923	n)	o)
45.7053	p)	q)

3) Rounding to significant figures

Round to 1 significant figure

a) 15

e) 0.133

b) 983

f) 0.0403

c) 0.0097

g) 90054

d) 1.9

h) 0.6402

i) 160.7

Round the numbers in the table.

Number	1 significant figure	2 significant figures	3 significant figures
4.915	5	j)	k)
5253	l)	m)	n)
197.196	o)	p)	q)
0.4063	r)	s)	t)

Sample question

The findings from the study are presented below:

A table to show the number of participants who perceived the ambiguous image as a monkey or as a teapot from both conditions: image presented with animals and image presented with kitchen items.

	Perceived as a monkey	Perceived as a teapot
Presented with animals	15	10
Presented with kitchen items	5	12

- Identify and simplify the ratio of the number of participants who perceived a monkey in the first condition and the number who perceived a monkey in the second condition.
- Identify and simplify the ratio of the number of participants who perceived a teapot in the first condition and the number who perceived a teapot in the second condition.

6) Measures of Central tendency.

- a) Find the mean of the data given below.

6 6 1 2 1 8

mean =

- b) Find the mean of the given data below, rounding your answer to the nearest whole number.

11 12 28 17 21 24 27

mean =

Sample question

A Psychologist investigated whether recall was affected by the way the material was presented. One group was given pictures to recall, the other group were given words.

Number of Pictures Recalled	Number of Words Recalled
7	4
5	6
10	7
8	5
7	6
5	5
7	9
9	3

Calculate the measures of central tendency for the following set of raw data. **Condition 1 (Numbers of pictures recalled)**

a) Mode =

b) Median =

c) Mean =

Condition 2 (Number of words recalled)

d) Mode =

e) Median =

f) Mean =

7) Displaying Data

Graphs, charts and tables are all used to describe data and make it easier for the data to be understood.

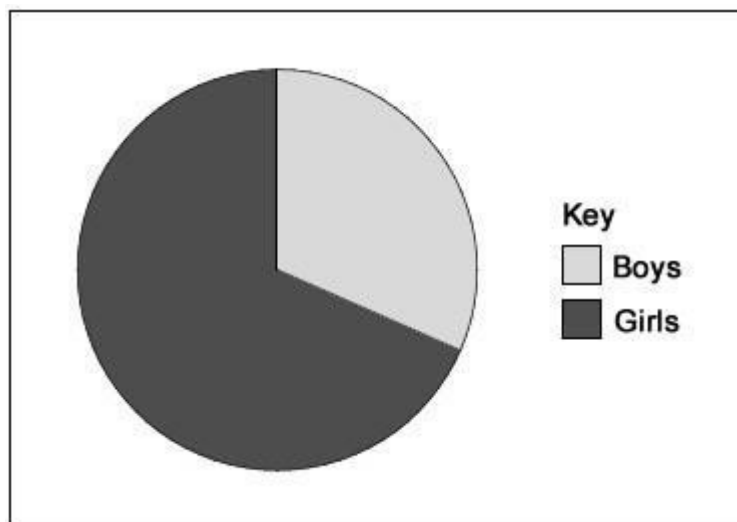
There are a number of graphs and charts that you need to be able to draw and interpret, they include:

- Tally chart (frequency table)
- Line graph
- Pie chart
- Bar chart
- Histogram
- Scatter diagram

Sample questions

A researcher is investigating gender differences in classification of attachment. They conduct a study using Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation'. The results are shown in the figure below.

The proportions of boys and girls who are classified as securely attached



- (a) Using the information in the figure, estimate the percentage of **boys** and **girls** that are securely attached.

Boys =

Girls =

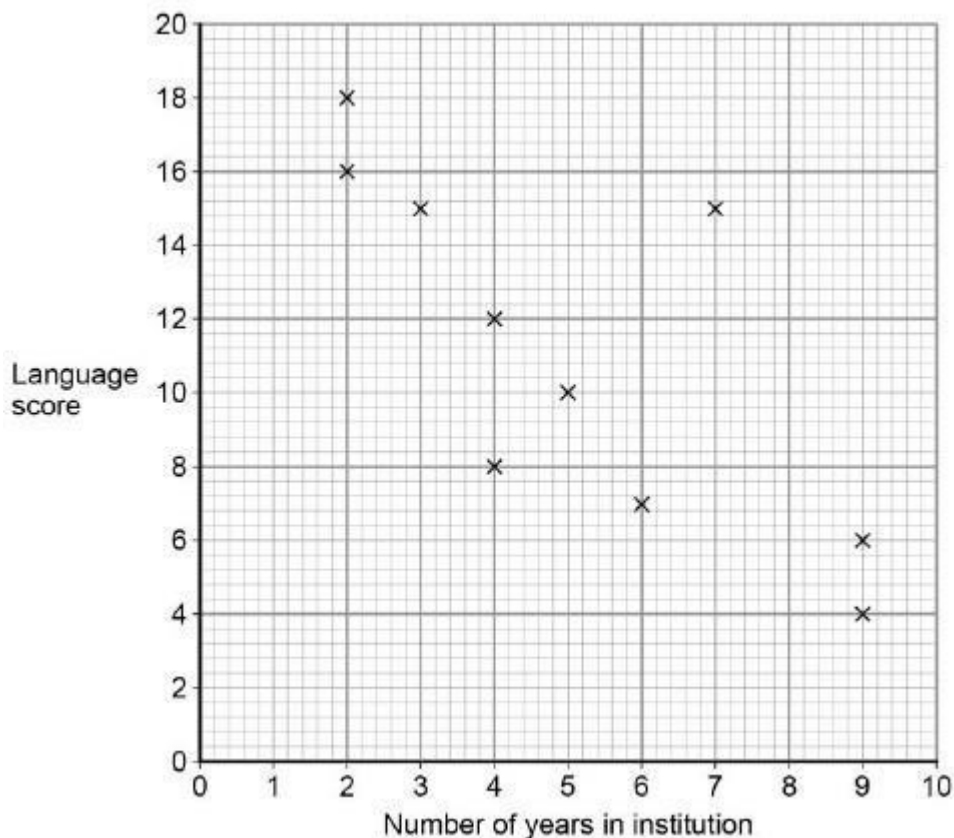
(2)

- (b) In a different study, 150 children were classified as securely attached. Of these, 40% were boys. How many of the 150 children were girls? Show your workings.

(2)

A psychologist thinks that there may be a link between language ability and institutionalisation. She tests the language skills of 8-year-old institutionalised children. A high score on the test indicates good language ability and a low score on the test indicates poor language ability. She also records the number of years that each child has been institutionalised. The findings are shown in the figure below.

The relationship between time spent in institution and language score



(c) Identify the type of graphical display in the figure.

A Histogram

B Bar graph

C Line graph

D Scattergram

(1)

(d) How many children took part in the study?

(1)

(e) What does the pattern of data in the figure suggest about language ability and institutionalisation?

(2)

(f) Calculate the range for the language scores. Show your workings.

(2)

