

GET READY TO STUDY PSYCHOLOGY

If you are planning to study Psychology with us in September, please review this document and complete the required activities.

Please bring the completed activities with you at induction.

What specification will I study?

We study the AQA specification for A Level Psychology

Here is the link to the specification: [Psychology AS and A-level 7181, 7182 Specification](#). Alternatively, you can scan the QR code.



How many lessons will I have a week?

You will have four lessons per week for Psychology. These lessons will include a mixture of teacher-led explanations, discussion and debate, independent learning tasks, and opportunities to apply psychological theories to real-world examples. This variety helps you build the analytical and evaluative skills needed to understand why people think, feel and behave the way they do.

Who can I contact if I have a question about this subject?

If you have any questions, please contact the Curriculum Leader for Psychology and Sociology, **Rebecca Thompson**, at r.thompson@barnsley.ac.uk.

What subjects go well with Psychology?

Psychology pairs well with several subjects because it sits at the intersection of science, social science, and humanities. Popular subject combinations with Psychology include Sociology, Criminology, Biology, Business, PE, and Health and Social Care, as they all help deepen your understanding of human behaviour from different angles.

What grades should I have?

We require applicants for the A Level programme to have a GCSE point score mean average of 5 or above. **This must include a grade 5 or higher in English Language, Mathematics, and Science** (either Combined Science at 5–5 or Biology at grade 5).

WHAT WILL I STUDY?

Paper 1: Introductory topics in Psychology
Section A: Social Influence Section B: Memory Section C: Attachment Section D: Clinical Psychology and Mental Health
Paper 2: Psychology in context
Section A: Approaches in Psychology Section B: Biopsychology Section C: Research Methods
Paper 3: Issues and options in Psychology
Section A: Issues and Debates Section B: Relationships Section C: Schizophrenia Section D: Forensic Psychology

WHAT WILL I NEED?

To study the course, you will need the following equipment:

- A folder with dividers
- Lined paper
- Pens and pencils
- Highlighters
- A ruler
- Whiteboard pens (non-permanent)
- A calculator

We would also ask that you purchase a textbook - details will be given in class.

HOW WILL I BE ASSESSED?

A Level Psychology is assessed through external examinations at the end of the second year. You will take three exams, each lasting two hours:

- **Paper 1:** Introductory Topics in Psychology
- **Paper 2:** Psychology in Context
- **Paper 3:** Issues and Options in Psychology

Mathematical skills will make up at least 10% of the overall assessment, while 25–30% will focus on evaluating skills, knowledge, and understanding of research methods.

INDUCTION TASK

Please complete the following activities and bring them to your first Psychology lesson.

You may either type your answers and print them or write them by hand on A4 lined paper. Whichever option you choose, you **must bring a physical copy to your first lesson.**

Please read the instructions carefully and complete all activities. If you have any questions, email r.thompson@barnsley.ac.uk.

Activity One:

One of the biggest debates in Psychology is whether it is a science or not. Use the internet if you need to, then answer the questions below. Make sure you clearly explain and justify your answers.

- 1) What is Psychology?
- 2) What make a subject a science?
- 3) Does Psychology use the scientific method? Explain your answer.
- 4) Which psychological approaches are most scientific, and why?
- 5) Which psychological approaches are less scientific, and why?
- 6) Why might some people argue that Psychology is not a science?
- 7) Why is it important for Psychology to be scientific?
- 8) How does research in Psychology help us understand human behaviour?

Activity Two:

Around 25% of the A Level Psychology course focuses on **Research Methods**. This area is essential for success, as it helps you understand how psychologists design studies and gather evidence. Try to define the key terms below linked to Research Methods. You may use the internet to help you if needed.

Aim	
Hypothesis	
Experimental hypothesis	
Correlational hypothesis	
Directional hypothesis	
Non – directional hypothesis	
Null hypothesis	
Independent variable	
Dependent variable	
Extraneous variable	
Quantitative data	
Qualitative data	
Primary data	
Secondary data	

Activity Three:

During your A Level Psychology course, you will study **six major psychological approaches**. Use the internet to research each approach and answer the questions below.

1) Behaviourist Approach

- What are the main ideas behind the behaviourist approach?
- What is classical conditioning?
- What experiment did Ivan Pavlov carry out?
- What did Pavlov discover about classical conditioning?
- What is operant conditioning?
- What does positive reinforcement mean in operant conditioning?
- What does negative reinforcement mean in operant conditioning?
- What does punishment mean in operant conditioning?
- What research did B.F. Skinner conduct?
- What did Skinner discover about operant conditioning?

2) Social Learning Theory

- What are the main ideas behind Social Learning Theory?
- What does imitation mean in Social Learning Theory?
- What is identification, and why does it make imitation more likely?
- What is vicarious reinforcement?
- What are mediational processes, and why are they important?
- What are the four mediational processes Bandura described?
- What research did Albert Bandura carry out?
- What did Bandura discover about how children learn from observing others?

3) Cognitive Approach

- What are the main ideas behind the cognitive approach?
- What are *internal mental processes*?
- What is a *schema*?
- How do schemas influence the way we think and behave?
- What is meant by using *models* to study mental processes?
- How do psychologists make *inferences* about what is happening in the mind?

4) Biological Approach

- What are the main ideas behind the biological approach?
- What does it mean that behaviour has a *genetic basis*?
- What is the difference between *genotype* and *phenotype*?
- How does *evolution* help explain human behaviour?
- How do the brain and nervous system influence behaviour?
- What is *neurochemistry*, and how can it affect behaviour?
- What is *cognitive neuroscience*?

5) Psychodynamic Approach

- What are the main ideas behind the psychodynamic approach?
- What is the *unconscious mind*?
- What are the three parts of personality: *Id*, *Ego*, and *Superego*?
- What are *defence mechanisms*?
- What does *repression* mean?
- What does *denial* mean?
- What does *displacement* mean?
- What are Freud's *psychosexual stages*?

6) Humanistic Approach

- What are the main ideas behind the humanistic approach?
- What does *free will* mean in psychology?
- What is *self-actualisation*?
- What is *Maslow's hierarchy of needs*?
- What does *congruence* mean?
- What are *conditions of worth*?