



A Level Psychology - Course Information

Exam board - AQA A-level Psychology

What is A Level Psychology?

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. It explores how people think, feel, and act in different situations, and seeks to understand the mental processes that shape human experience.

What does the course involve?

- Investigating human behaviour through scientific research methods and experiments.
- Exploring key psychological approaches and debates, such as nature vs nurture and free will vs determinism.
- Analysing real-life applications of psychology, including mental health, criminal behaviour, and social influence.
- Developing critical thinking, data analysis, and evaluation skills.

Entry Requirements: GCSE English grade 5, Mathematics grade 5 and Science grade 5 or above.

What topics are studied and how is it assessed?

Students study core areas of psychology across both years, covering how psychologists explain and investigate human behaviour.

Year 12:

- **Social Influence** – why people conform and obey authority figures.
- **Memory** – how information is processed, stored, and forgotten.
- **Attachment** – how early relationships influence later behaviour.
- **Psychopathology** – definitions and explanations of abnormality, including depression, phobias, and OCD.
- **Approaches in Psychology** – key psychological perspectives such as behaviourism, cognitive, biological, psychodynamic, and humanistic.
- **Research Methods** – how psychologists design and conduct experiments, including data collection, ethics, and statistical analysis.

Year 13:

- **Issues and Debates in Psychology** – gender bias, cultural bias, ethical issues, and the nature–nurture debate.
- **Biopsychology** – how biological systems such as the brain and nervous system influence behaviour.
- **Relationships**: explores the formation, maintenance and breakdown of romantic relationships, including factors such as attraction, attachment, and virtual communication.
- **Schizophrenia**: examines the symptoms, explanations and treatments of schizophrenia, focusing on biological, psychological and interactionist approaches.
- **Aggression** - causes of aggression, both situational and biological, as well as application to video games and prisons.



How is it assessed?

Assessment is through three written exams at the end of Year 13. Each paper lasts 2 hours and contributes 33.3% of the A Level (96 marks each).

Paper	Focus	Assessment
Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology	Social Influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology	Written exam: 2 hours (33.3% of A Level)
Paper 2: Psychology in Context	Approaches, Biopsychology, Research Methods	Written exam: 2 hours (33.3% of A Level)
Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology	Issues and Debates, plus 3 optional topics	Written exam: 2 hours (33.3% of A Level)

What are lessons like?

Lessons are engaging and varied, combining theory with real-world examples. Students will:

- Analyse psychological experiments and case studies.
 - Discuss and debate explanations of behaviour.
 - Apply theory to everyday life and media examples.
- Independent study is key: students read academic material, summarise research findings, and practise essay writing to prepare for exams.

Where Can Psychology Take You?

Psychology is one of the most versatile and respected A Levels. It develops skills in critical thinking, research, communication, and problem solving, all highly valued by universities and employers.

Career opportunities include: Clinical or Counselling Psychology, educational or Forensic Psychology, Human Resources and Management, Teaching and Research, Marketing, Advertising, and Data Analysis, Health, Social, and Community Work

Psychology helps you understand people making it one of the most useful subjects for both academic progression and real-world application.

For more information about the course, please see Ms Mcfarlane