



A-Level Course Information



Qualification: Advanced Level Psychology

Exam Board: OCR

Subject Leader: Mrs E. Jenkins

Entry Requirements:

Minimum Entry Requirements:

5 x 5s

4 in English and Maths

Subject Specific Entry Requirements:

6 in GCSE English or a humanities

5 in GCSE Maths

6 in Psychology if taken at GCSE

Why study Psychology?

Have you ever wondered why people turn to crime, if playing violent video games can make you aggressive, where you draw the line between sanity and insanity, or to what extent your behaviour is controlled by your genes? If so, then Psychology is the subject for you. Throughout the course you will discover some fascinating theories of human behaviour, challenge your previously-held beliefs and develop your analytical, investigative, evaluative and writing skills along the way.

What is Psychology?

Psychology is considered to be a science because psychologists try to understand people through careful controlled observation. All sciences rely on rigorous scientific methods and in this way psychology is no different to biology, physics or chemistry. However, psychology does not study molecules or plants, it studies people, their behaviour towards themselves and each other and how they learn and think.

Most of the research that psychologists do falls into one of five general areas; developmental, social, physiological, cognitive and individual differences. We will consider each of these in turn, using previous studies to help us understand the different approaches, and how these lead to different theories and explanations. We will also be carrying out some research of our own.

What can I do with Psychology after A-Level?

Many students go on to study a psychology-related degree, but it will also prepare students well for other degrees and careers in areas such as biology, sociology, philosophy, maths, counselling, medicine (particularly psychiatry), nursing, nutrition, policing, criminology and forensics. The skills you will develop during the course will be useful for you no matter what field you choose to enter.

What will I study?

There are three units in A level Psychology, all assessed by exams at the end of year 13. There is no coursework or controlled assessment.

Unit 1 – Research Methods

This unit introduces the world of psychological research methods. Students are required to conduct their own practical work. It provides students with the opportunity to understand what's involved in a range of different research methods and techniques, and it creates awareness of associated strengths and weaknesses.

Students are encouraged to reflect on their research journeys as they develop vital investigative skills and develop an appreciation of the principles of empirical scientific enquiry.

Assessment: Two hour exam paper
90 marks
30% of the A-level

Unit 2 – Psychological themes through core studies

Candidates build knowledge and understanding of 20 psychology studies, demonstrating evaluation skills and an appreciation of wider psychological approaches/perspectives, theories, issues and debates. It introduces some of the central areas of investigation in psychology organised in key themes.

Each key theme is represented by a classic and a contemporary core study which enables students to appreciate how psychological knowledge and understanding develop over time. The areas covered are individual differences, developmental, social, physiological and cognitive psychology.

Assessment: Two hour exam paper
105 marks
35% of the A-level

Unit 3 – Applied Psychology

You will cover three different topics in this unit:

- Issues in Mental Health
- Child Psychology
- Criminal Psychology

Through these topics students explore applications of psychology and gain an insight into how theory can be applied to real-world situations. The assessment provides the opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning through extended writing.

Assessment: Two hour exam paper
105 marks
35% of A-level