

Curriculum Overview

Psychology Intent

It is our intent to inspire pupils in the understanding of the mind and behaviour. We aim to secure strong academic outcomes alongside a discovery of new and thought-provoking areas of study. By exploring a wide range of topics, pupils can find areas of interest which will raise their confidence and encourage them to embrace a growth mind set.

The Psychology curriculum involves students learning about key psychological approaches, research and advances through history and considering the practical applications psychology has in society today.

It is the intention that students will develop empathy, integrity and respect by understanding others and why they may act the way they do because of factors outside of their control as well as looking at how some behaviours can be influenced by ourselves as well. Students will learn about ethical considerations and the implications of being unethical in research to promote integrity in the research process and how we should treat others.

Students can expect to be challenged and supported in tackling challenging issues and topics to build curiosity, resilience, confidence and ambition. High expectations from teachers will help to model resilience and ambition from students. Furthermore, academic reading opportunities and extended learning will help to promote curiosity and a love for Psychology.

Psychology Implementation

Our course is based on the AQA specification for Psychology. This qualification offers an engaging and effective introduction to Psychology. Through this course, students will learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop skills valued by higher education, preparing them for university and employers, preparing them for jobs requiring critical analysis, independent thinking and research. Throughout the course, students must cover key themes;

Core Themes;

1. Social influence (Paper 1) This topic involves conformity, including Zimbardo's research to social roles. Explanations of obedience, resistance to social pressures, minority influence and the role of social influence processes in social change.
2. Memory (Paper 1) The multi-store model of memory. The working memory model. Explanations for forgetting: proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues. Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. Improving the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, including the use of the cognitive interview.
3. Attachment (Paper 1) Caregiver-infant interactions in humans. Stages of attachment. Multiple attachments and the role of the father. Evolutionary and learning explanation of attachment. Understanding Ainsworth's 'strange situation' and types of attachment such as secure and insecure, in addition to the cultural variations. The influence of early attachments on adult relationships.

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4. Psychopathology (Paper 1) Definitions of abnormality, including deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency and deviation from ideal mental health. The behavioural, cognitive and biological approach to explaining and treating disorders and phobias such as Depression and OCD.
5. Approaches in Psychology (Paper 2) Origins of psychology: Wundt, introspection and the emergence of psychology as a science. The basic assumptions of the following approaches: Learning approaches, Cognitive approach, Biological approach.
6. Biopsychological (Paper 2) The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic). The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones. The fight or flight response. Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma. Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques; post-mortem examinations. Biological rhythms: circadian, infradian and ultradian and the difference between these rhythms. The effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle.
7. Research methods (Paper 2) Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following research methods, scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis, be familiar with their use and be aware of their strengths and limitations. This includes experimental methods, observational techniques, self-reports and correlations.
8. Issues and debates in psychology (Paper 3) Gender and culture in psychology – universality and bias (e.g. androcentrism and ethnocentrism) Free will and determinism: The scientific emphasis on causal explanations. The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour. Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism. Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation. Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.
9. Relationships (Paper 3) The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences. Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships. Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model and investment. Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown. Virtual relationships in social media: self disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships. Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.
10. Schizophrenia (Paper 3) Classification of schizophrenia. Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition. Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia. Biological explanations for schizophrenia. Psychological explanations for schizophrenia. Drug therapy. Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy. Token economies as used in the management of schizophrenia. The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model.
11. Aggression Psychology (Paper 3) Psychological explanation of aggression and criminality including Social Learning Theory and Deindividuation. Biological explanation of aggression and criminality – genetics, hormones, neurotransmitters. Ethological explanation of aggression. Evolutionary explanation of aggression. Impact of video games on aggression in children.

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All staff in the department are fully committed to developing a passion and enthusiasm of the subject within the students. Students are encouraged to have an open mind, view the world from others' perspectives and consider the impact of different psychological experiences on individual's lives. Staff work collaboratively in their planning and sharing of resources with a commitment to update resources with contemporary issues, demonstrating the relevance of Psychology to everyday life.

The study of Psychology aims to develop students understanding about theirs and others behaviour, looking at introducing theories of specific behaviours such as memory, social influence, attachment and phobias and OCD.

Students are encouraged to develop their own Psychology awareness through active engagement of psychological research and theory alongside contemporary social issues within the world today. Teachers make explicit links to other level 3 courses through teaching, including; sociology, criminology, law, history and English.

Students will demonstrate that they can conduct research and plan research, being able to evaluate and apply their psychological knowledge to scenarios and exam questions. This will be demonstrated through being able to achieve their MEG's or better on assessments throughout the year.

Students will be equipped with transferable skills to aid them in their post-18 goals, i.e. university, apprenticeships or full-time employment, demonstrating resilience in being able to identify not only where they were successful on an assessment but how they can improve. Their ambition to achieve will be shown in an improvement in their assessments over the term of the Psychology course.

Students will demonstrate integrity and curiosity by completing extended learning to deadlines. Curiosity will be shown when students complete wider reading tasks around the topics being covered. Students will show ambition and respect through the presentation of their booklets and active revision in folders being neat, tidy and up to date, as well as demonstrating the progress they have made in Psychology over the year.

Students will show ambition by completing challenging work and seeking wider reading to suit their learning levels while confidently participating in psychological discussion being mindful of and respectful of their peer's opinions. They will be able to do this in an empathetic way by considering all viewpoints and analysing these in their critiques of psychological theory.

Pupil progress is assessed through the students' ability to hold analytical debates between perspectives on a range of psychological issues. Students must hold a balanced and well-informed conversation, measuring their literacy and analytical skills. Assessments are used throughout the two-year course to inform teaching and learning and adapt teaching where necessary and addressing misconceptions. Assessments take the form of both formative and summative, whilst meaningful feedback and feedforward tasks are used to help students identify how to make progress.

An integral part of the study of each topic area will be to understand psychological theories, perspectives and methods. Students will consider the design of the research used to obtain data, including its strengths and limitations. They must show awareness of how to collect data, considering the usefulness of a number of research methods and issues (practical, theoretical and ethical) psychologists face when conducting research. Throughout the course synoptic links between topic areas studied are made. Skills are embedded over time and staff make a conscious effort to support students in their note taking and creation of revision resources. All lessons start with a recap of the previous lesson and the lesson will have explicit links to assessment criteria.

Sociology: Education YEAR 12

Unit: Biopsychology				
What are we learning?	Our intention- what knowledge, understanding and skills will we gain?	Evaluation and Assessment methods	Implementation	What additional resources are available?
Biopsychology	<p>Knowledge: the nervous system, endocrine system, flight and flight and the structure of the brain and how it can be affected through learning or surgery. Biological rhythms- circadian, ultradian and infradian, Endogenous Pacemakers & Exogenous Zeitgebers.</p> <p>Understanding: Students will have understanding of the structure of the nervous system, how the fight or flight response is activated and the structure of the brain and its effects on behaviour. Students will have understanding of the different biological rhythms, applied to bodily rhythms, with reference to research studies.</p> <p>Skills: Define key terms; demonstrate independence; apply research to novel situations, analyse and evaluate research and theory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to confidently analyse, in detail, psychological research and theories. Students will show a logical chain of reasoning in their presentation of an argument, with specific evaluation using Psychological terminology. Students will show joined up thinking, whereby details from other units synoptically. Evaluation will be evidenced in the exam questions and demonstrate a clear understanding of research. Reading beyond the set texts are evidence and show modern day application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links made to the Approaches topic and the biological approach Links made to year one Biopsychology 	<p>AQA A-level Psychology Book 1</p> <p>Department Reading List</p>

Unit: Issues & Debates				
Issues and Debates	<p>Knowledge: Gender and Culture Bias, Free Will and Determinism. Nature vs. Nurture, Holism and Reductionism, Ideographic vs. Nomothetic approaches, Etic vs. Emic approaches, Ethics.</p> <p>Understanding: Students will have understanding of key issues and debates within psychology. Clear links to theories and research made synoptically. They will understand how to evaluate research and theories in terms of its reliability and validity and be able to evaluate theories in terms of bias. Students will show a deep appreciation of ethical issues.</p> <p>Skills: Define key terms; demonstrate independence; apply research to novel situations, analyse and evaluate research and theory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to confidently analyse, in detail, psychological research and theories. Students will show a logical chain of reasoning in their presentation of an argument, with specific evaluation using Psychological terminology. Students will show joined up thinking, whereby details from other units synoptically. Evaluation will be evidenced in the exam questions and demonstrate a clear understanding of research. Reading beyond the set texts are evidence and show modern day application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links made to evaluation points in all other topics Synoptic links to all topics 	<p>AQA A-level Psychology Book 1</p> <p>Department Reading List</p>

Unit: Schizophrenia				
Schizophrenia	<p>Knowledge: Classification of Schizophrenia according to the DSM and ICD and positive and negative symptoms, Reliability and Validity of Diagnosis using those diagnostic manuals in terms of culturally, co morbidity and prognosis. Biological Explanations for schizophrenia- the dopamine hypothesis and brain structure and Drug Treatments, Family Dysfunction theories- the double-blind theory and Expressed emotion and Family Therapy, Token Economy, Cognitive explanations leading to irrational thinking and CBTp.</p> <p>Understanding: Students will have understanding of theories and research related to schizophrenia. They will understand how to evaluate research on treatments in terms of its reliability and validity and be able to evaluate theories in terms of bias. Students will show a deep appreciation of ethical issues.</p> <p>Skills: Define key terms; demonstrate independence; apply research to novel situations, analyse and evaluate research and theory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to confidently analyse, in detail, psychological research and theories. Students will show a logical chain of reasoning in their presentation of an argument, with specific evaluation using Psychological terminology. Students will show joined up thinking, whereby details from other units synoptically. Evaluation will be evidenced in the exam questions and demonstrate a clear understanding of research. Reading beyond the set texts are evidence and show modern day application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to research methods when discussing reliability and validity Biological approach linked to OCD, Approaches and Biopsychology Cognitive explanation linked to depression and Approaches topic. 	<p>AQA A-level Psychology Book 1</p> <p>Department Reading List</p>

Unit: Aggression				
Aggression	<p>Knowledge: Students will know the Social Learning Theory of Aggression, How Deindividuation could explain aggression and the Biological explanations of aggressive behaviour. Institutional aggression experienced in prison- the deprivation model and the situational explanation. Effects that the media can have on aggression and how to explain it.</p> <p>Understanding: Students will have understanding of theories and research. They will understand how to evaluate research in terms of its reliability and validity and be able to evaluate theories in terms of bias. Students will show a deep appreciation of ethical issues.</p> <p>Skills: Define key terms; demonstrate independence; apply research to novel situations, analyse and evaluate research and theory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be able to confidently analyse, in detail, psychological research and theories. Students will show a logical chain of reasoning in their presentation of an argument, with specific evaluation using Psychological terminology. Students will show joined up thinking, whereby details from other units synoptically. Evaluation will be evidenced in the exam questions and demonstrate a clear understanding of research. Reading beyond the set texts are evidence and show modern day application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to SLT in Approaches Links to Biological approach in Approaches topic and Biopsychology 	<p>AQA A-level Psychology Book 1</p> <p>Department Reading List</p>