



# A Level Psychology

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Pre-Course Workbook

# Overview

This workbook will give you an insight into your studies of A Level Psychology. Some of this will form the basis of your understanding of the early part of the course. Please take time to read the information provided and complete the tasks.

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## How to complete this booklet

- You may choose to print and work directly on the booklet or make your notes on lined paper.
- If you use paper, please ensure you put the task headings for each activity.
- All of the resources you need can be found by clicking on the links.
- If you are working from a printed copy, then you can copy the links from pg15
- Please try your best with each task – we are not worried about how ‘correct’ your work is but the effort you put in.

# KS5 Psychology A-Level Learning Journey



Unit 11 – Cognition & Development

## FUTURE PATHWAYS



Unit 8 – Issues & Debates



Unit 9 – Stress



Unit 10 – Addiction



Unit 7 – Further Approaches



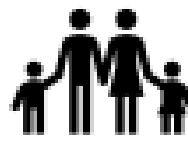
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Unit 6 – Biopsychology



Interviews



Questionnaires



Observational Techniques



Unit 3 – Memory

Research Methods



Unit 2 – Social Influence



Case Studies



Content Analysis

Research Methods



Ethical Issues



Pilot Study



The Research Process



Unit 1 – Psychological Approaches



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# What is Psychology?

The origin of the word Psychology comes from the 1600's – *psychologia* (the study of the soul).

*psykhē* "breath, spirit, soul" + *logia* "study of"

Early psychology had its roots in Philosophy, but today it is seen as a much more scientific discipline.

**Task 1:** Read this article and use it to answer the questions that follow.

[Psychology | Psychology Today](#)

This should take around 20 mins.

1. List 3 processes that are of interest to Psychologists  
-  
-  
-
2. How much does the brain weigh?
3. In which year did Ivan Pavlov win his Nobel Prize?
4. What is learned helplessness?
5. What is neuroplasticity?
6. Aside from Clinical Psychology, outline 2 other applications of the subject.



The Crash Course site has some great videos on Psychology (and other subjects). You will need to watch the first 2 videos for the next tasks, but we would recommend subscribing to their YouTube playlist:

<https://youtu.be/eal4-A89IWY>

**Task 2:** Watch video #1 from the crash course series. Make a note of the names that are mentioned. Pick one and research how they were involved in psychology. Write a short paragraph here summarising what you learnt.

## Approaches in Psychology

Psychology is not a 'one size fits all' study of behaviour. It is more of an umbrella term for many different fields of study. There are several different approaches that can be taken when trying to explain a behaviour - each with their own set of beliefs, techniques, and areas of interest.

The main ones we will look at are:

- Cognitive
- Biological
- Learning theories (*including Behaviourism and Social Learning Theory*)
- Psychodynamic
- Humanistic

As well as each approach, we will be looking at how there are multiple influences on our behaviour from the 3 areas in the diagram to the right. Sometimes these can work together to affect how a person thinks, feels and acts.



# Task 3: Approaches Research



We will be looking at some of the approaches in your first few weeks on the course, so this task will be very helpful in aiding your understanding.

Use the links below alongside information from the video you watched to help you to make a **poster or a summary handout** on either:

- An overview of all the approaches with some key points

**OR**

- A more detailed look at one of the following:
  - Biological Approach
  - Cognitive Approach
  - Behavioural Approach
  - Social Learning Theory

On Tutor2U you will find specific sets of study notes, quizzes and videos based on your specification. This is a site that you will be using in your A Level.

This task should take 30-40 mins, but please use this as a chance to show us your best effort in presentation and your creativity.

If you want further guidance, please see the sample layout on the next page.

Suggested resources:

[Approaches in Psychology | Psychology | tutor2u](#)

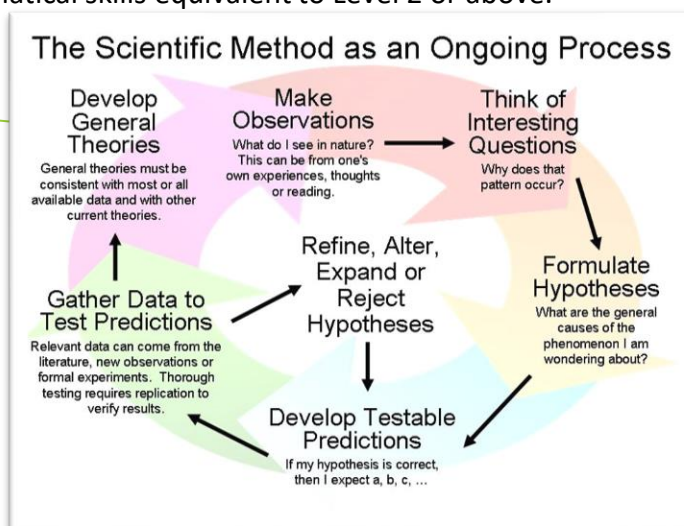
[7 Major Psychological Perspectives \(verywellmind.com\)](#)

[Psychologist World | Psychology News, Tests, Theories and Guides](#)

## Research Methods in Psychology

Research methods are fundamental to furthering our understanding of psychology. Without investigations, we wouldn't be able to develop any theories about behaviour. You will learn about a range of methods and techniques across the course.

- At least **25–30%** of the overall assessment will assess skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research methods.
- Additionally, **at least 10%** of the overall assessment of Psychology will contain mathematical skills equivalent to Level 2 or above.



# Name of Approach

Who are the key people in this approach?

What are some key theories/ideas in this approach?

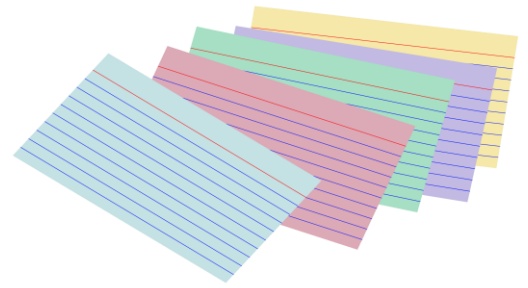
What are some of the key terms in this approach?

What research methods does this approach use?

How has this approach helped in the real world/ what are the applications?

Are there any issues with using this approach?

# Key Terminology



Learning Psychology for the first time is like learning a new language. There are lots of new terms that you will need as well as understanding different meaning for some that are already in your vocabulary.

You will be expected to keep detailed glossaries for this course. You will be guided to key terms on your unit summaries for different sections. You will be assigned pre-learning home studies regularly, that will get you to complete and update these.

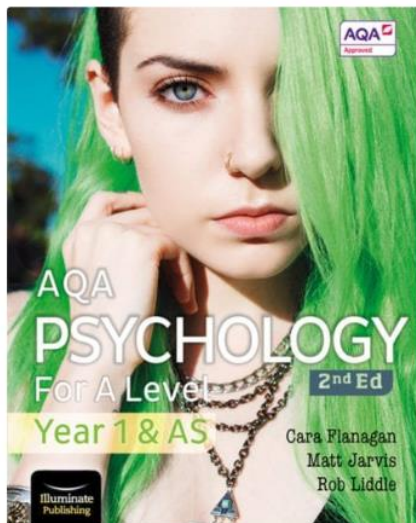
How you choose to keep your **glossary** is up to you, so long as you can access it when needed in lessons. You may wish to try one of the following methods:

- Table with terms and definitions (good for look, cover, write, check)
- Neat list following your unit summary
- Cue cards (including online platforms like Quizlet or Anki).

As you have already seen, there is a range of resources available for psychology. We will also provide you with a textbook (both a physical copy and access to the new online edition). You can have a look at this by following the link below.

Our Textbook:  
 USERNAME: SHIGHCLIFFE7  
 PASSWORD: GREEN7

[Login Screen \(illuminate.digital\)](#)



## A sample Unit Summary:

Highcliffe School		EXPERIMENTAL METHOD
<p><b>What will we be learning?</b></p> <p>We will be learning about how the experimental method is used to investigate human behaviour. You will also learn how to carry out your own research using the experimental method.</p>	<p><b>Why this? Why now?</b></p> <p>This is the third section in paper 2 (7182) (48 marks)</p> <p>Additional research methods questions will also be asked in any section on paper 1, 2 and 3.</p>	<p><b>Key words:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aim</li> <li>debriefing</li> <li>ethical issues</li> <li>experiment</li> <li>extraneous variables</li> <li>hypotheses</li> <li>directional hypothesis</li> <li>non-directional hypothesis</li> <li>independent variable</li> <li>informed consent</li> <li>operationalisation</li> <li>standardised procedures</li> <li>confounding variable</li> <li>control</li> <li>internal validity</li> <li>internal reliability</li> <li>internal validity</li> <li>reliability</li> <li>confounding</li> <li>field study</li> <li>experimental design</li> <li>independent groups</li> <li>matched pairs</li> <li>dependent measures</li> <li>counterbalancing</li> <li>order effects</li> <li>randomisation</li> <li>field experiment</li> <li>laboratory experiment</li> <li>quasi-experiment</li> <li>demand characteristics</li> <li>experimenter effects</li> <li>sampling (stratified, systematic, volunteer, random, opportunity)</li> <li>target population</li> <li>bias</li> <li>volunteer bias</li> <li>reliability</li> <li>population</li> <li>ethics issues</li> <li>confounding</li> <li>deception</li> <li>informed consent</li> <li>blinding</li> <li>protective blink bars</li> <li>right to withdraw</li> <li>debriefing</li> <li>debriefing</li> <li>ethical guidelines (code of conduct)</li> <li>ethics committee</li> <li>informed consent</li> <li>measures of central tendency</li> <li>mean, median, mode</li> <li>measures of dispersion: range, standard deviation</li> </ul>
<p><b>What will we learn?</b></p> <p>Experimental method. Types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi-experiments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims: stating aims, the difference between aims and hypotheses.</li> <li>Hypotheses: directional and non-directional.</li> <li>Sampling: the difference between population and sample; sampling techniques including: random, systematic, stratified, opportunity and volunteer; implications of sampling techniques, including bias and generalisation.</li> <li>Field studies and the aims of fielding.</li> <li>Experimental design: repeated measures, independent groups, matched pairs</li> <li>Variables: manipulation and control of variables, including independent, dependent, extraneous, confounding; operationalisation of variables.</li> <li>Control: random allocation and counterbalancing, randomisation and standardisation.</li> <li>Demand characteristics and investigator effects</li> <li>Ethics, including the role of the British Psychological Society's code of ethics; ethical issues in the design and conduct of psychological studies; dealing with ethical issues in research</li> <li>Presentation and display of quantitative data: graphs, tables, bar charts, histograms.</li> <li>Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>What opportunities are there for wider study?</b></p> <p>Read: Psych Experiments, Michael A Britt, PhD Adams Media</p> <p>You will be able link this knowledge to your work on the studies by Skinner, <b>DuSoy</b> and Bandura. The videos available will help you to understand how these are set-up as experiments.</p>	
<p><b>How will I be assessed?</b></p> <p>Mid and End of Topic Tests: Research methods will be assessed in your mid and end of topic papers, for example, when you have an assessment on memory you will also be assessed research methods.</p> <p>Mock exam: in June (end of year 12)</p>	<p><b>Example questions:</b></p> <p><b>A02:</b> Identify the operationalised dependent variable in this study (2 marks)</p> <p><b>A02/A01:</b> What do the mean and standard deviation values in Table 1 suggest about the participants' performances with and without music? Justify your answer. (4 marks)</p> <p><b>A02/A01:</b> Design an experiment to investigate whether learning words in silence increases recall compared to learning words while listening to music</p> <p>In your answer you should provide details of: • the aims of the experiment • identification and manipulation of variables including details of the task • controls to minimise the effects of extraneous variables • data handling and analysis – use of descriptive statistics and/or data presentation. (12 marks)</p>	



# Task 4: Key Terminology

Now you understand the importance of glossaries, we would like you to make a start on the first part of research methods. As you saw on Pg5, research methods is a fundamental part of psychology as it enables us to investigate the behaviour that we are interested in.

Using either the table below, or your own method, please **write definitions** for the following terms. You can use any of the resources you have previously accessed in this booklet.

You may also find Crash course video #2 helpful - <https://youtu.be/hFV71QPvX2I>

Key Term	Definition
Experiment	
Aim	
Hypothesis	
Independent variable	
Dependent variable	
Operationalise	
Method	
Standardised procedure	
Control	
Validity	
Reliability	
Sample	
Target population	
Generalisation	
Findings	
Conclusion	

# Task 5: Apply Your Knowledge

As you have hopefully picked up from the work you have already completed, psychology is all about explaining behaviour. We ask questions like:

***Why do we do... / What causes... / How can we treat...***

We will look at a wide range of behaviours on this course. Select one of the following examples and answer the questions that follow.

- Obedience
- Forgetting
- Phobias
- Stress
- Peer pressure

## QUESTIONS

1. Give a definition of your chosen behaviour
  
2. Pick one of the approaches you looked at earlier and describe how this approach might explain the behaviour you have chosen.
  
3. How has psychology helped with our knowledge of the behaviour? (E.g., deeper understanding, treatments)

## EXTENSION

Would it be possible to design an experiment to explore your chosen behaviour? How might you go about this? IF not, explain why it might not be ethical to do.

Which behaviour or theory are you most looking forward to learning about on the course?

# Where could Psychology take you?



Studying Psychology does not mean you have to become a psychologist. There are hundreds of careers that could utilise the skills you gain from your studies. If you did want to explore the more specific careers and routes, the following information will help you.

You may wish to download the BPS careers booklet, or check out some of their videos here: [Additional careers resources | BPS](#)

## **Additional Resources:**

[Career options in psychology | BPS](#)

[Psychology: Careers, Areas of Study, and Impact \(verywellmind.com\)](#)

[80+ Psychology Jobs: What You Can Do With a Psychology Degree \(verywellmind.com\)](#)

## **Task 6 – Thinking about the future**

Pick one career option from the articles and information above. If you already have a career in mind, use that as your inspiration.

Write a brief summary of how an understanding of Psychology would help with this career/job role. What kind of work does this career involve? How might it help our understanding of human behaviour in the future.

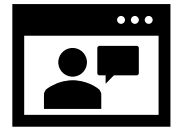
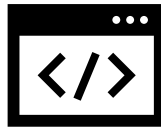
**Extension** – find a piece of research that fits in with your chosen area. You may like to use google scholar for this, or perhaps look at news articles.

# Take it Further

If you have made it this far, then you do not need to do any more work. However, if you would like to know more, please check out some of the resources detailed here.

## Websites with good articles/resources

Psychology Today  
Very Well Mind  
BPS research digest  
Scientific American (Mind)  
All About Psychology



## Books:

- Friend Request, 2018 by Laura Marshall
- Born Evil, 2018 by Julia Derek
- Lies, 2017 by T.M. Logan
- Reaching Down the Rabbit Hole, 2016 by Allan Ropper and Brian David Burrell
- Good Me Bad Me, 2017 by Ali Land
- Selfie: How the West Became Self-Obsessed, 2018 by Will Storr
- The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Turn Evil, 2008 by Philip Zimbardo
- How to Survive the End of the World, 2018 by Aaron Gillies

You may also want to have a look at [The ultimate psychology reading list | BPS](#)

## Video Clips

<https://youtu.be/J3nIGWelVj8>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/petter\\_johansson\\_do\\_you\\_really\\_know\\_why\\_you\\_do\\_what\\_you\\_u\\_do](https://www.ted.com/talks/petter_johansson_do_you_really_know_why_you_do_what_you_do)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/laurel\\_braitman\\_depressed\\_dogs\\_cats\\_with\\_ OCD\\_what\\_animal\\_madness\\_means\\_for\\_us\\_humans](https://www.ted.com/talks/laurel_braitman_depressed_dogs_cats_with OCD_what_animal_madness_means_for_us_humans)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth\\_loftus\\_the\\_fiction\\_of\\_memory](https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/scott\\_fraser\\_the\\_problem\\_with\\_eyewitness\\_testimony](https://www.ted.com/talks/scott_fraser_the_problem_with_eyewitness_testimony)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/steven\\_pinker\\_chalks\\_it\\_up\\_to\\_the\\_blank\\_slate](https://www.ted.com/talks/steven_pinker_chalks_it_up_to_the_blank_slate)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/philip\\_zimbardo\\_on\\_the\\_psychology\\_of\\_evil](https://www.ted.com/talks/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ben\\_ambridge\\_10\\_myths\\_about\\_psychology\\_debunked](https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_ambridge_10_myths_about_psychology_debunked)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_yT\\_F0dMZRU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_yT_F0dMZRU) (Part 1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3rHTm1YLxA> (part 2) – Stephen Fry - The Secret Life Of The Manic Depressive. BBC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhLuEKZj1oo> – The Fritzl affair. Real crime documentary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJm7AhdGbDk> – Freud documentary (short)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5XFjLdNO4FU> – The Nurture room – child psychology

SciShow Psych is another great channel hosted by the same team as the Crash Course videos. Their videos cover some fascinating areas of Psychology.

[youtube.com/channel/UCUdettijNYvLAm4AixZv4RA](https://youtube.com/channel/UCUdettijNYvLAm4AixZv4RA)

# Get organised

## Specification

Have a look at what we will be covering by exploring the specification for your course. You can also see samples of exam questions, command words, key terms and other information on this site

AQA A Level - <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/subject-content-a-level>

## Resources

- You will be provided with a textbook for both years.
- It is up to you to provide your own paper and materials for the classroom. Students need a folder (lever arch) to put all work in and can have a daily folder that they bring to class.
- There will be certain resources that you are expected to have with you at every lesson. You will get more detail on this in September.
- You will find it useful to have (in addition to a pen!) pencils, coloured pens, highlighters, and a ruler.
- You will also need a basic calculator for lessons and exams.



# Checklist

Task	Activity	Complete?
1	Reading Comprehension	
2	Psychologist Research	
3	Approaches Poster	
4	Key Terminology	
5	Application to Real Life	
6	Your Future with Psychology	

## Questions

You can email Miss Bascombe (Subject lead for Psychology) with any queries or questions that you have. If you think of things as you are working on this, make a note of them below and we can answer them when you come to Highcliffe.

Email: Miss Bascombe: [jbascombe@highcliffeschool.com](mailto:jbascombe@highcliffeschool.com)

Write down any questions that you have for September here:

# Full Links / References



If you are unable to access the links in the booklet, please copy them as they are written out below.

## **Task 1**

Psychology Today article

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/psychology>

## **Task 3**

Tutor2U page - <https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/collections/a-level-psychology-study-notes-approaches-and-biological-psychology>

Very Well Mind - Perspectives -

<https://www.verywellmind.com/perspectives-in-modern-psychology-2795595>

Psychologist World – (please only use the free to access articles)

<https://www.psychologistworld.com/>

## **Task 4**

Textbook: <https://illuminate.digital/aqapsych2edy1/>

## **Task 5**

<https://www.bps.org.uk/additional-careers-resources>

<https://www.bps.org.uk/career-options-psychology>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/a-list-of-psychology-careers-2794917>

## **Extras:**

<https://www.bps.org.uk/psychologist/ultimate-psychology-reading-list>