

Progression - Psychology

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1. Thinking of studying A Level Psychology at Worcester Sixth Form College?

We teach the **AQA** specification.

Here is a brief summary of the topics we cover over the two-year course. If you want to find out more about each of these topics, you can find the full specification on the AQA website: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182/specification-at-a-glance>

- **Social Influence** – conformity, obedience to authority and minority influence.
- **Memory** – the structure of memory, forgetting and eyewitness testimony.
- **Attachment** – early attachments and the effects of disrupting an attachment.
- **Psychopathology** – definitions of abnormal behaviour, causes and treatment of mental disorders.
- **Approaches** – the assumptions of learning approaches, the cognitive approach, the biological approach, the psychodynamic approach.
- **Biopsychology** – the nervous and endocrine systems, fight or flight response, ways of studying the brain and biological rhythms.
- **Research Methods** – data gathering and analysis techniques.
- **Issues and Debates** – free will and determinism, the nature-nurture debate, and holism and reductionism.
- **Cognition and Development** – development of mental processes, especially thinking, reasoning and our understanding of the world.
- **Stress** – causes of stress, the impact of stress on the body and coping with stress.
- **Aggression** – biological and psychological explanations for aggression, aggression in prisons and media influences on aggression.



2. Tasks to complete before September

In order to prepare for the course, you need to complete the tasks on p4-9.

Before you begin, find a folder to store this Booklet and all the notes that you make on the tasks. **You need to bring in this folder at the start of the course.** Make sure that your notes are neat and well-organised!

Some of the content in these tasks is not directly assessed in the A level Psychology exam, but it will help you understand how psychologists undertake research.



2. Tasks to complete before September

Key Research Studies in Psychology

Use the links below to read about some classic psychological studies, most of which you will be learning about in your course.

Then, use the following headings to summarise each of the **SIX** research studies in no more than 250 words (for each study):

- Background and Aim(s)
- Method (procedure and details of the sample)
- Results (this could be written or included on a graph – as long as you explain your graph)
- Conclusion(s)

- 1) <https://simplypsychology.org/milgram.html> - Milgram
- 2) <https://www.simplypsychology.org/zimbardo.html> - Zimbardo
- 3) https://www.canonsociaalwerk.eu/1971_stigma/1973%20Rosenhan%20Being%20sane%20in%20insane%20places%20OCR.pdf – Rosenhan
- 4) <https://www.simplypsychology.org/loftus-palmer.html> - Loftus and Palmer
- 5) <https://www.simplypsychology.org/mary-ainsworth.html> - Ainsworth
- 6) <http://www.holah.karoo.net/rainestudy.htm> - Raine

Throughout your A Level Psychology course you will complete exam-style questions that ask you to describe or outline something. This may be describing a study, an explanation or a model. This information is called 'A01'.

This type of exam-style question will begin:

- Describe...
- Identify...
- Outline... etc

You will have a go at answering some exam-style questions later.



2. Tasks to complete before September



Key Research Studies in Psychology: Quiz

- 1) How many participants were there in Milgram's study?
 - a) 20
 - b) 40
 - c) 50
 - d) 60

- 2) How long were pseudo patients admitted to the hospitals for?
 - a) Between 7-52 days (mean = 19 days)
 - b) Between 8-52 days (mean = 18 days)
 - c) Between 9-48 days (mean = 19 days)
 - d) Between 7-53 days (mean = 19 days)

- 3) What was the speed estimate when the verb 'smashed' was used?
 - a) 40.6mph
 - b) 48.1mph
 - c) 40.8mph
 - d) 41.8mph

- 4) What role did Zimbardo play in the Stamford prison experiment?
 - a) A guard
 - b) A prisoner
 - c) A warden
 - d) The chief superintendent

- 5) How were the prisoners for Zimbardo's study 'collected'?
 - a) Arrested at home and handcuffed by police officer
 - b) Arrested at home by Zimbardo
 - c) They made their own way to Stamford University for the experiment
 - d) Arrested at home by the guards in the study

2. Tasks to complete before September

Ted Talks

You may have come across TED Talks at school. There are some good ones on psychological topics.

Go to the TED Talks homepage (<https://www.ted.com/talks>) and then select *psychology* from the drop down 'topics' box.

Pick **THREE** talks that look interesting or use the 'search talks' box to find TED Talks on a topic linked to the A Level Psychology specification.

After watching each talk, summarise it in 50-100 words.

Here are some examples that you might like:

- 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/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory
- 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/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil
- https://www.ted.com/talks/ben_ambridge_10_myths_about_psychology_debunked



2. Tasks to complete before September

Current Research Studies in Psychology

Having learned about some classic or key psychological research studies, this task will introduce you to summaries of psychological research published more recently.

Go to the website: <https://digest.bps.org.uk/>. (You can also download the Research Digest app.)

Scroll down the regularly-updated feed or use the 'search' box to find out research on topics that you find interesting.

Select THREE research studies and then answer the following questions – use the table on p8 to note your brief answers.

These questions will familiarise you with some of the terminology used on the A Level Psychology course:

1. Who conducted this research and/or what is the title of the study?
2. What is the aim of the study - what is it about?
3. Who are the participants - the individual or group of people used in the study?
4. What findings were obtained and/or what conclusions have been drawn?
5. Does this research have any practical applications - could the findings from the study be useful in any way? If so, how and for who?



Question	Research Study 1	Research Study 2	Research Study 3
Researcher or title of study?			
Aim?			
Participants?			
Findings or Conclusions?			
Practical applications?			

3. Optional Tasks

i. Complete a (free) short course about Psychology

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

<https://www.futurelearn.com/subjects/psychology-and-mental-health-courses>

These courses are organised by external providers NOT Worcester Sixth Form College! Some are more appropriate for individuals new to studying Psychology – it is recommended that you choose an ‘introductory’ level course. Most, but not all, are free courses.

Why not try these OpenLearn courses?

- Starting with psychology
- Psychological research, obedience and ethics
- Introduction to child psychology
- Forensic psychology

ii. Watch some Psychology-themed documentaries

- NETFLIX: Babies (related to the specification topic of Attachment)
- NETFLIX: 100 Humans (covers topics within general psychology)
- NETFLIX: The Mind Explained (short episodes, many of which link to different topics on the specification)
- The brain: a secret history (3 parts which cover different topics on the specification)
 - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6cifd2>
 - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x6cifd6>
 - <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xugnxu>

After watching each documentary, try to summarise it in no more than 100 words. Alternatively, if you are watching the documentary with someone else, you could both write a summary and compare them. Although you have watched the same content, your interpretations may be different (we look at this phenomenon in A level Psychology!).

iii. Read some psychology-themed books or articles

The following books relate closely to the study of Psychology. Using the internet, your local library and school or college library read a selection of books/articles listed below.

Summarise your findings in 50-100 words and suggest ways in which your chosen books/articles relate to the field of 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

Articles:

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/finding-new-home/201806/why-do-some-songs-become-popular>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/finding-new-home/201805/narcissistic-eyebrows>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/talking-apes/201805/are-you-morning-lark-or-night-owl>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/modern-mentality/201806/sadness-does-not-discriminate-reflecting-kate-spade>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/when-your-adult-child-breaks-your-heart/201805/are-children-overprescribed-psychiatric>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/finding-new-home/201805/new-research-does-watching-tv-make-us-unhappy>