

## What is Psychology?

An interest in 'behaviour' is essential to the study of Psychology. The subject allows students to gain an understanding of both the physiological and the psychological aspects of our make-up and investigates both the brain functions and the social stimuli involved in behaviour. Focus is placed upon analysis, evaluation, interpretation, ethical issues and critical appreciation of psychological methodologies.

## Why students choose this course

Psychology is an ideal choice for students who have an interest in understanding human behaviour from a scientific perspective. It is a subject for students who are inquisitive and fond of conducting research on issues or topics that are often overlooked, and critically evaluating the effectiveness of these. Students enjoy learning theories and content that enhance their understanding of everyday life.

The knowledge they gain within this A level gives them an opportunity to understand not only their own behaviours but also allows them to acknowledge reasons for various situations that occur around the world and within their social circle. Psychology A level compliments subjects like Science, Law, PE, Sociology, Mathematics and Health and Social Care.

## What the course covers

### Year 1:

#### **Paper 1: Social Influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology**

1. Social Influence: Why do people conform and obey authority figures?
2. Memory: How does memory work? Why do you forget? How accurate are eye witness testimonies?
3. Attachment: How important are attachments in infancy? What effects can disruption of attachments have?
4. Psychopathology: How can we explain and treat mental health disorders (e.g. depression, OCD and phobias)?

#### **Paper 2: Approaches, Biopsychology and Research Methods**

1. Approaches: What different explanations are there for behaviour? (e.g. cognitive)
2. Biopsychology: What areas in the brain control what functions? How do drug treatments work?
3. Research Methods: How do we conduct research in psychology? How do we analyse and present data?

### Year 2

#### **Paper 3: Issues and Debates, Stress, Gender, Addiction**

1. Issues and debates: Do we have free will?
2. Stress: What causes stress? How can stress affect you?
3. Gender: What is the influence of culture and media on gender roles? What is gender identity disorder?
4. Addiction: How can we explain nicotine addictions? How can you reduce these?

**The complete specification can be viewed on the AQA website: [www.aqa.org.uk](http://www.aqa.org.uk)**

## What students can do with this course

Psychology provides opportunities for those looking to progress to degree level in a number of fields, and can be studied as Experimental Psychology at Oxford, and as part of the Social and Political Sciences at Cambridge. Psychology has uses across many fields (e.g. Clinical, Educational, Sports, Criminal Psychology) and is widely used in the workplace.

It allows a development of core skills, building arguments, reading and understanding the work of others. All these skills are applicable in employment and at University across courses.

## How this course is assessed

3 separate exams each lasting 2 hours (carrying 33.3% marks each)

- The course includes mathematical skills which are assessed in all three papers.
- The course is content heavy and therefore requires candidates to have an excellent memory alongside a dedicated attitude towards active revision.

## Entry requirements

All our course entry requirements are detailed in the Entry Requirements document located in the admissions section of our website.

## Further Reading

All AQA Psychology content and example exam practice can be viewed on the following links:  
<https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology>  
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

## Student Profile:



Before Sixth Form, Samah was a student at Dixons City Academy. At Dixons Sixth, she studied A Levels in Psychology and Geography in addition to BTEC Health and Social Care, gaining grades A, A and Distinction. She left us to read Psychology at the University of Leeds.

“ I studied psychology because I have a genuine curiosity about the way humans think and behave. The A Level Psychology course complements a range of other subjects. There’s so many different focuses in the discipline, which allows for a variety of career choices. Studying psychology provided me with the skills required of an undergraduate: an inquiring mind and the ability to use scientific research findings to support and challenge various claims. ”