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# PSYCHOLOGY

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It is difficult to give a precise definition of psychology because there are many different types of psychologists and differing views as to what causes behaviour, but as a broad definition psychology is defined as the scientific study of mind and behaviour. This subject concerns itself with developing a critical awareness of the main approaches to the study of behaviour and to communicate scientific ideas and arguments logically and precisely. The course follows the AQA specification.

*Examining Board*  
AQA

*Specification*  
A-Level Psychology 7182

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO THE A LEVEL COURSE**

Please see the Sixth Form Admissions Policy for the entry requirements to this course.

### **Unit 1**

- Social influence.
- Memory
- Attachment.
- Psychopathology.

These topics investigate the underlying principles of psychology and examine ideas and concepts such as:

- Factors affecting whether people conform and obey.
- How do we remember and why do we forget?
- The accuracy of eyewitness testimony.
- The nature of caregiver-infant interactions.
- Definitions of abnormality.
- Explanations and treatment of phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder and depression.

### **Unit 2**

- Approaches in Psychology
- Biopsychology
- Research Methods

These topics investigate the underlying principles of psychology and examine ideas and concepts such as:

- The basic assumptions of the main psychological schools of psychology (biological; behaviourist; social learning theory; cognitive; psychodynamic and humanistic).

- Understanding of the structure and function of the neurons and synaptic transmission. Localisation of function in the brain and the genetic basis of behaviour. This section gives students the basic knowledge in the understanding of human behaviour.
- The nature of the scientific enquiry in psychology.

### **Unit 3**

- Issues & Debates
- Gender
- Schizophrenia
- Aggression.

These topics develop understanding of concepts and theories, studies research methods and ethical issues in psychology such as:

- Gender and culture, free-will and determinism, nature and nurture, holism and reductionism
- Biological and psychological explanations of gender development.
- Schizophrenia: the classifications, explanations and treatments of schizophrenia
- Aggression-Explanations of aggression, including the effects of prison and media on aggressive behaviour
- Students' knowledge of research methods and mathematical skills will be assessed throughout the course

### **STUDENT VIEWPOINT**

Students generally find the subject fascinating as they are able to apply the knowledge they gain to their own everyday experiences. Students do however require a disciplined approach to the course. They are expected to be able to work independently, design and carry out their own experiments and analyse results. It is important that students grasp the underlying psychological and biological principles of the subject as these issues run throughout the course.

### **COMPLEMENTARY SUBJECTS**

As this is the study of human mind and behaviour it complements most subjects. Psychology is a science, therefore works well with any of the 'natural' sciences but particularly Biology. There is also a significant amount of Mathematics in the course.

### **CAREER AND UNIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES**

Students of Psychology have a wide range of occupations open to them. It is an important academic subject. If you are planning a career in Psychology, it is likely that you will be required to undertake postgraduate study - please speak to the department if you require any further advice.