

# Curriculum Plan – Psychology



*Called as God’s family,  
we strive to achieve our personal best,  
by living and learning in Christ.*

**Department Mission Statement - :**

Ask ten psychologists why an individual is behaving in the way they are and you are likely to get ten different answers. Students of psychology will be looking at some of these different schools of thought: Biological, Psychodynamic, Behaviourist, Cognitive and Positive. By studying the assumptions, therapies and the classic research of these approaches they should gain an understanding of human behaviour and develop the skill of critical evaluation: By the end of their A level study when asked why an individual is behaving the way they are the A level psychology student can provide an answer and back it up with well-considered evidence to support their claim. The course aims to broaden their thinking with the philosophical aspects of psychology like the role of reductionism and the free-will verses determinism argument. Students and teachers will confront and question their own prejudices and preconceptions studying how cultural bias and sexism have affected what we take to be truths about all human behaviour. They will need to think deeply about how non-human animals are used in research and the veracity and value of research carried out decades ago. The most important skill they will develop is the tricky task of applying scientific methods to the study of human behaviour. From the development of a research question, the collection of qualitative and quantitative data culminating in statistical testing and the rejection or retention of the null hypothesis. The most important quality to have and to develop in A level psychology is curiosity.

## Key Stage 5 Knowledge and Skills Requirement (What knowledge and skills do pupils need to gain by the end of year 13?)

Knowledge To Be Built	Skills To Be Developed
<p>In year 12 students’ study: Component 1. Psychology past to present. Five different approaches in psychology are covered: Biological, psychodynamic, behaviourist, cognitive &amp; positive. The aim is to give students a good understanding of the breadth of ideas in psychology and develop their critical evaluation skills. For each approach the following are studied:</p> <p>Key assumptions Therapy Classic research Contemporary debate Evaluation of the approach Comparing and contrasting the approaches with the other approaches studied.</p>	<p>Psychology is a rigorous academic subject that complements a range of other subjects through its development of analytical and evaluative skills and the essay writing and critical thinking skills, research methods and data analysis/interpretation learnt in psychology are excellent preparation for university and for career paths such as law, the police, criminology, journalism, social work and marketing, statistics, teaching.</p> <p>Three key skills measured in the A level exam are: A01-description, A02 application of knowledge, A03 evaluation.</p> <p><b>A01</b> Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures</p> <p><b>A02</b> Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in a theoretical context</li> <li>• in a practical context</li> <li>• when handling qualitative data</li> </ul>



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<p>Component 2: Investigating behaviour</p> <p>Students will learn how to use different methods for investigating human behaviour.</p> <p>They will apply this knowledge to novel scenarios and devise two pieces of coursework based on investigation titles set by the exam board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when handling quantitative data</li> </ul> <p><b>AO3</b> Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: make judgements and reach conclusions develop and refine practical design and procedures.</p> <p>Students should be able to:</p> <p>organise evidence and communicate arguments in a coherent manner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ demonstrate an awareness and understanding of theoretical debates and approaches in psychology</li> <li>▪ use evidence to support and sustain arguments and conclusions</li> <li>▪ distinguish between facts, opinions and value judgements</li> <li>▪ select and apply a range of relevant concepts and theories</li> <li>▪ analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative data</li> <li>▪ evaluate theories, arguments and evidence</li> <li>▪ Select and apply appropriate research methods knowledge to develop their own research and critically assess the research of others.</li> </ul>
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Curriculum Plan				
Year Group	Scheme of Work	Knowledge Gained (Including How It Builds on Previous Knowledge Gained)	Skills Developed ((Including How It Builds on Previous Skills Gained)	Assessment of knowledge and skills
12	<b>Component 1 Psychology past to present</b>	<p>Biological, psychodynamic, behaviourist, cognitive &amp; positive.</p> <p>Key assumptions Therapy Classic research Contemporary debate Evaluation of the approach</p>	<p>Key assumptions AO1: describe the key assumptions of each approach AO2: Apply the assumptions to explain at least one behaviour. Therapy: AO1 describe the link between the assumptions and the therapy, describe the key components of the therapy.</p>	<p><b>Exam style questions</b> <b>Essays</b> <b>Short answers.</b> <b>Model answers.</b></p>



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			<p>A02 apply the therapy to a novel scenario.</p> <p>A03: Analyse and evaluate the therapy in terms of effectiveness and ethical issues using research methods and studies in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions.</p> <p>Classic research: A01 describe the classic research; method, procedure, findings and conclusions.</p> <p>A03 Evaluate the methodology used including the validity and reliability of the study, Link to knowledge gained in C3. Evaluate the validity of the conclusions.</p> <p>Contemporary debate: A01: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the contemporary debate.</p> <p>A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength of the arguments using evidence and research methods in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions.</p> <p>Evaluation of the approach</p>	
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	<p><b>Component 2: Investigating behaviour</b></p>	<p><b>Ethics</b> knowledge, understanding and application of: • confidentiality • deception • risk of stress, anxiety, humiliation or pain • risk to the participants’ values, beliefs, relationships, status or privacy • valid consent • working with vulnerable individuals (including children) • working with animals • managing the risk posed by ethical issues (including the use of ethics committees and ethical guidelines)</p> <p><b>Deciding on a research question</b> knowledge and understanding of: • aim of the research • research hypotheses • alternative (or experimental) hypotheses • directional and non-directional hypotheses • null hypotheses • independent variables • dependant variables •</p>	<p>A01: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach. A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the approach using evidence and research methods in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions. compare and contrast the approach with other approaches Using DRIAS.</p> <p>A01 knowledge and understanding of the ethical guidelines in psychology, role of APA and BPS. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations.</p> <p>A03 Analyse and evaluate the strengths &amp; weaknesses of the application of guidelines using evidence and research methods in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions. Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations.</p>	
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		<p>co-variables • operationalisation of variables • confounding variables • extraneous variables</p> <p><b>Methodologies:</b> • experiments • quasi-experiments • participant observations • non-participant observations • content analysis • structured interviews / questionnaires • semi-structured interviews • correlational studies • case studies • brain scans • longitudinal studies • cross-sectional studies • self-reports Both quantitative data and qualitative data should be included. Both primary and secondary sources should be included.</p> <p><b>Location of research</b> knowledge, understanding and evaluation of: • conducting research in a laboratory environment • conducting research in the field • conducting research on-line.</p> <p><b>Participants</b> knowledge, understanding and evaluation of: • target populations • sampling frames • random , opportunity, systematic , stratified, quota , self-selected &amp; snowball sampling • observational sampling techniques (including event sampling, time sampling)</p>	<p>A03 Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations. Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3</p> <p>A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the method using evidence and research methods in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions. compare and contrast the method with other methods. Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations. A03 Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3 A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the method using evidence and research methods in order to:</p>	
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		<p><b>Experimental design</b> knowledge, understanding and evaluation of: • independent groups • repeated measures • matched pairs</p> <p><b>Reliability</b> knowledge, understanding and application of: • internal reliability • external reliability • ways of dealing with issues of reliability • assessing reliability (including inter-rater reliability, test-retest reliability, split-half reliability) And <b>Validity</b> knowledge, understanding and application of: • internal validity • external validity • specific validity issues (including researcher bias, demand characteristics, social desirability) • ways of dealing with issues of validity • assessing validity (including concurrent, predictive, face, content and construct validity)</p> <p><b>Levels of measurement</b> knowledge and understanding of: • nominal data • ordinal data • interval data • ratio data</p> <p><b>Graphical representation</b> knowledge of, and be able to construct and interpret: • frequency tables • graphical representation (including line graphs, histograms, bar charts, pie charts, scatter diagrams) • distribution curves (including normal, positive and negative skewed distributions)</p>	<p>present arguments make judgements draw conclusions. compare and contrast the method with other designs.</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations. A03 Use concepts to evaluate theories and research in C1 and C3 A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the method using evidence and research methods in order to: present arguments make judgements draw conclusions.</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations.</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms. A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations. A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the method using</p>	
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		<p><b>Descriptive statistics</b> knowledge, evaluation, interpretation, estimation and calculation of: • measures of central tendency (including mean <math>\sum x/n</math>, median and mode) • measures of dispersion (including range and standard deviation <math>\sqrt{\sum(x-\bar{x})^2/n-1}</math>)</p> <p><b>Social Psychology: Milgram, S. (1963). Behavioural study of Obedience.</b>  <b>Developmental Psychology: Kohlberg, L. (1968). The child as a moral philosopher.</b></p>	<p>evidence and research methods in order to:          present arguments          make judgements          draw conclusions.</p> <p>A01 describe the studies- methods, procedures, findings &amp; conclusions .          A02 apply this knowledge to novel questions.          A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the research using evidence and research methods in order to:          present arguments          make judgements          draw conclusions.</p>	
13	Component 2	<p><b>Inferential statistics</b> knowledge, appropriate application and interpretation of: • Chi Square test • Mann Whitney U test • Sign test • Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient • Wilcoxon matched pairs signed ranks test • probability values • significance levels • observed (calculated) values • critical values from tables • appropriate symbols (= , ≤ , &lt; , &gt; , ≥)</p>	<p>A01 define and explain the key terms.          A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Select and interpret stats tests, apply probability, and interpret critical values. Apply to own investigations. Substitute numbers into formule          A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of data analysis using evidence and research methods in order to:          present arguments</p>	



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		<p><b>The role of the scientific community in validating new knowledge</b>          knowledge, understanding and application of • peer review • format for reporting psychological investigations.</p> <p><b>Coursework;</b> devise and execute two research projects based on titles provided by the board.</p>	<p>make judgements          draw conclusions.</p> <p>A01 define and explain the key terms.          A02 apply this knowledge to novel scenarios. Apply to own investigations.          A03: Analyse and evaluate the strength &amp; weaknesses of the methods using evidence and research methods in order to:          present arguments          make judgements          draw conclusions.</p> <p>A02 apply knowledge from Component 2 to devise research and write up in appropriate format, collect and analyse data using appropriate descriptive and inferential stat.</p>	
13	<b>Component 3- implications in the real world</b>	<p><b>Applications:</b>          Schizophrenia          Criminal behaviour          Addiction</p>	<p><b>Applications</b> For each behaviour it will be necessary for learners to:          A01 know the characteristics of the behaviour          A01 know and understand biological, individual differences and social psychological explanations of the behaviours          A03 evaluate the biological, individual differences and social psychological explanations of the behaviours          A01 know and understand the methods of modifying the behaviours</p>	



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		<p><b>Controversies</b> Sexism Ethical costs in research Use of non-human animals in research Culture bias Scientific status of psychology</p>	<p>A02 apply the explanations to methods of modifying the behaviours A03 evaluate the methods of modifying the behaviours (including their effectiveness, ethical implications and social implications) A03 make judgements and come to conclusions about the treatments. A02 apply their knowledge to novel scenarios.</p> <p><b>Controversies</b> For each of the five controversies it will be necessary for students to: A01 understand the issue and why it is controversial A02 apply knowledge and understanding to controversies in psychology A03 make judgements and come to conclusions about the controversies from a psychological perspective.</p>	
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