Psychology A Level

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. We examine competing theories as to how and why people think and behave in the varied ways that they do, remembering that a theory must have evidence to substantiate it. We take a scientific approach to the evaluation of research evidence to discuss whether a theory can be said to be valid.

Each lesson will introduce students to new concepts, so there is much to learn, but most students find it fascinating to try to understand themselves and others.

Note that the emphasis throughout is on **science** – the need for investigations surrounding theories of the mind and behaviour, and analysis of the results of research in order to draw conclusions. Most lessons will discuss theories/ explanations of psychological phenomena followed by an examination of the evidence (studies) undertaken by psychologists in this area. We then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence in order to assess the validity of the theory, or compare this to another competing explanation of the same phenomenon.

Students will therefore learn about research methods, analysis of the results of research, debate the ethics of research studies and look at the practical application of research to the real world.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Fluency in written English and ability to construct logical argument.
- Good mathematical skills of computation and analysis.
- Understanding of scientific method. Ability to use technical scientific terminology. This is a science subject, most alike Biology in content/format.
- Participation in group debate and discussion.
- Ability to draw conclusions from evidence rather than personal opinion and biases.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Desiree Knights

EXAM BOARD

AQA

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PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Paper 1 topics
Memory, Social Influence, Attachment, Clinical Psychology and Mental Health.

1/3 of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

Paper 2 topics
Biopsychology
Approaches to Psychology,
Research Methods and Statistics

1/3 of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

Paper 3 topics
Statistics
Research Methods - (Advanced)
Issues and debates
Schizophrenia
Relationships
Forensics

1/3 of total A Level

Exam paper
2 hours

EXAMINATION RESULTS

2026 Results were as follows:
21.6% of our cohort achieved an A*–A grade
37.8% of our cohort achieved an A*–B grade
75.7% of our cohort achieved an A*–C grade
100% of our cohort achieved an A*–E grade

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Past visits include the Bethlem Museum of the Mind, Freud Museum and Wellcome Gallery.

Psychology club allows students to explore topics of interest and unusual cases, beyond the A Level course.

Our psychology prefect also oversees a platform for sharing of wider reading and documentaries.

FUTURE CAREERS

Psychology can either become a career in itself (e.g. criminal psychologist, health psychologist, child psychologist, occupational psychologist, counsellor etc.), can be a useful asset to a career (such as in Law, Medicine, Teaching, Marketing, Social work etc.) or can simply be a way to expand your range of skills and knowledge.

Last year's students are now studying for various degrees, including psychology and philosophy at Oxford. In terms of A Level subject combinations, psychology works well with sciences, but also arts of humanities.

EXAMINATIONS

The course is linear (meaning that all assessment are at the end of the 2 years) and has no coursework. Each paper is 2 hours. All exams contain both short answers and extended writing (essay) questions.