

PSYCHOLOGY CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Intent

The aim of the Psychology curriculum is to equip students with the specialist subject knowledge and skills required to be able to understand and explain the causes of human behaviour and its impact on wider society over time. By the end of the course, students will develop their critical thinking and analytical skills. In addition to the skills they acquire which will support them academically, they will also develop life skills as Psychology is happening around us all the time and not just within the parameters of the classroom. Students will acknowledge that the different roles they play in lives will be influenced by psychological influences which will impact on behaviour.

Curriculum aims:

Psychology is usually a new subject for students at A-level. We aim to generate interest and scientific skill in studying and understanding human behaviour. Whilst the focus of the curriculum is to gain academic knowledge in the different schools of thought within psychology, this subject has huge application to everyday life. For job opportunities, it is beneficial to be able to say you have studied 'people' & their behaviour to a higher degree. Interacting with different personalities and being able to adapt accordingly can only be a useful skill.

Curriculum content and skills:

Students must cover 11 units throughout the 2-year linear course. These range from understanding the basics in scientific investigation, through to specific areas within cognitive, biological and social psychology. All units are assessed using three core skills as follows:

AO1 = Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.

AO2 = Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: in a theoretical context, in a practical context, when handling qualitative data, when handling quantitative data.

AO3 = Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: make judgements and reach conclusions, develop and refine practical design and procedures.

Lessons are designed to suit a variety of learning styles. Students should be able to use key terminology effectively, use their knowledge to explain unseen scenarios accurately and discuss the usefulness of a variety of research.

Assessment overview:

Units/topics	Assessed Homework	Q1 assessment	Q2 assessment		Q3 assessment		Q4 assessment	
			Year 12	Year 13	Year 12	Year 13	Year 12	Year 13
1 – Research Methods	1 x 16 mark essay per unit per student, with the exception of research methods where they do practice questions instead as there are no essays in this unit.	•	•	•	•	•	•	
2 – Approaches			•	•	•			
3 – Biopsychology				•	•	•		
4 – Social Influence								•
5 – Memory								•
6 – Attachment						•		•
7 – Psychopathology						•		•

8 – Issues and debates				•		•		
9 – Forensic				•		•		
10 – Relationships						•		
11 - Schizophrenia						•		
Assessment Objectives assessed in each quarterly assessment:		AO1	AO1	AO1	AO1	AO1	AO1	
		AO2	AO2	AO2	AO2	AO2	AO2	
		AO3	AO3	AO3	AO3	AO3	AO3	

Implementation

Key principles of unit planning

- We create workbooks for each of the 11 units in psychology, and provide students with these so they have a good starting format for their notes on each topic.
- Two thirds of the content is taught in year 12, covering all content for “paper 1” and “paper 2”. This leave only the content for “paper 3” in year 13, and time for exam skills, practice, revision and much needed time to go over individual concerns.
- The first unit taught is research methods, because this will underpin all other units and is the one unit worth most out of all 11.
- Students are provided with 2 textbooks for the 2-year course, a set of resources on Copia including PowerPoints and worksheets, and workbooks for each individual unit. This supports independent learning whenever necessary, and means they have a great base to revise from.
- Students now take “key terms tests” and fill in “key terms sheets” for each unit, to emphasise the learning of subject specific vocabulary.
- All 3 assessment objectives are visited in each lesson (including within lesson prep) for each new topic. Therefore students are consistently practicing each.
- Quizzes are used regularly in lessons to assess current, previous, and much older knowledge to try and assist with recall of a 2-year course.
- Assessed homework focusses solely on essay writing skills, to allow them practice across the course for the longest possible exam questions.

Impact

Key assessment principles

- Regular low stakes testing of key knowledge through starter Qs, plenaries, mini quizzes and peer assessment each lesson
- Student progress signposted by formal feedback in quarterly exams and assessed homework essays
- All 3 assessment objectives are formally tested within each of the 4 quarterly assessments
- Exams consistently demand cumulative recall
- Lesson prep regularly provides application practice to familiarise students with this skill throughout the course
- Students track their progress e.g. filling in tracker sheets, retaking papers where target not achieved, comparing answers against those in feedback lessons, noting self-improvements