

# Outline of A Level Psychology examination structure

## Paper 1 (Approaches, issues and debates)

The candidates need to have studied all 12 core studies alongside methodology, approaches/perspectives and issues/debates. For the core studies, candidates need to know the following:

1. Background to, and psychology behind, the study
2. The aim(s) of the study
3. The method and procedure of the study
4. The results of the study
5. The conclusions drawn from the study

For each core study, there has to be some evaluation based on:

1. The methodology used
2. The approach or perspective the study belongs to
3. Issues and debates applicable for that study from:
  - a. Application to everyday life
  - b. Individual versus situational explanations of behaviour
  - c. Nature–nurture debate
  - d. The use of children and animals in psychological research

The structure of the examination is as follows:

- There are no 'sections' to the examination.
- There will be a series of questions about a selection of core studies that will look at things such as:
  - the aim, method, results and conclusions
  - how the studies link to the issues and debates
  - how the studies link to their respective approach
  - one of the last questions will always be an extended piece of writing marked out of 8 or 10 and will be based on an evaluation of a named study.

## Paper 2 (Research methods)

The structure of the examination is as follows:

- Section A: Short answer questions based on the core studies
  - There will be a range of short answer questions linking the research methods section of the syllabus to the 12 core studies. Learners will need to show their knowledge of research methods through examples from the core studies.
  - This section will usually be out of 22 marks.
- Section B: Scenario-based questions about an unseen study
  - There will be questions based on different scenarios presented to the learners. They will have to apply their knowledge of the research methods section of the syllabus to the different scenarios answering a series of questions.
  - This section will usually be out of 24 marks.

- Section C: A design-based question divided into two parts
  - Section C will be a design-based question. The learner will be expected to design a study based on the given information in the question (10 marks) then make some evaluative judgement about their design (4 marks). The 10 mark question is likely to be marked in a similar way to the 9698 syllabus 10 mark design question on Paper 2 (using the how, what, where, who and when approach).

## Paper 3 (Specialist options: theory)

Learners will need to answer questions on the **two** options that they have been taught from the following:

- Psychology of abnormality
- Psychology and consumer behaviour
- Psychology of health
- Psychology of organisations

Learners will need to answer two questions for **both options** that they have studied.

- Question 1. This question will be divided into three parts worth 2, 4 and 6 marks each. The questions will cover knowledge of studies, theories and concepts from the option (the 2 and 4 mark questions) and then a discussion question (6 mark question)
- Question 2. This will be a structured essay question divided into two parts. This will be very similar to some of the questions on Paper 3 of the 9698 syllabus [the 10 and 12 mark questions]. The difference is that the describe question will now be out of 8 marks and the evaluation questions with a named issues or debate will now be out of 10 marks.

## Paper 4 (Specialist options: application)

Learners will need to answer questions on the **two** options that they have been taught from the following:

- Psychology of abnormality
- Psychology and consumer behaviour
- Psychology of health
- Psychology of organisations

The examination is split into three sections and it is important that candidates **follow the rubric**.

- Section A. Learners will answer two questions (**one per option studied**) from a choice of four available.
  - Each of these questions will be based on stimulus material and will be divided into four parts (2+4+4+5 marks).
  - They must answer all questions for the **two** options they have covered at A Level.
  - The questions will test knowledge about the topic content of each option as well as research methods and issues and the debates.
  - The last question worth 5 marks will be discussion based and expect a learner to form a conclusion.
- Section B. Learners will answer one design-based question from a choice of four. Each question is divided into two parts (10+8 marks). This section is out of 18 marks.
- Section C. Learners answer one essay from a choice of four. The essay will be marked out of 12.
  - It will ask a learner to write a short essay based on a quotation.
  - The learner can choose which option they want to answer the question from.
  - The learner will need to read the quotation and then discuss the extent to which they agree with the quotation using examples from the material they have studied for that option.