The A-level examinations

**Paper 1: Introductory topics in psychology (2 hours)**

- **Section A** Social influence 24 marks
- **Section B** Memory 24 marks
- **Section C** Attachment 24 marks
- **Section D** Psychopathology 24 marks

**Paper 2: Psychology in context (2 hours)**

- **Section A** Approaches in psychology 24 marks
- **Section B** Biopsychology 24 marks
- **Section C** Research methods 48 marks

**Paper 3: Issues and options in psychology (2 hours)**

- **Section A** Issues and debates in psychology 24 marks
- **Section B** Relationships 24 marks
- **Section C** Schizophrenia 24 marks
- **Section D** Aggression 24 marks

**Essay questions (16 marks) – Marking grid**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Knowledge (AO1)</th>
<th>Application (AO2)</th>
<th>Evaluation (AO3)</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Specialist terminology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>13–16</td>
<td>Accurate and generally well-detailed</td>
<td>Appropriate, links to knowledge explained</td>
<td>Thorough and effective</td>
<td>Clear, coherent, focused</td>
<td>Used effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9–12</td>
<td>Evident, occasional inaccuracies</td>
<td>Appropriate, links to knowledge not always explained</td>
<td>Apparent, mostly effective</td>
<td>Mostly clear and organised, lacks focus in places</td>
<td>Mostly used effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>Some knowledge is present, lacks accuracy in places</td>
<td>Partial, only partly effective, focus mainly on description</td>
<td>Lacks clarity and organisation in places</td>
<td>Used inappropriately on occasions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>Limited, many inaccuracies</td>
<td>Limited, poorly focused or absent</td>
<td>Lacks clarity, poorly organised, absent or inappropriately used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No relevant content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What are the Assessment Objectives?**

- **AO1 – Knowledge**
  - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures

- **AO2 – Application**
  - Apply knowledge and understanding
    - in a theoretical context
    - in a practical context
    - when handling data

- **AO3 – Evaluation**
  - Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence
    - make judgements and reach conclusions
    - develop and refine practical design and procedures

**16 mark essays: How might the marks be split?**

- **AO1**
- **AO2**
- **AO3**

**Evaluating research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types</strong></td>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-retest</td>
<td>If the same procedure is repeated with the same participants a second time, are the results consistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-observer</td>
<td>If two observers tally the same behaviours in the same participants, are the results consistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In experiments</td>
<td>If another researcher replicates the experiment, are the results consistent?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issues and debates in Psychology**

Some key terms

- Androcentrism
- Alpha and beta bias
- Gender bias
- Alpha and beta bias
- Culture bias
- Ethnocentrism
- Cultural relativism
- Universality
- Free will and determinism
  - Hard and soft determinism
  - Biological, environmental and psychic determinism
  - Scientific determinism – Causal explanations
- Nature-nurture
  - Heredity
  - Environment
  - Interactionist
- Holism and reductionism
  - Levels of explanation
  - Biological and environmental reductionism
- Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to research
  - Qualitative
  - Quantitative
- Ethical implications
  - Socially sensitive research

**How much do I need to write?**

- A minute and a quarter per mark
- 25–30 words per mark
- 20 minutes for a 16-mark question
- 400–500 words for a 16-mark question

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