

AS/A Level Psychology (9698)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can students take dictionaries into the examination?

Candidates are allowed a simple translation dictionary.

What support materials are available?

Syllabus

Specimen question papers and mark schemes (revised syllabus from 2012)

AS/A level Standards Booklet- - this contains examples of marked student answers to AS and A level questions and has a commentary from senior examiners

Question papers and mark schemes

All the above are available from CIE Publications.

How many hours contact time do you recommend for AS/A level?

Over a two year A level course approximately 5 hours per week of teaching time would be sufficient. Students will be expected to do individual work outside of this time.

The new syllabus that will be examined in 2012 will be taught from Sept 2011. The current year 12's are currently preparing for examination in 2011 with the current specification, but will we start teaching them the new syllabus (for year 13) in Sept 2011 for examination in June 2012, or do we teach the same syllabus as we are currently doing?

1) For candidates taking staged assessment with the AS examination (Papers 1 and 2) in 2011 and the A2 (Paper 3) in 2012:

Use the 2011 syllabus (the 'old' syllabus) for the AS part (Papers 1 and 2), but use the 2012 syllabus (the 'new' syllabus) for Paper 3

2) For candidates taking Papers 1, 2, 3 in 2011:

Use the 2011 syllabus (the 'old' syllabus) for all 3 papers

3) For candidates taking Papers 1, 2, 3 in 2012:

Use the 2012 syllabus (the 'new' syllabus) for all 3 papers

I'm having trouble locating some of the Core Study articles referred to in the syllabus. Can you help?

There are links to the new Core Studies (for the revised 2012 syllabus) on the discussion forum at <http://teachers.cie.org.uk/community/forum/forums/show/1201.page>.

There are also links in the syllabus to the original articles (see pages 33-34).

If these links don't work the articles can also be found at <http://www.psychexchange.co.uk>. Search 'George's resources' and the articles will come up. (We are unable to send you copies of the Core Study articles listed in the syllabus because of copyright regulations.)

The core studies are the prescribed content for Papers 1 and 2, and it is recommended that teachers consider the original studies themselves (see below). Texts which summarise the studies are particularly useful in providing the necessary teaching material but no textbook covers all of the core studies:

Key Studies in Psychology by Gross, R. (2007), 5th Edition, Hodder Arnold (ISBN 9780340947395)

This book provides a comprehensive account of many of the required studies. Some are reproduced in full and others reduced to manageable proportions. The text also contains full evaluations and background notes, and is recommended as being made available to candidates for reference if it is not selected as a main reader for the course.

Introducing Psychological Research; seventy studies that shape psychology by Banyard, P. and Grayson, A. (2007), 3rd Edition, Palgrave (ISBN 9781403900388)

This book contains summaries and major details relating to many of the prescribed studies and suggests tasks arising from the findings. It is comprehensive in reference and accessible in style.

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I am teaching AS Psychology for the first time and I'm looking to you for some guidance on the order of teaching topics.

It is up to you to decide the order in which to teach the studies in the course – there is no set way of doing this and the order may depend on how you teach particular core studies, what resources your school has and so on. However, if you are planning to teach the full A level we would recommend that the Core Studies are taught before the Specialist Choices, even if students take all 3 exams in the same session.

Are there any Psychology conferences for the syllabus?

There are no seminars or conferences specifically arranged for the CIE syllabus, but general support for teaching Psychology can be found from The Association for the Teaching of Psychology (ATP). The ATP is mainly concerned with the teaching of psychology in schools and colleges. It arranges events for teachers and produces a range of helpful publications. Contact details for the ATP are as follows:

The Association for the Teaching of Psychology
c/o The British Psychological Society
St Andrews House
48 Princess Road East
Leicester
LE1 7DR
United Kingdom

In questions such as 'Outline two types of response of abnormal affect due to trauma', should the answer be two different types of abnormalities (mental disorders of this category) or two clusters of symptoms of one mental disorder of this category?

Candidates could give two responses/symptoms for one type of trauma or they could give two symptoms that different responses have in common. For example, 'recurring phenomena' is a general response to trauma - or it could be a symptom of the more specific PTSD. Whatever approach taken by the teacher will be fine; either approach will be marked as correct.

Several of my Psychology students want to sit both the A level and AS level examinations in the June session. However, if they don't do well in the A level paper but do so in their AS level, can they drop the A-level mark and keep the AS level one?

Your students would need to be entered for the A level option. If they fail the A level they would be awarded a compensatory AS providing they had achieved enough marks on Paper 1 and Paper 2 to achieve an AS grade. However, if they achieved a grade on the A level (i.e. did not fail it) but it wasn't as high a grade as they would have liked, they can't then receive an AS. An alternative option that you might wish to consider is entering your candidates for the AS papers in one session, then entering them for the A level papers in a later session and carrying forward the AS mark.

For Paper 3, in Psychology and Abnormality section, under 'Abnormal Avoidance and Need' topic, there is a disorder as 'elective withdrawal'. Well I am unable to find information on it from anywhere, for that matter it is not even mentioned in DSM IV-TR. I would really appreciate if I can get some information on it.

Elective withdrawal generally applies to children who choose (i.e. elect) to withdraw themselves from school - usually because of bullying or some other problem. A specific example is elective mutism (there are lots of web references for this). This is an abnormal behaviour, but is not in DSM. Please note that elective withdrawal is not included in the revised syllabus (first examination in 2012). For further guidance on Papers 1 and 2 we would recommend referring to the Teacher Support Site for mark schemes and principal examiner reports for teachers. There is also a standards booklet on the website which gives sample answers and guidance on how to award marks for these answers.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the CIE syllabus include any coursework or practical investigations at AS?

There isn't any coursework for AS (or A level). For AS the question papers are based on the 20 core studies listed in the syllabus.

Is there any way I could get hold of some mark schemes or sample essays?

In terms of support materials, please refer to our website for a publications order form.

The 'Standards Booklet' is a document that contains sample answers, and a senior examiner's commentary on how marks were awarded for these answers.

Other publications available are examiner reports, past papers and mark schemes. When ordering these you will need to quote the session (e.g. November 2010) and the syllabus code 9698. For past papers you will also need to quote the paper numbers, e.g. Paper 1 and Paper 2 for the AS level.

There are specimen papers and mark schemes available on the website, but please note that the format of Paper 1, Section B is a little different now with 4 parts to each question rather than 3.

Can you suggest any websites that could be used as teaching aids?

General

British Psychological Society www.bps.org.uk/index.cfm

Psychnet UK www.psychnet-uk.com/

Psychology electronic journals and periodicals psych.hanover.edu/Krantz/journal.html

Personality Tests Free personality tests on the web www.2h.com/personality-tests.html

Physiological Psychology

Crime Times Linking brain dysfunction to disordered/criminal/psychopathic behaviour
www.crime-times.org/

Crime Library Case studies and information on offender profiling approaches
www.crimelibrary.com/

Introductory Psychology Image Bank Images for teaching the functions of the brain (as well as others); notes on all the core studies and health and education
www.mhhe.com/socscience/intro/ibank/set1.htm

University of Iowa P.E.T Imaging Center The University of Iowa Imaging Centre site with information on PET scans and their uses
pet.radiology.uiowa.edu/webpage/Research/CaseStudies/Brain.html

Sleep Quest Site on sleep and sleep disorders, where Dr. Dement gives a weekly commentary. The site also has a "chat with Dr. Dement" opportunity on it
www.sleepquest.com

Splitting the human brain www.indiana.edu/~pietsch/split-brain.html

Cognitive Psychology

The Chimpanzee and Human Communication Institute Gardner and Gardner
www.cwu.edu/~cwuchci/

Elizabeth F Loftus Contains the autobiography of Loftus faculty.washington.edu/eloftus/

Autism Society of America Baron Cohen www.autism-society.org

Sleepnet Dement www.sleepnet.com/

Health

Health Education Board for Scotland You can get information on this site about mental health, alcohol and drug abuse in Scotland www.healthscotland.com/topics/index.aspx

Web of Addictions Site with links on drugs and alcohol. Mostly American
www.well.com/user/woa/

Eurocare Statistics about how different European countries deal with alcohol
www.eurocare.org

BBCi Health Looks at back pain www.bbc.co.uk/health/backchat/