

AS and A LEVEL
Teacher Guide

PSYCHOLOGY

H167/H567

For first teaching in 2015

**Core Studies overview and how
they provide new understandings
of behaviour**

Version 1



AS and A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

Core Studies overview

This brief guide provides an overview of the core studies with tag lines for each study to represent what they found/new understanding of behaviour.

Students need to understand the impact that each piece of research has had on its field in psychology and further in society. The following tag lines and key conclusions for each core study can be used during revision and to highlight key real life applications.

Area	Study	Tag line	Key conclusion/ new understanding of behaviour	
Social	Milgram (1963) Obedience	How far do we obey those in authority positions?	People will carry out behaviours against theirs and societies norms if the authority figure seems legit.	
	Bocchiaro et al (2012) Disobedience and whistle-blowing	Do we challenge those in authority positions?	People don't always think they will obey requests from people in authority but their behaviour suggests they will when situations are unfamiliar or novel.	
	Piliavin et al (1969) Subway Samaritan	What are the costs of helping those in need?	Deciding to help those in need is based on a cost-reward analysis where factors increasing the likelihood of help, such as the person in need being ill, are predictable.	
Cognitive	Levine et al (2001) Cross-cultural altruism	Do all cultures help those in need?	There are large cross-cultural differences in responding to people in need and helping behaviour is affected by economic productivity, cultural norms and traditions.	
	Loftus and Palmer (1974) Eyewitness testimony	Is memory reconstructed?	Memory recall is formed using information from the initial event the memory was created in as well as post-event information.	
	Grant et al (1998) Context-dependent memory	Does context count in memory recall?	Memory recall is improved where the recall environment is the same as the environment the memory was formed in.	
	Moray (1959) Auditory attention	Is attention selective?	Attention is selective as participants were unable to recall information they were not focusing on unless it was subjectively important to them. This suggests that most information around us is not processed or paid attention unless its deemed relevant.	
	Simons and Chabris (1999) Visual inattention	Inattention blindness – do we ignore what is right in front of our eyes?	People do not process all information nor pay attention to it. If attention is devoted to a different task background, information can appear to have never happened as it is unable to be recalled or recognised.	
	Developmental	Bandura et al (1961) Transmission of aggression	Do adults influence children's aggressive behaviour?	Children's behaviour is shaped by the adult role models they interact with and therefore children acquire behaviour through observation.
		Chaney et al (2004) Funhaler study	Do rewards influence children's adherence to medical regimens?	Children can be encouraged to adhere to their medication with the use of 'fun'.
Kohlberg (1968) Stages of moral development		Do we all develop moral reasoning as we age?	Moral development is found to occur in a sequential order, according to Kohlberg's stage theory, where individuals may progress at their own rate depending on environmental factors such as class upbringing.	

Area	Study	Tag line	Key conclusion/ new understanding of behaviour
	Lee et al (1997) Evaluations of lying and truth telling	Does culture affect moral development?	Moral development and subsequent justifications about truth telling and lying is deeply affected by the culture and/ or social environment individuals are socialised in.
Biological	Sperry (1968) Split brain study	Can we map functions of the brain to different regions?	The corpus callosum helps different regions of the brain to communicate and improve our perception of the world but each hemisphere can function to produce its own perception and memories.
	Casey et al (2011) Neural correlates of delay gratification	Do brain regions determine our self-control?	The inferior frontal gyrus is involved in the level of self-control shown when resistance to temptation is tested suggesting that there are biological individual differences involved in the ability to display delayed gratification.
	Blakemore and Cooper (1970) Impact of early visual experience	Is visual perception innate?	The notion of brain plasticity was supported when looking at the development of visual perception in kittens as modifying the animals visual environment had profound implications for their future perceptual abilities.
	Maguire et al (2000) Taxi drivers	Does the brain show plasticity due to your job?	Brain plasticity was found in taxi drivers brain in relation to their navigational demands which suggests that the brain develops in response to the environmental demands put on it and the skills this requires.
Individual differences	Freud (1909) Little Hans	How can we explain the development of sexuality and the emergence of phobias?	Children develop their sexuality and personality as they progress through the psychosexual stages and during this process they may develop phobias due to unconscious anxiety experienced in relation to their parental relationships.
	Baron-Cohen et al (1997) Autism in adults	What is an individual with autism perception of emotion?	Individuals with autism do have an impaired theory of mind, regardless of intelligence level, which requires more sophisticated testing than previous research.
	Gould (1982) A nation of morons. Bias in IQ testing	Can we measure intelligence accurately?	IQ tests have been found to be developed to reflect cultural practices rather than measuring innate intelligence and therefore can be questioned in terms of their accuracy in measuring intelligence.
	Hancock et al (2011) Language of psychopaths	Can we measure psychopathy as an individual difference?	Language use can be used to measure the differences between psychopaths and non-psychopaths. Psychopaths have been found to characteristically use particular word-patterns that appear to have a lack of fluency, psychologically distant terms and more rational rather than emotional.



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