

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

H167

For first teaching in 2015

H167/02 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

H167/02: Psychological themes through core studies is the second of two examined components for the OCR AS Level Psychology qualification. This component focuses on:

- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of five key themes
- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a classical and a contemporary study located within each key theme (10 core studies)
- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of areas and perspectives in psychology
- methodological issues relating to the core studies
- issues and debates in psychology
- practical applications of psychology.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed to have a sound knowledge and understanding of all the core studies, areas, perspectives and debates. Evaluation skills needed to be good and candidates needed to be able to apply their psychological knowledge effectively to a novel situation.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showed extensive knowledge and understanding of the nine core studies cited in Section A and therefore answered questions competently and confidently • had sound knowledge and understanding of the biological area and gave in-depth and appropriate responses in Section B • appreciated that a discussion of the psychology is a science debate involved a thorough and balanced discussion about features of a science within psychology and was supported by appropriate evidence from relevant core studies in Section B Question 6 (e) • knew, understood and could apply the principles/concepts of the developmental area in Question 7 (a) • could evaluate self-reports specifically and apply this to the article in Question 7 (b) • showed a high standard of understanding of two ways in which females could be encouraged to become more involved in politics and were also able to apply their psychological knowledge within their suggestions effectively in Question 7 (c) • made explicit links to issues/debates in Question 7 (d). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presented responses that are pre-learnt and rehearsed and not reading and responding to the specific questions appropriately • confused the details between different core studies and gave muddled responses in Section A and Section B • did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding to respond effectively to questions relating to the biological area, the developmental area and/or psychological issues and debates in psychology • explaining how core studies are scientific as opposed to discussing whether psychology is scientific in Question 6 (e) • simply described practical strengths and weaknesses of the suggestions they made in Question 7 (c) without reading that the evaluation needed to focus on issues and debates. They did not read the question carefully and therefore did not answer the question asked.

Section A overview

Section A: Core studies. This section consists of the ten core studies individually, in their pairs or in terms of their key theme. Questions are short answers but range in mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 1 (a)

- 1 (a) Describe **one** of the groups that made up the sample used in Baron-Cohen et al.'s (1997) study into the theory of mind.

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..... [2]

Many candidates provided detailed and accurate descriptions which included two or more features of one of Baron-Cohen et al.'s groups. Others answered this question as if the command word was 'identify' and they only named one of the groups without providing a description or they gave only one feature of the sample. Some candidates muddled the facts about each group, like the number, gender ratio, location and where the sample were sourced from, and this showed a lack of real understanding of the groups in Baron-Cohen et al.'s sample.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Describe the background to Freud's (1909) study of Little Hans.

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..... [4]

Those candidates who were more successful on this question provided detailed and accurate descriptions of the background to the study in the context of Freud's study and demonstrated a sound understanding of the Little Hans study. Most candidates scored 2 marks on this question by offering brief descriptions of aspects of Freud's theory (like the Oedipus Complex, Psychosexual Stages or Unconscious mind) without contextualising to Little Hans and/or describing them. Some candidates merely listed key terms from Freud's theory and were less successful on this question.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 (a) Give **one** of the materials used in Bocchiaro et al.'s (2012) study into obedience and whistleblowing.

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..... [1]

Some candidates were able to name a material used in Bocchiaro et al.'s study – computer, mailbox, research committee forms. Some candidates gave generic materials (paper) or stated aspects of the procedure (cover story, authority figure) or stated a material from a different core study and therefore did not answer the question.

Question 2 (b)

- (b) Outline the procedure used in Milgram's (1963) study into obedience.

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..... [5]

The more successful responses to this question provided an accurate description of at least 5 key features of Milgram's procedure. These features were detailed and not just listed. Some candidates included details about Milgram's sample, methodology, results or conclusions which gained no credit as the question is specifically about Milgram's procedure.

Question 3

- 3 Describe **one** difference between Loftus and Palmer's (1974) study of eye witness memory and Grant et al.'s (1998) study of contextual cues in memory.

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..... [4]

Many candidates were unable to identify an accurate difference between Loftus and Palmer and Grant et al.'s study. Candidates needed to identify an appropriate difference, needed to develop the difference and evidence the difference in relation to the two named studies. Some differences were inappropriate – their aims, sampling method. Some responses given were not differences but were in fact similarities between the studies – independent measures design, laboratory experiments.

Assessment for learning



Centres should focus on highlighting specific details of the **methodology** that each pair of core studies has in common and how they are different. For example, candidates should be able to identify the experimental design of each study and practise explaining this with reference to each core study.

Exemplar 1

One difference is that Loftus and Palmer's study was a repeated measures design whereas Grant's was independent. Loftus and Palmer used the same participants for both experiments which could have led to demand characteristics. Grant used one group of participants for his experiment ~ independent measures.

Exemplar 1 demonstrates how the candidate has used experimental design as a difference between the pair of core studies when in fact it is a similarity as they both used an independent measures design.

Question 4

- 4 Outline **one** way in which Chaney et al.'s (2004) study into Funhalers could be criticised for its lack of validity.

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..... [2]

Some candidates performed well on this question by identifying a relevant issue of validity. Others needed to go beyond merely identifying an issue of validity and apply this to Chaney et al.'s study. Candidates who referred to phrases like – Medical adherence, compliance, medicating – demonstrated good contextual links to their validity issue.

Question 5 (a)

- 5 (a) Explain how Casey et al.'s (2011) study into delay of gratification relates to the theme of 'regions of the brain'.

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..... [4]

Candidates who were more successful on this question provided a clear and accurate response which demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the relevant features of Casey et al.'s study and how they link to the theme 'regions of the brain'. There was some confusion on the exact terminology of the brain regions - right inferior frontal gyrus and ventral striatum. And there was further confusion on how these brain regions are different in high and low delayers. Some candidates appeared to misread the question and linked their response to Sperry's study.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) Explain **one** way in which the procedure of Sperry's (1968) study into split brains increased the reliability of the research.

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..... [3]

There were many good responses here with candidates showing a clear understanding of reliability and being able to provide a sound outline of how Sperry's procedure increased the reliability of his study. Other candidates needed to develop their understanding of the term 'reliability' and their ability to explain how this issue was addressed in the procedure of Sperry's study, i.e. go beyond responses such as 'The procedure was highly controlled and standardised,' which merely infers an understanding of the term.

Section B overview

Section B: Areas, perspectives and debates. Questions in this section focus on areas, perspectives and debated in psychology. Questions range in size and mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 6 (a)

6 (a) Outline **two** defining principles or concepts of the biological area.

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..... [4]

Many candidates were able to provide a brief outline of the basic biological principles that cause behaviour such as genetics, the brain or chemical processes but were unable to show greater understanding of the area to gain full marks. Many candidates evaluated the biological area instead of outlining the defining principles/concepts (nature, objective, scientific) which gained no credit.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Briefly explain how Sperry's (1968) study of split brains can be related to the biological area.

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..... [3]

Successful candidates on this question were able to identify a main principle of the biological area with clear reference to the brain, identify parts of the brain relevant to Sperry's study and identify the behaviour these part(s) of the brain impact on. The more successful responses included the specific brain regions corpus callosum or left/right hemisphere. Other candidates gave a principle of the biological area that is not relevant, e.g. 'The area believes that genes cause behaviour...'

Question 6 (c)

- (c) Briefly outline **one** way that research in the biological area can be seen as socially sensitive. Support your answer with evidence from an appropriate core study.

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..... [3]

This question required candidates to define at least one aspect of socially sensitive research, link this to the biological area and link this to a biological core study. Many candidates did not define socially sensitive research clearly and there was some confusion where candidates were outlining ethics instead. The question requires reference to Casey et al.'s study or Sperry's study but some candidates used Baron-Cohen et al.'s study which gained no credit as it is not a core study from the biological area.

Question 6 (d)

- (d) Outline what is meant by the nature versus nurture debate and state how this can be related to the biological area.

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Many candidates performed well on this question by demonstrating knowledge of the concept of both nature and nurture and then explicitly relating the biological area to the nature side of the debate. Some candidates gave accurate definitions of nature and nurture, but they did not clearly state which part of the debate they were defining, and this gained no credit. Some candidates used examples from core studies to support why the biological area is situated on the nature side of the debate, but this was not a requirement of the question.

Question 6 (e)*

- (e)* Discuss the idea that psychology is a science. Use evidence from core studies placed in the biological area and **one other** area or perspective from psychology to support your answer.

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..... [12]

Successful candidates were able to provide a balanced discussion of the idea psychology is a science. Many candidates did not do this and described how various core studies supported whether psychology is a science, and this gained no credit. To access the higher mark bands, candidates needed to outline features of psychology that make it a science or reasons why psychology is not scientific, supported by appropriate evidence from core studies. Some candidates did not read the question carefully as it required them to use evidence from at least one biological core study and evidence from at least one core studies from one other area/perspective from psychology to support their response.

Section C overview

Section C: Practical applications. Questions in this section require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source. Questions range in size and mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 7 (a)

- 7 (a) Outline **one** defining principle or concept of the developmental area and briefly explain how it relates to the article.

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..... [3]

Those who performed well on this question provided an accurate outline of a relevant principle/concept of the developmental area, linking this explicitly to the article. Some candidates needed to develop a greater understanding of the developmental area so they could go beyond merely identifying such concepts as changes, learned or early experiences. There were some instances where candidates referred to evidence from the article but this did not match up with the principle/concept that had previously been defined and this was a less successful response.

Exemplar 2

One concept of the developmental area is that we learn the most and fastest at a young age as our brain develops through stages. The article explains that "The gender gap begins before young people are even old enough to vote" [3]

Exemplar 2 illustrates the candidate showed a clear and accurate outline of a relevant principle/concept of the developmental area. The response shows that the evidence from the article is not relevant to the principle. A better response would be to use evidence from the article that links to 'learning' or 'develops'.

Question 7 (b)

(b) One psychological issue raised in this article is the validity of research using self-report.

With reference to the article, explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of using self-report for this type of research.

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..... [6]

Successful candidates were able to identify a relevant strength and weakness of using self-reports for research, these were then explained in the context of self-reports and then considered in the context of the article. Many candidates did not evaluate self-reports specifically (i.e. the method of asking to gather data) but instead offered evaluation specific to questionnaires, interviews, open questions, closed questions and types of data and these gained no credit. Weaknesses such as demand characteristics or social desirability bias and strengths such as the ability to access thoughts and feelings were often cited.

Question 7 (c)

- (c) Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest **two** ways in which females could be encouraged to become more involved in politics.

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..... [8]

Some candidates provided two clearly different suggestions as to how females could be encouraged to become more involved in politics which included very effective application of psychological knowledge throughout. The most effective responses were linked to the use of operant conditioning and observational learning (SLT). Some suggestions were not clearly explained enough that would allow it to be implemented and included very weak/no application of psychological knowledge. Candidates who provided such responses were less successful.

Question 7 (d)*

- (d)* Evaluate the suggestions you have made in part (c) with reference to issues and debates you have studied in psychology.

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..... [8]

The question required them to evaluate the suggestions they had made in Question 7 (c) in relation to psychological **issues and debates**. Many candidates merely evaluated their previous suggestions and therefore did not answer the question.

Exemplar 3

One strength is that these suggestions would allow the population especially females to gain a better understanding of the country, people controlling the country, the world and what is happening in the world. This means people would be able to gain better insight into their surroundings and the world.

A weakness of the suggestions I have made is that studying politics in school would give students less time to study their core ~~for~~ subjects like maths and english. Therefore, this could hinder the rest of their learning, for example, lead them to not pass english / maths as they have been focusing too much on politics.

The candidate has evaluated the suggestions they made in Question 7 part (c) but not in relation to any of the psychological issues or debates identified in the specification.

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