

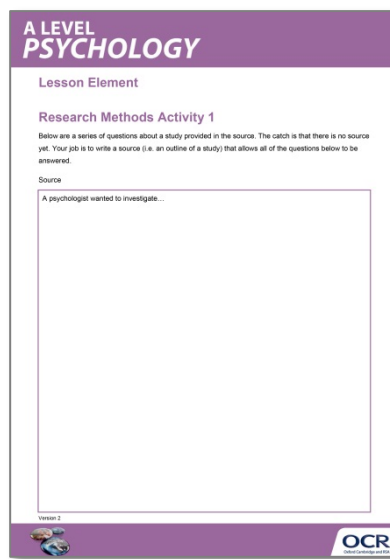
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Lesson Element

Research Methods Activity 1

Instructions and answers for teachers

These instructions should accompany the OCR resource 'Research Methods Activity 1 student sheet' which supports OCR A Level Psychology.



The Activity:

The aim of this task is for students to understand a broad range of the concepts and processes which occur within the Research Methods topic but, more importantly, within the context of the examination. On this basis, it is more of a revision activity and would be best delivered at the end of the topic or course.

The objectives are for students to:

- Review their understanding of key ideas in Research Methods,
- Reflect on how questions are constructed and assessed in the A Level examination,
- Understand the importance of applying their knowledge to sources provided in the A Level examination.



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This activity offers an opportunity for English skills development.



This activity offers an opportunity for maths skills development.

Introduction to Task

Research Methods is distinct from other topics in the sense that it has more breadth than depth. In other words, there is a wide range of concepts and processes that students need to be familiar with and they tend to be assessed using lower tariff questions. Aided by their teachers, many A Level students have the capacity to learn the ideas behind and definitions of these key concepts and processes but this will only get them so far. It is also important that students can effectively *apply* what they have learned and this is largely assessed by giving students novel sources in the examination. This is much more difficult to prepare for as students and teachers alike do not know what study or other material will be presented on the day of the examination. It is therefore important to practise the application of Research Methods. This can be done by looking at specimen papers and past papers as they are banked but, of course, these sources will never occur again so it is also useful to anticipate the kinds of questions that might be asked of a source. The following activity focuses on possible questions but also has a twist – the students need to write the source for themselves.

Suggestions for Delivery

To be done effectively, this activity probably needs to be done across a number of lessons but, considering the skills and insight it has the potential to develop, this is a worthwhile investment of time.

It is important that students are familiar with how the Research Methods component works in terms of providing sources and then asking questions focused on these sources. No doubt they will have done specimen and past papers in classwork, for homework and possibly in trial exams (although this may also be good preparation for a trial exam).

It might be useful to precede the main activity with one that gets students thinking about Assessment Objective 2, applying knowledge and understanding, through a starter activity. One suggestion is giving students a series of exam-style questions and answers, and then asking them what the responses have in common. The common theme would be that all responses demonstrate knowledge and understanding



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of concepts and processes (AO1) but fail to apply this to the source as required (AO2). Once students have established this (eg through Q&A, paired work) then they could be shown responses that would gain full credit as a way of modelling ‘ideal’ answers.

Task Instructions

There is a lot of flexibility in how this task is organised and delivered but the core aim is to get students to construct a source for a set of questions already provided by the teacher. Obviously, the questions will guide what the students need to include in their source but also allows for a level of independence and creativity.

In constructing a source, students will be:

- Interpreting examination-style questions,
- Analysing how questions are constructed,
- Reflecting on how sources are written in the examination and the key information they include,
- Developing their insight into the procedures and processes involved in an investigation as they will need to use this to structure their source.

The materials are relatively straightforward for this task. Students will be given a sheet with a series of examination-style questions and their mark allocation, and a blank box for them to construct a source, the challenge being to produce a source that relates to the questions asked and allows them *all* to be answered. An electronic version of the sheet is preferable as it is easier for students to edit their source (and provide a mark scheme if the teacher extends the activity). The task can be assessed in a number of ways:

- i) Teacher assessment,
- ii) Peer assessment – other students can attempt the questions to make sure they are do-able,
- iii) Self-assessment – by also producing a mark scheme for the questions. (This could be combined with the above so that students mark other students’ attempts at their questions.)

Whatever mode of assessment is used, the main success criteria would be to decide whether each question is answerable given the source.

Differentiation of Task

The task can be given to some students to work on individually whilst others work in pairs. Alternatively, all students work in pairs but pairings could be organised by ability – this may be mixed or same ability.



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Different abilities of students could be given different questions, or alternatively different amounts of questions, to work into their source.

As suggested above, a mark scheme could be devised once the source is composed – this could serve as an extension activity which only some students attempt.

Preparation

This task requires minimal preparation apart from the bank of questions to use for the source. Questions should follow a theme so that students are able to construct a coherent source. Teachers may find it useful to research past papers themselves to see how questions are themed.

Students may also benefit from access to past papers – either just before or during the completion of the task so that they have something to model their source on.

Students may ask if the source should be written to the same standard or in the same style as those in the examination. Considering real sources undergo high levels of review and editing, this would be an unfair expectation. The main purpose of the task is to think about how a source applies to the questions (and vice versa) so quality of language is not a key criteria. The same would apply to the writing of a mark scheme if this was part of the task.



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Research Methods Activity 1

Below are a series of questions about a study provided in the source. The catch is that there is no source yet. Your job is to write a source (ie an outline of a study) that allows all of the questions below to be answered.

Source

A psychologist wanted to investigate...



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1. Write an alternative hypothesis for this study. (2 marks)
2. The psychologist used an experiment to carry out her research. Outline **one** strength of using this method in the study. (2 marks)
3.
 - i) Name the experimental design used by the psychologist. (1 mark)
 - ii) Explain **one** limitation of using this design in this study. (2 marks)
4. Identify the independent variable and the dependent variable in this study. (2 marks)
5.
 - i) Name the sampling method used by the psychologist. (1 mark)
 - ii) Briefly outline how the participants could have been selected using this method. (1 mark)
6. Explain **one** control that should have been used in this study. (3 marks)
7. Outline **one** ethical issue raised by this study. (2 marks)
8. What conclusion should the psychologist conclude from her results? Justify your answer. (2 marks)
9.
 - i) Name one inferential test that could be used to analyse the data from this study. (1 marks)
 - ii) Explain **one** reason for choosing this test with reference to the study. (2 marks)
10. Outline how **one** non-experimental method could be used to further investigate the hypothesis. (3 marks)

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