

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Specification**

# **PSYCHOLOGY**

**J203**

For first assessment in 2019

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Specifications are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published resources and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

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*Registered office:*  
*The Triangle Building*  
*Shaftesbury Road*  
*Cambridge*  
*CB2 8EA*

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# 1 Why choose an OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology?

## 1a. Why choose an OCR qualification?

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Choose OCR and you've got the reassurance that you're working with one of the UK's leading exam boards. Our new OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology course has been developed in consultation with teachers, employers and Higher Education to provide learners with a qualification that's relevant to them and meets their needs.

We're part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, Europe's largest assessment agency and a department of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge Assessment plays a leading role in developing and delivering assessments throughout the world, operating in over 150 countries.

We work with a range of education providers, including schools, colleges, workplaces and other institutions in both the public and private sectors. Over 13,000 centres choose our A Levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications including Cambridge Nationals and Cambridge Technicals.

### Our Specifications

We believe in developing specifications that help you bring the subject to life and inspire your students to achieve more.

We've created teacher-friendly specifications based on extensive research and engagement with the teaching community. They're designed to be straightforward and accessible so that you can tailor the delivery of the course to suit your needs. We aim

to encourage students to become responsible for their own learning, confident in discussing ideas, innovative and engaged.

We provide a range of support services designed to help you at every stage, from preparation through to the delivery of our specifications. This includes:

- A wide range of high-quality creative resources including:
  - Delivery Guides
  - Transition Guides
  - Topic Exploration Packs
  - Lesson Elements
  - ...and much more.
- Access to Subject Advisors to support you through the transition and throughout the lifetime of the specifications.
- CPD/Training for teachers including events to introduce the qualifications and prepare you for first teaching.
- Active Results – our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual learners or whole schools.

All GCSE (9–1) qualifications offered by OCR are accredited by Ofqual, the Regulator for qualifications offered in England. The accreditation number for OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Psychology is QN603/1109/5.

## 1b. Why choose an OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology?

OCR's GCSE (9–1) specification in Psychology is designed to inspire and engage learners by providing a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study which develops an understanding of the ideas and values that characterise 'self' and others. Learners will be equipped with a psychological literacy that enables them to apply their knowledge and skills in their everyday lives, including making informed decisions about further study and career choices.

OCR are enriching and supporting our qualification by working with Time to Change, England's biggest programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination, run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness.



Time to Change explain:

*"Time to Change is pleased to be working with OCR to update their GCSE (9–1) Psychology qualification. One in ten young people experience a mental health problem; that's three in an average classroom - so striving to improve young people's mental health knowledge is crucial. Improved knowledge helps to reduce stigma and discrimination, which we know have a profound impact on the lives of young people affected by mental health problems; preventing them from fulfilling their potential or seeking help, and leading to loneliness, worse recovery outcomes and loss of confidence."*

*50% of all adult mental illness starts before the age of 15, and 75% by age 18. We hope this GCSE (9–1) Psychology qualification will inspire this generation to know more about mental health and find out what they can do to support their own mental health and that of their peers and help to create a future free from stigma and discrimination."*

### Aims and learning outcomes

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Psychology will encourage learners to:

- use specialist vocabulary, psychological concepts, terminology and conventions to engage in the process of psychological enquiry
- acquire knowledge and understanding of psychology, developing an understanding of self and others, and how psychological understanding can help to explain everyday social phenomena
- understand how psychological research is conducted, including the role of scientific method and data analysis
- present information, develop arguments and draw conclusions through a critical approach to psychological evidence, developing as reflective thinkers
- develop an understanding of the relationship between psychology and personal, moral, social and cultural issues, and develop an understanding of ethical issues in psychology
- develop an understanding of psychological issues, the contribution of psychology to individual, social and cultural diversity, and how psychology contributes to society.

## 1c. What are the key features of this specification?

The key features of OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Psychology for you and your learners are:

- a specification with a focus on mental health, which encourages greater awareness in young people and therefore reducing stigma and discrimination – developed in partnership with Time to Change
- a clear and straightforward structure, which retains the popular elements of key concepts, theories, research and application
- an allowance for the teaching of research methods to be embedded within topics as well as standalone sections
- brain and neuropsychology content embedded within topics
- an emphasis on the importance of practical work and 'doing psychology', including research studies on the specification that can be replicated
- a specification that was developed in consultation with teachers and other subject stakeholders
- exciting subject content with a balance of classic and modern psychological theory and research which is relevant to young people
- content that provides applications to the real world, increasing learners' psychological understanding
- access to our Subject Team and teacher guidance to support in the planning, delivery and assessment of the qualification
- a wide range of teaching and learning resources to support the delivery of the specification, including:
  - delivery guides
  - core studies guides
  - lesson elements
  - curriculum plans
  - flipped learning guide
  - quantitative skills guides
  - student topic workbooks
  - podcasts
  - bespoke resources produced with Time to Change on 'psychological problems' content.

## 1d. How do I find out more information?

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If you are already using OCR specifications you can contact us at: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

If you are not already a registered OCR centre then you can find out more information on the benefits of becoming one at: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

If you are not yet an approved centre and would like to become one go to: [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

Want to find out more?

Ask our Subject Team:

Email: [psychology@ocr.org.uk](mailto:psychology@ocr.org.uk)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Visit our Online Support Centre at [support.ocr.org.uk](http://support.ocr.org.uk)

News: [twitter.com/OCR\\_psychology](https://twitter.com/OCR_psychology)

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## 2 The specification overview

### 2a. OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Psychology (J203)

Learners take both components 01 and 02 to be awarded the OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology.

#### Content Overview

- Criminal Psychology
- Development
- Psychological Problems
- Research Methods

- Social Influence
- Memory
- Sleep and Dreaming
- Research Methods

#### Assessment Overview

##### Studies and applications in psychology 1\* (01)

90 marks  
Written paper  
1 hour 30 minutes

**50%**  
of total  
GCSE

##### Studies and applications in psychology 2\* (02)

90 marks  
Written paper  
1 hour 30 minutes

**50%**  
of total  
GCSE

\* Indicates inclusion of synoptic assessment.

## 2b. Content of GCSE (9–1) in Psychology (J203)

Learners will be required to study psychological ideas, processes, techniques and procedures, through the following topics:

- development
- memory
- psychological problems
- social influence
- the brain and neuropsychology\*
- criminal psychology
- sleep and dreaming
- research methods.

Each component will consist of three topics, with research methods included in both. For each of the topics, content will relate to:

- key concepts
- theories/explanations
- research studies
- applications.

For each topic, learners will be required to study two core studies\*\* to support the content of related theories. For each core study, learners should ‘tell the story’ of the study by considering the following:

- background
- method
  - design
  - sample
  - materials/apparatus
  - procedure

- results
- conclusions
- criticisms.

As part of their study, learners will be required to develop knowledge and understanding of the five core areas of psychology identified as:

- biological – an understanding of biological concepts within psychology, including neuroscience and genetics as contributors to behaviour
- cognitive – an understanding of thought, information and mental processing as contributors to behaviour
- social – an understanding of the social area of psychology, the impact of social and environmental factors on behaviour and the influence of groups
- developmental – an understanding of how individuals change throughout their lives, with a particular focus on childhood and how both nature and nurture can affect individuals
- individual differences – an understanding of the complex nature of human behaviour and experiences and why and how people are different.

Learners will also be required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- debates within psychology, including ‘reductionism/holism’, ‘nature/nurture’ and ‘freewill/determinism’
- how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time and how these inform our understanding of behaviour

- the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity
- the interrelationships between the core areas of psychology
- how the studies for topics relate to the associated theory
- research methods as outlined in the content below.

There will also be a research methods section within each component. For component 01, the focus will be on designing an investigation and for component 02, the assessment will relate to a novel source. Specific research methods content may also be assessed within the topic areas.

It is recommended that learners carry out ethical, investigative practical activities in order to support their understanding of research methods.

The following research methods content will be assessed throughout the whole qualification.

- Planning Research:
  - hypotheses
  - variables
  - experimental Designs
  - populations and Sampling
  - ethical Guidelines.
- Doing Research:
  - experiments
  - interviews
  - questionnaires
  - observations
  - case studies
  - correlations.
- Analysing Research:
  - types of data
  - descriptive data
  - tables, charts and graphs
  - reliability and validity
  - sources of bias.

Full details of research methods content appears in section 2c of the specification.

Fully referenced details of research studies used within this qualification can be found in section 5d of the specification.

In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in psychology, learners need to have been taught, and demonstrate competence, to select and apply areas of mathematics relevant to research methods in psychology (see section 5c).

\* content of brain and neuropsychology has been embedded within the other topics and can be assessed as either part of that topic, or as an isolated question within the given section. Brain and neuropsychology content has been underlined within the topics. Students should know and understand key concepts in the brain including its division into three main parts (Cerebrum, Cerebellum and Brainstem) and associated sub-parts.

\*\* owing to the brain and neuropsychology being embedded within other topics, the following are used as 'dual purpose' studies, covering more than one topic: Wilson, Kopleman and Kapur (2008) (Brain and neuropsychology, memory) and Daniel, Weinberger, Jones et al. (1991) (Brain and neuropsychology, psychological problems).

## 2c. Content of Studies and applications in psychology 1

This component introduces learners to the following topics: Criminal Psychology, Development and Psychological Problems.

Learners must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, theories/ explanations, related research studies and applications listed.

For the research studies the following must be studied: background, method (design, sample, materials/apparatus, procedure), results, conclusions and criticisms.

Learners are also required to have studied all content relating to planning research, doing research and analysing research (see section 2c Content of Research Methods (Components 01 and 02)).

Learners are encouraged to carry out ethical, investigative practical activities appropriate for the study of psychology at this level, but learners will not be directly assessed on these specific activities.

Criminal Psychology	Content
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different types of crime including: violent; drug related; acquisitive; sexual; and anti-social offences</li> <li>Criminal behaviour as a social construct including deviation from norms and the role of culture in defining criminal/anti-social behaviour</li> <li>How crime is measured: official statistics and self-report.</li> </ul>
<p>Theories/Explanations of why criminal/anti-social behaviour occurs</p> <p>The Social Learning Theory</p> <p>Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Social Learning Theory of Criminality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identification with role models</li> <li>the role of observation and imitation</li> <li>the process of vicarious reinforcement</li> <li>the role of direct reinforcement and internalisation</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the nature/nurture debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Social Learning Theory Research Study – Cooper and Mackie (1986): Study into video games and aggression in children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theories (1964 and 1992) and the Biological Basis of Personality (1967)</li> <li>extraversion; neuroticism; and psychoticism; in relation to criminal behaviour</li> <li><u>how the central nervous system relates to cognitions and behaviour, with specific reference to arousal levels and the criminal personality</u></li> <li><u>how functions of the brain relate to cognitions and behaviour with specific reference to synapses and dopaminergic neurons and how they interact in an overactive dopamine system in psychoticism</u></li> <li><u>the role of dopamine reward systems; the reticular activation system and the cerebral cortex in extroversion</u></li> <li><u>the role of the autonomic nervous and the limbic system in neuroticism</u></li> </ul>

Criminal Psychology	Content
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the role of early socialisation and difficulties in conditioning children</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the issue of individual differences.</li> </ul> <p>Criminal Personality Theory Research Study – Heaven (1996): Study into delinquency, extroversion, psychoticism and self-esteem.</p>
<p>Application</p> <p>The changing nature of punishment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of rehabilitation in reducing criminal/anti-social behaviour; and increasing pro-social behaviour; including restorative justice; and the use of positive role models</li> <li>The effects of punishment and deterrents in reducing criminal/anti-social behaviour; including the use of prisons; community sentences; and fines.</li> </ul>

Development	Content
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stages of development; pre-natal; childhood; adolescence; and adulthood</li> <li><u>The development of brain structures and functions; the nervous system; neurons; synapses; and their interaction in development of the brain</u></li> <li>IQ tests as a measure of intelligence.</li> </ul>
<p>Theories/Explanations</p> <p>Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development</p> <p>The Role of Learning on Development –</p> <p>Dweck's Mindset Theory</p> <p>Willingham's Learning Theory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The four invariant stages of development: sensori-motor; pre-operational; concrete-operational; formal operational</li> <li>assimilation and accommodation</li> <li>the concepts of object permanence; animism; and egocentrism</li> <li>the processes of decentration; reversibility; and conservation</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the reductionism/holism debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Cognitive Development Research Study – Piaget (1952): Study into the conservation of number.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning theories of development:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dweck's ideas on fixed and growth mindsets</li> <li>Dweck's ideas on praise for effort</li> <li>Willingham's ideas on the myth of learning styles</li> <li>Willingham's ideas on the importance of meaning for learning</li> <li>criticisms of learning theories including the nature/nurture debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Learning Research Study – Blackwell et al. (2007): study into fixed and growth mindsets.</p>
<p>Application</p> <p>The changing role of education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How Piaget's ideas have been applied to education through the use of key stages, readiness, active learning and the concept of intelligence</li> <li>How learning theories apply to the development of education and intelligence through growth mindsets and teaching through meaning not learning styles.</li> </ul>

Psychological Problems	Content
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An introduction to mental health:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ways of defining mental health, including the mental health continuum</li> <li>the current prevalence of mental health problems, including current statistics and differences between age; gender; and sexual orientation</li> <li>the incidence of significant mental health problems over time, including changing classification; similarities and differences; and how attitudes have changed towards mental health in the UK since the 1959 Mental Health Act.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The effects of significant mental health problems on the individual and society:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effects of stigma on individuals before and after diagnosis</li> <li>the effects of discrimination on individuals before and after diagnosis</li> <li>the effects of significant mental health problems on the wider society, including care in the community.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Theories/Explanations  Biological Explanation of Schizophrenia  Psychological Explanation of Schizophrenia	<p><u>Schizophrenia</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The clinical characteristics of schizophrenia as outlined in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Key statistics of schizophrenia including reference to prevalence; age; sex; ethnicity; and recovery rates</li> <li>The biological theory of schizophrenia:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>the dopamine hypothesis – the role of dopaminergic neurons and synaptic transmission in an overactive dopamine system causing high dopamine levels in the brain</u></li> <li><u>how the structure and functions of the brain relates to cognitions and behaviour; brain dysfunction in relation to brain volume and brain activity – the roles of the frontal lobes; hippocampus; and temporal lobes; and the impact of neurological damage in schizophrenia</u></li> <li>criticisms of this theory including the nature/nurture debate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The psychological theory - the social drift theory of schizophrenia:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rejection by society</li> <li>disengagement of individuals</li> <li>criticisms of this theory including problems establishing cause and effect.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Schizophrenia Research Study–  <u>the role of monoamines on cerebral function during specific prefrontal cognitive activation – Daniel, Weinberger, Jones et al. (1991): The effect of amphetamine on regional cerebral blood flow during cognitive activation in schizophrenia.</u></p>

<sup>1</sup> Teachers should use the most recent version of ICD when starting to teach a two year course.

Psychological Problems	Content
<p>Theories/Explanations</p> <p>Biological Explanation of Clinical Depression</p> <p>Psychological Explanation of Clinical Depression</p>	<p><u>Clinical Depression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The clinical characteristics of clinical depression as outlined in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Key statistics of clinical depression including reference to prevalence; age; sex; ethnicity; and recovery rates</li> <li>The biological theory – the social rank theory of clinical depression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the evolutionary function of depression</li> <li>the role of a lower rank in reducing conflict</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the reductionism/holism debate.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The psychological theory - the ABC Model of clinical depression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rational versus irrational beliefs</li> <li>the roles of activating events, beliefs and consequences</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the freewill/determinism debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Clinical Depression Research Study – Tandoc et al. (2015): Study into Facebook use, envy, and depression among college students: Is Facebooking depressing?</p>
<p>Application</p> <p>The development of treatments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of anti-psychotics and anti-depressants to treat schizophrenia and clinical depression and <u>how they improve mental health through changing the actions of the brain and interactions between neurons and synapses</u></li> <li>The use of psychotherapy for treating schizophrenia and clinical depression and how it improves mental health</li> <li><u>The development of neuropsychology for studying schizophrenia and clinical depression, including neuropsychological tests and brain imaging techniques.</u></li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Teachers should use the most recent version of ICD when starting to teach a two year course.

## 2c. Content of Studies and applications in psychology 2

This component introduces learners to the following topics: Social Influence, Memory and Sleep and Dreaming.

Learners must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts, theories/ explanations, related research studies and application listed.

For the research studies the following must be studied: background, method (design, sample, materials/apparatus, procedure), results, conclusions and criticisms.

Learners are also required to have studied all content relating to planning research, doing research and analysing research (see section 2c Content of Research Methods (Components 01 and 02)).

Learners are encouraged to carry out ethical, investigative practical activities appropriate for the study of psychology at this level, but learners will not be directly assessed on these specific activities.

Social Influence	Content:
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conformity including majority influence.</li> <li>Collective and crowd behaviour including pro-social and anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>Obedience including obeying the orders of authority figures.</li> </ul>
Theories/Explanations Situational Factors  Dispositional Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effect of situational factors (other people and social) on behaviours:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>majority influence on conformity</li> <li>collective and crowd behaviour, including deindividuation</li> <li>culture on pro-social and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>authority figures on obedience</li> <li>criticisms of the effect of situational factors, including the free will/determinism debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Situational Factors Research Study - Bickman (1974): study into obedience and the social power of a uniform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The effect of dispositional factors (personality) on behaviours:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>self-esteem on conformity</li> <li>locus of control in crowds</li> <li>morality on pro-social and anti-social behaviour</li> <li>the authoritarian personality on obedience</li> <li><u>the influence of the brain in dispositional factors, including: hippocampal volume in self-esteem; and regions of the pre-frontal cortex in morality</u></li> <li>criticisms of the effect of dispositional factors including issues of generalisability.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Dispositional Factors Research Study - NatCen (2011): study into the August riots in England with reference to anti-social collective behaviour and dispositional factors. <i>(Note: candidates only need to be familiar with the events in Tottenham.)</i></p>



Social Influence	Content:
Application Changing attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How minority influence affects social change in relation to changing attitudes and behaviour towards, increasing awareness of, and reducing mental health stigma and discrimination.</li><li>• How majority influence affects social change in relation to changing attitudes and behaviour towards, increasing awareness of, and reducing mental health stigma and discrimination.</li></ul>



Memory	Content
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The stages of information processing: input; encoding; storage; retrieval; and output</li> <li>Types of forgetting: decay; displacement; retrieval failure (lack of cues).</li> <li><u>The structure and functions of the brain and how the brain works in the formation of memories; – how neurological damage can affect memory; the role of the hippocampus on anterograde amnesia; the frontal lobe on retrograde amnesia; and the cerebellum on procedural memory.</u></li> </ul>
Theories/Explanations  The Multi-store Model of Memory          The Theory of Reconstructive Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structure and process of the Multi-store Model of memory:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ sensory store, short-term memory and long-term memory</li> <li>◦ differences between stores in terms of duration</li> <li>◦ differences between stores in terms of capacity</li> <li>◦ differences between stores in terms of types of encoding</li> <li>◦ criticisms of the model including rehearsal versus meaning in memory.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>The Multi-store Model of Memory Research Study – an example of the impact, on behaviour, of neurological damage - Wilson, Kopelman and Kapur (2008): Prominent and persistent loss of past awareness in amnesia: delusion, impaired consciousness or coping strategy (the Clive Wearing study).</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The structure and process of the theory of reconstructive memory:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ the concept of schemas</li> <li>◦ the role of experience and expectation on memory</li> <li>◦ the process of confabulation</li> <li>◦ distortion and the effect of leading questions</li> <li>◦ criticisms of the theory including the reductionism/holism debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Reconstructive Memory Research Study – Braun, Ellis and Loftus (2002): study into How Advertising Can Change Our Memories of the Past.</p>
Application  Techniques used for recall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of cues, repetition and avoiding overload in advertisements and the use of autobiographical advertising</li> <li><u>The development of neuropsychology for measuring different memory functions, including the Wechsler Memory Scale.</u></li> </ul>

Sleep and Dreaming	Content
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The functions, features and benefits of sleep: healthy brain; physical repair; emotional stability; <u>stages of the sleep cycle and when dreaming occurs</u>; the role of the pineal gland and melatonin</li> <li>The causes of sleep disorders: sleep onset and sleep maintenance insomnia</li> <li>Endogenous pacemakers; and exogenous zeitgebers; and their role in sleep.</li> </ul>
<p>Theories/Explanations: The Nature of Dreaming</p> <p>The Freudian Theory of Dreaming</p> <p>The Activation Synthesis Theory of Dreaming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Freudian Theory of Dreaming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the unconscious mind</li> <li>the role of repression</li> <li>the concept of wish fulfilment</li> <li>manifest and latent content of dreams</li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the issue of subjectivity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Freudian Theory of Dreaming Research Study – Freud (1918): dream analysis study of ‘The Wolfman’.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Activation Synthesis Theory of Dreaming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the role of REM sleep</li> <li><u>the function and actions of the brain during sleep, including the limbic system</u></li> <li><u>activity of neurons in the pons during sleep</u></li> <li><u>the process of synthesis as a function of the cerebral cortex</u></li> <li>criticisms of the theory including the reductionism/holism debate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The Activation Synthesis Theory of Dreaming Research Study <u>Differences in actions and functions of the brain when dreaming and when awake</u> – Williams et al. (1992): study into Bizarreness in Dreams and Fantasies: Implications for the Activation Synthesis Hypothesis.</p>
<p>Application</p> <p>Development of treatments for insomnia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Features of insomnia, <u>the role of the nervous system and its management through relaxation techniques</u> and the role of the physical environment in insomnia and its treatment through improved sleep hygiene</li> <li><u>The impact of neurological damage to the hypothalamus on sleep.</u></li> </ul>

## 2c. Content of Research Methods (Components 01 and 02)

There will be a research methods section within each component. For component 01, the focus will be on designing an investigation and for component 02, the assessment will relate to a novel source. Specific research methods content may also be assessed within the topic areas.

Learners are encouraged to carry out ethical, investigative practical activities appropriate for the study of psychology at this level, but learners will not be directly assessed on these specific activities.

A minimum of 20% of the overall marks in both components are for the assessment of Research Methods.

A minimum of 10% of the overall marks across the two components are targeted at the assessment of mathematics relevant to research methods in psychology (please see Section 5c).

<u>Planning Research</u>	Learners should have knowledge and understanding of the following features of planning research and their associated strengths and weaknesses, including reliability and validity.
Hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Null and alternative hypotheses</li> <li>• Hypotheses to predict differences, correlations, or no patterns.</li> </ul>
Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent variables and how they can be manipulated</li> <li>• Dependent variables and how they can be measured</li> <li>• Co-variables and how they can be measured</li> <li>• Extraneous variables and how they can be controlled, including the use of standardisation.</li> </ul>
Experimental Designs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeated measures design</li> <li>• Independent measures design.</li> </ul>
Populations and Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target populations, sampling and sample size with reference to representativeness and generalisability</li> <li>• Sampling methods; random, opportunity, self-selected</li> <li>• Principles of sampling as applied to scientific data.</li> </ul>
Ethical Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ lack of informed consent</li> <li>◦ protection of participants / psychological harm</li> <li>◦ deception.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ways of dealing with ethical issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ use of debriefing</li> <li>◦ right to withdraw</li> <li>◦ confidentiality.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The British Psychological Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct.</li> </ul>

<u>Doing Research</u>	Learners should have knowledge and understanding of the following features of doing research and their associated strengths and weaknesses including reliability and validity and the type of research objectives for which they are most suitable.
Experiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laboratory</li> <li>• Field</li> <li>• Natural.</li> </ul>
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured</li> <li>• Unstructured.</li> </ul>
Questionnaires (Surveys)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open questions</li> <li>• Closed questions</li> <li>• Rating scales.</li> </ul>
Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naturalistic</li> <li>• Controlled</li> <li>• Overt</li> <li>• Covert</li> <li>• Participant</li> <li>• Non-participant.</li> </ul>
Case Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of qualitative data</li> <li>• Use of small samples.</li> </ul>
Correlations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of quantitative data</li> <li>• Positive, negative and zero correlations.</li> </ul>

<u>Analysing Research</u>	Learners should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the process and procedures involved in the collection, construction, interpretation, analysis and representation of data. This will necessitate the ability to perform some calculations.
Types of Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative data</li> <li>• Qualitative data</li> <li>• Primary data</li> <li>• Secondary data</li> <li>• Strengths of each type of data.</li> </ul>
Descriptive Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures of Central Tendency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Mode (including modal class)</li> <li>◦ median</li> <li>◦ mean.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Range</li> <li>• Ratios</li> <li>• Percentages</li> <li>• Fractions</li> <li>• Expressions in decimal and standard form</li> <li>• Decimal places and significant figures</li> <li>• Normal distributions</li> <li>• Estimations from data collected.</li> </ul>
Tables, Charts and Graphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency tables (tally chart)</li> <li>• Bar charts</li> <li>• Pie charts</li> <li>• Histograms</li> <li>• Line graphs</li> <li>• Scatter diagrams.</li> </ul>
Reliability and Validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ internal</li> <li>◦ external</li> <li>◦ inter-rater.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Validity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ ecological</li> <li>◦ population</li> <li>◦ construct.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demand characteristics</li> <li>• Observer effect</li> <li>• Social desirability.</li> </ul>
Sources of bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender bias</li> <li>• Cultural bias</li> <li>• Age bias</li> <li>• Experimenter bias</li> <li>• Observer bias</li> <li>• Bias in questioning.</li> </ul>

## 2d. Prior knowledge, learning and progression

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No prior knowledge or learning of the subject is required.

GCSEs are qualifications that enable learners to progress to further qualifications, either Vocational or General.

This qualification provides the ideal foundation for learners to progress to OCR's AS Level in Psychology and A Level in Psychology.

Find out more at [www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk).

## 3 Assessment of GCSE (9–1) in Psychology (J203)

### 3a. Forms of assessment

OCR's GCSE (9–1) in Psychology consists of two components that are externally assessed. Learners must take both components.

A minimum of 20% of the overall marks in both components are for the assessment of Research Methods.

A minimum of 10% of the overall marks across the two components are targeted at the assessment of mathematics relevant to research methods in psychology (please see section 5c).

## 3

### Studies and applications in psychology 1 (Component 01)

This component is externally assessed and is worth 50% of the overall qualification. It is worth 90 marks in total. Learners will answer questions on:

- Criminal Psychology (worth 24 marks)
- Development (worth 24 marks)
- Psychological Problems (worth 24 marks)
- Research Methods (worth 18 marks).

The examination will be a written paper lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes and will consist of short and medium tariff questions, as well as one extended essay question worth 13 marks.

Different topics are assessed in different sections across the series of examinations.

The 13-mark question will always appear in section C and will require learners to make a judgement on a synoptic item. There will also be three multiple choice questions per topic area (excluding section D). These will appear at the beginning of each section.

For section D - research methods, learners will be required to design an investigation. In addition, research methods are also embedded within sections A-C.

The study of the brain and neuropsychology has been embedded within the content but can be assessed in isolation within sections A-C.

Please note, content separated by a semicolon (;) can be assessed discretely or in any combination.

The use of calculators is permitted in the examination.

## Studies and applications in psychology 2 (Component 02)

This component is externally assessed and is worth 50% of the overall qualification. It is worth 90 marks in total. Learners will answer questions on:

- Social Influence (worth 24 marks)
- Memory (worth 24 marks)
- Sleep and Dreaming (worth 24 marks)
- Research Methods (worth 18 marks).

The examination will be a written paper lasting 1 hour and 30 minutes and will consist of short and medium tariff questions, as well as one extended essay question worth 13 marks.

Different topics are assessed in different sections across the series of examinations.

The 13-mark question will always appear in section C and will require learners to make a judgement on a synoptic item. There will also be three multiple choice questions per topic area (excluding section D). These will appear at the beginning of each section.

For section D - research methods, learners will be required to respond to a novel source. In addition, research methods are also embedded within sections A-C.

The study of the brain and neuropsychology has been embedded within the content but can be assessed in isolation within sections A-C.

Please note, content separated by a semicolon (;) can be assessed discretely or in any combination.

The use of calculators is permitted in the examination.

### 3b. Assessment objectives (AO)

There are three Assessment Objectives in the OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology. These are detailed in the table below.

	Assessment Objective
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes and procedures
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of psychological ideas, processes and procedures
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse and evaluate psychological information, ideas, processes and procedures to make judgements and draw conclusions

### AO weightings in OCR's GCSE (9–1) Psychology

The relationship between the Assessment Objectives and the components is shown in the following table:

Component	% of overall GCSE (9–1) in Psychology (J203)		
	AO1	AO2	AO3
Studies and applications in psychology 1 (J203/01)	33–37%	33–37%	28–32%
Studies and applications in psychology 2 (J203/02)	33–37%	33–37%	28–32%
<b>Total</b>	35%	35%	30%

### 3c. Total qualification time

Total qualification time (TQT) is the total amount of time, in hours, expected to be spent by a learner to achieve a qualification. It includes both guided learning hours and hours spent in preparation, study

and assessment. The total qualification time for GCSE Psychology is 140 hours. The total guided learning time is 120–140 hours.

### 3d. Qualification availability outside of England

This qualification is available in England. For Wales and Northern Ireland please check the Qualifications in Wales Portal (QIW) or the Northern Ireland Department of Education Performance Measures /

Northern Ireland Entitlement Framework Qualifications Accreditation Number (NIEFQAN) list to see current availability.

### 3e. Language

This qualification is available in English only. All assessment materials are available in English only and all candidate work must be in English.

### 3f. Assessment availability

There will be one examination series available each year in May/June to **all** learners.

All examined components must be taken in the same examination series at the end of the course.

This specification will be certified from the June 2019 examination series onwards.

### 3g. Retaking the qualification

Learners can retake the qualification as many times as they wish. They retake all components of the qualification.

### 3h. Assessment of extended response

The assessment materials for this qualification provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to construct and develop a sustained and

coherent line of reasoning and marks for extended responses are integrated into the marking criteria.

### 3i. Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is the learners' understanding of the connections between different elements of the subject. It involves the explicit drawing together of knowledge, skills and understanding within different parts of the GCSE (9–1) course.

The emphasis of synoptic assessment is to encourage the understanding of psychology as a discipline. Synoptic assessment is embedded within both components of this qualification.

The extended response item in each series will focus on synoptic assessment. This will be a 13 mark question in both paper one **and** paper two. The item will require learners to draw upon a range of psychological knowledge in order to answer the set question.

The study of Research Methods underpins the entire specification. Questions in topic areas may require candidates to draw upon their knowledge and understanding of research methods.

### 3j. Calculating qualification results

A learner's overall qualification grade for OCR GCSE (9–1) in Psychology will be calculated by adding together their marks from the two components taken to give their total weighted mark. This mark will then be compared to the qualification level grade boundaries for the entry option taken by the learner and for the relevant exam series to determine the learner's overall qualification grade.

The information in this section is designed to give an overview of the processes involved in administering this qualification so that you can speak to your exams officer. All of the following processes require you to submit something to OCR by a specific deadline.

More information about the processes and deadlines involved at each stage of the assessment cycle can be found in the Administration area of the OCR website.

OCR's *Admin overview* is available on the OCR website at [www.ocr.org.uk/administration](http://www.ocr.org.uk/administration).

## 4 Admin: what you need to know

### 4a. Pre-assessment

#### Estimated entries

Estimated entries are your best projection of the number of learners who will be entered for a qualification in a particular series.

Estimated entries should be submitted to OCR by the specified deadline. They are free and do not commit your centre in any way.

#### Final entries

Final entries provide OCR with detailed data for each learner, showing each assessment to be taken. It is essential that you use the correct entry code, considering the relevant entry rules.

Final entries must be submitted to OCR by the published deadlines or late entry fees will apply.

All learners taking a GCSE (9–1) in Psychology must be entered for J203.

Entry code	Title	Component code	Component title	Assessment type
J203	Psychology	01	Studies and applications in psychology 1	External Assessment
		02	Studies and applications in psychology 2	External Assessment

#### Collecting evidence of student performance to ensure resilience in the qualifications system

Regulators have published guidance on collecting evidence of student performance as part of long-term contingency arrangements to improve the resilience of the qualifications system. You should review and consider this guidance when delivering this qualification to students at your centre.

For more detailed information on collecting evidence of student performance please visit our website at: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/general-qualifications/assessment/>

### 4b. Special consideration

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to marks or grades to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time the assessment was taken.

Detailed information about eligibility for special consideration can be found in the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process*.

## 4c. External assessment arrangements

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Regulations governing examination arrangements are contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting examinations*.

Learners are permitted to use a scientific or graphical calculator for both components. Calculators are subject to the rules in the document *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* published annually by JCQ ([www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)).

## Head of centre annual declaration

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The Head of Centre is required to provide a declaration to the JCQ as part of the annual NCN update, conducted in the autumn term, to confirm that the centre is meeting all of the requirements detailed in the specification.

Any failure by a centre to provide the Head of Centre Annual Declaration will result in your centre status being suspended and could lead to the withdrawal of our approval for you to operate as a centre.

## Private Candidates

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Private candidates may enter for OCR assessments.

A private candidate is someone who pursues a course of study independently but takes an examination or assessment at an approved examination centre. A private candidate may be a part-time student, someone taking a distance learning course, or someone being tutored privately. They must be based in the UK.

Private candidates need to contact OCR approved centres to establish whether they are prepared to host them as a private candidate. The centre may charge for this facility and OCR recommends that the arrangement is made early in the course. Further guidance for private candidates may be found on the OCR website: <http://www.ocr.org.uk>

## 4d. Results and certificates

### Grade Scale

GCSE (9–1) qualifications are graded on the scale: 9–1, where 9 is the highest. Learners who fail to reach the minimum standard of 1 will be Unclassified

(U). Only subjects in which grades 9 to 1 are attained will be recorded on certificates.

### Results

Results are released to centres and learners for information and to allow any queries to be resolved before certificates are issued.

Centres will have access to the following results information for each learner:

- the grade for the qualification
- the raw mark for each component
- the total weighted mark for the qualification.

The following supporting information will be available:

- raw mark grade boundaries for each component
- weighted mark grade boundaries for the qualification.

Until certificates are issued, results are deemed to be provisional and may be subject to amendment.

A learner's final results will be recorded on an OCR certificate. The qualification title will be shown on the certificate as 'OCR Level 1/ Level 2 GCSE (9–1) in Psychology'.

## 4e. Post-results services

A number of post-results services are available:

- **Review of results** – If you are not happy with the outcome of a learner's results, centres may request a review of their marking.
- **Missing and incomplete results** – This service should be used if an individual subject result for a learner is missing, or the learner has been omitted entirely from the results supplied.
- **Access to scripts** – Centres can request access to marked scripts.

## 4f. Malpractice

Any breach of the regulations for the conduct of examinations and non-exam assessment may constitute malpractice (which includes maladministration) and must be reported to OCR as

soon as it is detected. Detailed information on malpractice can be found in the JCQ publication *Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures*.

## 5 Appendices

### 5a. Overlap with other qualifications

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There is no significant overlap between the content of this specification and those for other GCSE (9–1) qualifications.

### 5b. Accessibility

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Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements allow learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment and show what they know and can do, without changing the demands of the assessment. Applications for these should be made before the examination series. Detailed information about eligibility for access arrangements can be found in the *JCQ Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments*.

The GCSE (9–1) qualification and subject criteria have been reviewed in order to identify any feature which could disadvantage learners who share a protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. All reasonable steps have been taken to minimise any such disadvantage.

### 5c. Mathematical skills requirement

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In order to be able to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in psychology, students need to have been taught, and demonstrate competence, to

use and apply the following areas of mathematics relevant to research methods in psychology:

**Arithmetic and numerical computation**

- recognise and use expressions in decimal and standard form
- use ratios, fractions and percentages
- estimate results.

**Handling data**

- use an appropriate number of significant figures
- find arithmetic means
- construct and interpret frequency tables and diagrams, bar charts and histograms
- understand the principles of sampling as applied to scientific data
- understand the terms mean, median and mode
- use a scatter diagram to identify a correlation between two variables
- know the characteristics of normal distributions
- understand range as a measure of dispersion
- understand the differences between qualitative and quantitative data
- understand the difference between primary and secondary data
- translate information between graphical and numerical forms
- plot two variables from experimental or other data and interpret graphs.

## 5d. Text List

### Core Study References

#### Criminal Psychology

Cooper, J. and Mackie, D. (1986), Video Games and Aggression in Children. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 16: 726–744. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1986.tb01755.x

Heaven, P. C. L. (1996), Personality and Self-Reported Delinquency: A Longitudinal Analysis. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 37: 747–751. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.1996.tb01467.x

#### Development

Piaget, J. (1952), *The Child's Conception of Number*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. Chapter 4

Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H. and Dweck, C. S. (2007), Implicit Theories of Intelligence Predict Achievement Across an Adolescent Transition: A Longitudinal Study and an Intervention. *Child Development*, 78: 246–263. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.00995.x

#### Psychological Problems

Daniel, D.G., Weinberger, D.R., Jones, D.W., Zigun, J.R., Coppola, R., Handel, S., et al. (1991), The effect of amphetamine on regional cerebral blood flow during cognitive activation in schizophrenia. *J Neurosci*, 11: 1907–1917

Tandoc, E.C., Ferrucci, P. and Duffy, M. (2015), Facebook use, envy, and depression among college students: Is facebook depressing? *Computers in Human Behavior*, 43: 139–146. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2014.10.053

#### Social Influence

Bickman, L. (1974), The Social Power of a Uniform. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 4: 47–61. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.1974.tb02599.x

Morrell, G. et al. (2011) The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen): The August Riots in England – Understanding the involvement of young people.

#### Memory

Wilson, B. A., Kopelman, M. and Kapur, N. (2008), Prominent and persistent loss of past awareness in amnesia: Delusion, impaired consciousness or coping strategy? *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation*, 18(5-6): 527–540. doi: 10.1080/09602010802141889

Braun, K. A., Ellis, R. and Loftus, E. F. (2002), Make my memory: How advertising can change our memories of the past. *Psychol. Mark.*, 19: 1–23. doi: 10.1002/mar.1000.

#### Sleep and Dreaming

Freud, S. (1918) *History of an Infantile Neurosis (The Wolfman)*

Williams, J., Merritt, J., Rittenhouse, C., and Hobson, J. A. (1992), Bizarreness in dreams and fantasies: implications for the activation-synthesis hypothesis. *Conscious. Cogn.* 1: 172–185. doi: 10.1016/1053-8100(92)90059-J.

## 5e. Acknowledgements

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In developing this specification we have consulted and drawn on the research of Time to Change, the mental health anti-stigma campaign run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness.

For more information about their work visit:

<http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>

## Summary of updates

Date	Version	Section	Title of section	Change
April 2018	1.1	4d	Results and certificates	Amend to certification titling
April 2020	1.2	1d	How do I find out more information?	Inclusion of Online Support Centre link
		4e	Post-results services	Enquiry about results name changed to Review of results
February 2021	1.3			Update to specification covers to meet digital accessibility standards
December 2022	1.4	3c	Total qualification time	Insertion of new section
February 2024	1.5	3d, 3e	Qualification availability, Language	Inclusion of disclaimer regarding availability and language
		4a	Pre-assessment	Update to include resilience guidance
		Checklist		Inclusion of Teach Cambridge
October 2024	1.6			Correction of typographical errors







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# YOUR CHECKLIST

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*Our aim is to provide you with all the information and support you need to deliver our specifications.*

- ☐ Bookmark [OCR website](#) for all the latest information and news on GCSE (9-1) Psychology
  - ☐ Sign up for [Teach Cambridge](#): our personalised and secure website that provides teachers with access to all planning, teaching and assessment support materials
  - ☐ Be among the first to hear about support materials and resources as they become available – register for [Psychology updates](#)
  - ☐ Find out about our [professional development](#)
  - ☐ View our range of [skills guides](#) for use across subjects and qualifications
  - ☐ Discover our new online [past paper service](#)
  - ☐ Learn more about [Active Results](#)
  - ☐ Visit our [Online Support Centre](#)
-

## Download high-quality, exciting and innovative GCSE (9-1) Psychology resources from [ocr.org.uk/gcsepsychology](https://ocr.org.uk/gcsepsychology)

Resources and support for our GCSE (9-1) Psychology qualification, developed through collaboration between our Psychology Subject Advisor, teachers and other subject experts, are available from our website. You can also contact our Psychology Subject Advisor who can give you specialist advice, guidance and support.

Contact the team at:

01223 553998

[psychology@ocr.org.uk](mailto:psychology@ocr.org.uk)

@OCR\_Psychology

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