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Introduction

These exemplar answers have been chosen from the summer 2017 examination series.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches and all answers are considered on their merits. These exemplars, therefore, should not be seen as the only way to answer questions but do illustrate how the mark scheme has been applied.

Please always refer to the specification (http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171732-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-psychology-h567.pdf) for full details of the assessment for this qualification. These exemplar answers should also be read in conjunction with the sample assessment materials and the June 2017 Examiners’ Report to Centres available on the OCR website http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/.

The question paper, mark scheme and any resource booklet(s) will be available on the OCR website from summer 2018. Until then, they are available on OCR Interchange (school exams officers will have a login for this).

It is important to note that approaches to question setting and marking will remain consistent. At the same time OCR reviews all its qualifications annually and may make small adjustments to improve the performance of its assessments. We will let you know of any substantive changes.
Question 1(a)

In Bocchiaro et al’s study on disobedience and whistleblowing, eight pilot tests were carried out before the main study:

Explain why Bocchiaro carried out these pilot tests.

High level answer – 2 marks

Q1(a) Bocchiaro carried out the pilot tests with 92 students to ensure that the when it came to carrying out the main study that it was carried out in a ethically and morally sound way in accordance with ethical guidelines. Additionally, the pilot studies were carried out to ensure that the behaviour of the Dutch experimenter was standardised so that all the participants in the study were treated by him in the same way, therefore increasing the reliability of the study.

Examiner commentary

Credit given to part of answer that explained that the tests served to standardise the experimenter-authority behaviour. This was given in context which resulted in full marks.

Medium level answer – 1 mark

Bocchiaro carried out these pilot tests to see if his research was ethical and if there was any problems conducting the study.

Examiner commentary

This is a vague answer in the context of the study. There is enough detail for 1 mark.
Question 1(b)

In Bocchiaro et al’s study into disobedience and whistleblowing a sample of 149 students were selected for the main study:

Outline one way this study may be considered ethnocentric.

High level answer – 2 marks

Q1(b) One way in which this study can be considered ethnocentric is due to the fact that all 149 undergraduate students were from the VU university in Amsterdam. It can be therefore be considered that these students were most likely from Holland and therefore an individualist culture, meaning that the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other cultures such as collectivist cultures who may behave differently in the scenario presented in the study.

Examiner commentary

Very good answer including details of the cultural location – Amsterdam – and the fact that it cannot be applied to other cultures making it ethnocentric. Both elements are present in context for 2 marks.

Low level answer – 0 marks

This study could be considered ethnocentric because it was only students that were used. The students used were from the VU university in Amsterdam.

Examiner commentary

No marks as the candidate does not show any understanding of the way the study can be considered ethnocentric.
Question 2(a)

In Levine et al’s study into cross-cultural altruism, four community variables were recorded:
Describe how two of the community variables were measured.

High level answer – 3 marks

The speed or pace of life in the 23 cities studied by Levine was one of the community variables, and it was measured by being operationalised as the speed at which people walked down the street in their respective cities. Another community variable was wealth, which was measured by using the GDP or gross domestic product of households in each of Levine’s 23 cities around the globe.

Examiner commentary

The first variable of pace of life was identified and the measurement was given in terms of walking speed. The second variable of wealth was identified but the way of measuring was not precise enough for full credit.
Examiner commentary

The candidate was unable to identify any of the community variables.
Question 2(b)

Exemplar Candidate Work

Explain how Levine et al.’s study into cross-cultural altruism informs our understanding of cultural diversity in helping behaviour.

High level answer – 3 marks

The speed or pace of life in the 23 cities studied by Levine was one of the community variables, and it was measured by being operationalised as the speed at which people walked down the street in their respective cities.

Another community variable was wealth, which was measured by using the GDP or gross domestic product of households in each of Levine’s 23 cities around the globe. [4]

Examiner commentary

The candidate explained cross cultural differences in helping behaviour and supported this with evidence of simpatia countries being more helpful to provide evidence for this.

Low level answer – 1 mark

It does this as it Levine did this study in 23 countries in densely populated cities doing the same test in each place multiple times. It shows how each country is diverse in helping behaviour. [3]

Examiner commentary

This answer shows limited understanding of cross cultural differences in helping behaviour.
Question 3(a)

In Loftus and Palmer’s study on eyewitness testimony a laboratory experiment was used. Describe why Loftus and Palmer’s study is considered a laboratory experiment.

High level answer – 2 marks

The independent variable was manipulated – verbs used in the leading questions included ‘hit’, ‘smashed’, ‘crushed’, ‘contacted’ and ‘crashed’. There were also conditions such as each participant...

Examiner commentary

A detailed answer in context which describes the key features of the laboratory experiment that is the manipulation of the independent variable and controls in place.

Medium level answer – 1 marks

The Loftus and Palmer study is considered a laboratory experiment because it was high in control... For example, the video was standardized so that all participants watched the same video twice in the same time...

Examiner commentary

The answer is given in context but only one key feature of the experimental method is identified.
Question 3(b)

Explain one weakness of using a laboratory experiment for this study.

High level answer – 2 marks

One weakness is that the study lacked ecological validity as the participants witnessed the car crash via video clips for which is unrepresentative of real-life experience as an eyewitness giving a testimony.

Examiner commentary

Weakness of the laboratory experiment is identified as having low ecological validity and this is explained in the context of the Loftus and Palmer study i.e. in terms of not being at a real car crash.

Medium level answer – 1 mark

One weakness of using a laboratory experiment for this study is that it lacked ecological validity which means that the experiment did not mirror real-life situations. This is bad because the findings cannot be generalised to other settings.

Examiner commentary

Weakness of the laboratory experiment is identified as having low ecological validity and is explained but not in the context of the Loftus and Palmer study.
Question 4(a)

Bandura et al’s study on the transmission of aggression is based on the principles of social learning theory.

Outline social learning theory.

High level answer – 3 marks

Examiner commentary

This candidate demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of social learning theory by using three key terms: observation, imitation and role models.

Medium level answer – 2 mark

Examiner commentary

The candidate shows reasonable knowledge and understanding of social learning theory by using the key terms imitation and role models. The answer lacks reference to the observation of behaviour. Although the candidate makes reference to Bandura’s study this is not required in this question.
Question 4(b)

Outline how the results of Bandura et al.’s study on the transmission of aggression support social learning theory.

High level answer – 2 marks

Examiner commentary

This is a good answer which makes several references to SLT e.g. imitating role models and does this in the context of Bandura’s study such as ‘displaying specific physical and verbal acts to the bobo doll’.

Low level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary

This is a partial answer which makes reference to aspects of Bandura’s study but not to SLT.
Question 5

Outline how Lee et al.'s study links to the developmental area in psychology.

High level answer – 2 marks

Examiner commentary
This candidate shows good application of the knowledge of the developmental area to Lee's study i.e. from the testing of moral behaviour in children of different ages -7, 9 and 11 years.

Medium level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary
This answer shows partial application to the developmental area but does not refer to the different ages of children studied by Lee.
Question 6(a)

From Sperry’s ‘split brain’ study into the psychological effects of hemisphere deconnection:
Outline one way the results may be considered valid.

High level answer – 2 marks

Examiner commentary

The candidate demonstrates good understanding of Sperry’s study having validity from the tactile tasks as participants had to have the hands under the desks to prevent the transfer of information to the other hemisphere.

Low level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary

There is basic evaluation of validity with no context from Sperry’s study.
Casey et al’s study examined behavioural and neural correlates of delay of gratification using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI):

Outline how delay of gratification is linked to regions in the brain.

High level answer – 3 marks

Examiner commentary

Good analysis and interpretation of how the two named areas of the brain link to delay of gratification.

Low level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary

Limited analysis and interpretation of how one area, the ventral striatum is involved in delay of gratification.
Question 7

Outline **one** difference between Blakemore and Cooper’s study on the impact of early visual experience and Maguire’s taxi driver study.

Medium level answer – 3 marks

One difference between Blakemore and Cooper’s and Maguire’s study is the sample used. Blakemore and Cooper used kittens from birth to the age of 1, whereas Maguire used 16 London taxi drivers and 50 participants in the comparison group. Blakemore and Cooper used animal participants, whereas Maguire used human participants. Therefore, the sample of the two studies is very different to each other.

Examiner commentary

An appropriate difference is identified and elaborated and evidence is given from the Maguire study but not from Blakemore and Cooper’s.
Low level answer – 1 mark

One difference between Blakemore and Cooper’s study and Moguilev’s study is that Blakemore and Cooper studied cats/kittens whereas Moguilev studied taxi drivers and their hippocampus. Blakemore and Cooper wanted to see what effect horizontal or vertical lines had on kittens when they were brought up in that environment. Moguilev studied what effect had long being a taxi driver has on the hippocampus.

Examiner commentary

A difference is identified but not elaborated or supported by appropriate evidence.
Question 8(a)

From Freud’s study of Little Hans:
What is meant by the term Oedipus complex?

High level answer – 2 marks

Examiner commentary

The candidate demonstrates knowledge of the 2 main features of the Oedipus complex by referring to the boy’s sexual interest in the mother and fear of the father.

Low level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary

The candidate only refers to one of the features of the Oedipus Complex and not the other so the answer gives a partial description.
Question 8(b)

Outline one piece of evidence that suggests Little Hans was experiencing the Oedipus complex.

High level answer – 2 marks

The candidate makes a clear link between an aspect of the Oedipus Complex, the boy’s fear of his father, to the description from the study of Little Hans of the white horse resembling his father.

Low level answer – 1 mark

The description from Little Hans study of his father resembling a horse is not clearly linked to a feature of the Oedipus Complex.
Question 9(a)

Outline the different positions of the ‘psychology as a science’ debate.

High level answer – 4 marks

Examiner commentary

The candidate shows good knowledge and understanding of the two different positions within the debate. They use falsifiability and replicability on the positive side to support psychology as a science and subjectivity and lack of quantitative data on the opposite side of the debate. Two features on each side are sufficient.
Low level answer – 1 mark

Examiner commentary

The candidate shows limited knowledge of one side of the debate i.e. they use deduction as a feature of psychology as a science but do not mention any other features.
Question 9(b)

Outline how one core study challenges the view that psychology can be considered a science. Support your answer with evidence from your chosen study.

High level answer – 4 marks

9b.) One study that challenges the idea that psychology can be considered to be a science is Freud’s case study on little Hans. Freud believed that all children went through psychosexual stages of development and supported his ideas through the indirect observation of little Hans’ who he believed was experiencing the Oedipus complex. Freud collected his data from little Hans father, and did not use any form of controlling the way that little Hans was observed, which is against the idea of scientific principle. Freud’s theory of psychosexual development cannot be directly tested, making it impossible to prove as correct or incorrect, which goes against the ability for research to be falsifiable. Additionally, Freud only collected descriptive qualitative data, while also relying on the personal interpretations of little Hans father. This subjective way of carrying out research goes completely against the idea of psychology being considered as a proper science.

Examiner commentary

This candidate has used the study of Little Hans to demonstrate effectively how psychology can be considered unscientific using a lack of falsifiability in this study and a lack of objective data. This has been done using clear links to the study.

Low level answer – 0 marks

Examiner commentary

There is nothing in this answer that is creditworthy. It is inappropriate to use Bandura’s study as an example of an unscientific study and the answer was not directed to that debate but the individual situational debate instead.
Discuss the extent to which psychology can be considered a science. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer.

High level answer – 15 marks

Psychology can be considered a science to some extent as research is often conducted as lab experiments that provide cause and effect relationships. This involves the manipulation of variables, leading to study cause and effect relationships. For example, Grant et al’s study into context-dependent memory in the biological area of psychology used the manipulation of conditions – matured (noisy or silent) or mismatched (noisy-silent or silent-noisy) for learning and retrieval of information from a psycho-immunology article. The manipulation of the independent variable here shows proof of the cause and effect relationship of context and memory recall. This is scientific because it allows for cause and effect relationships to be found and lab experiments allow for hypothesis testing. However, not all psychological lab experiments are scientific as some provide qualitative data such as Hancock et al’s study into the
The language of psychopathic murderers—though the method was scientific, the findings (in the form of recorded interviews) were not scientific to some extent.

Psychology may also not be scientific [15] due to the subjective nature of some of...

9(c) The research such as Freud's study of Little Hans, Freud's analysis of Hans' phobia of horses and baths along with his dreams/fantasies relative to his experience of the Oedipus complex. As Freud only used Hans in his study, the sample is extremely limited and so the findings and experience explanations for Hans are not objective/generisable therefore unscientific. However, there are many studies with very large samples such as Pilavin's study of helping behaviour in the social area of psychology where approximately 4,450 men and women from a range of races (45% black, 55% white) and backgrounds made the findings that ill victims are more likely to be helped than drunk ones more objective therefore scientific to some extent.
Psychology is also scientific to some extent as standardised measures are often used (including scientific equipment). For example, Sperry’s split brain study (in the biological area) of into the lateralisation of function consisted of high levels of control — of extraneous variables such as covering one eye to avoid the use of both hemispheres of the brain; silence so no other senses (sound) could affect the results; and only showing the images for 1/10 of a second in the visual tasks. Also, Moray used the Bremmel Mark IV stereophonic tape recorder in his study of dichotic listening in the left cognitive area of psychology. Moray also used other controls such as asking participants to state when the volume levels in each output sounded equal; repeating the short list of words (in experiment 1) 35 times; giving each participant the same ten passages (in experiment 2) as the shadow message. High levels of control make psychological research scientific to some extent because it ensures high internal reliability which can then be used to check falsification.

Psychology may also not be scientific to some extent as quantitative data self-report methods are often used. For example, Chaney et al. used questionnaires in their study into
Examiner commentary

A very good answer with a range of evaluation points both positive and negative. Each point is well developed and discussed fully in relation to the context of the question. A range of core studies are used to support the answer.
Discuss the extent to which psychology can be considered a science. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer.

Psychology can be considered a science because it collects objective data which is data that is not open to interpretation. For example in Casey’s Study into delay of gratification. Scientific equipment was used to deliver objective results. In experiment 1, participants completed a list version of the no-go task made an fMRI scanner to measure brain activity in the frontal and right inferior frontal cortex. This gave an image which clearly showed the level of different-brain activity with no possible interpretations. This meant that the replication of Psychology as a Science increases as the principles were followed.

Psychology is also scientific because if it is replicable, meaning the procedure of research is standardised, it could be replicated again to achieve the same results. For example in Lashley and colleagues’ lab experiment was very standardised in that in experiment 1 all participants watched the same 7 film clips of a car crash and then were asked the same 89 critical questions about how fast were you going when they? (A question red for condition 1). In experiment 2, they all watched the same clip of a 4 second multi-car crash then were asked the 69 question about Speed and another critical question on if they saw broken glass. Yes/No. This means if a theory wanted to replicate the study, it could be done in exactly the same way to check for external reliability.

Psychology can be considered unscientific when non-quantifiable
Examiner commentary

This answer falls in the upper mid band as there are two very well made points in support of psychology as a science which are related to the context of the question and supported by appropriate core studies. The points against psychology as a science are discussed in relation to the context of the question but the points are less well developed.
Question 9(d)

Compare the biological area to the behaviourist perspective. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer.

Low level answer – 2 marks

A strength of the biological area perspective is that it only focuses on the brain and genetics, whereas the behaviourist perspective focuses on the environment. A core study that relates to the biological area is Sprung et al., who only looked on the brains of 11 participants, whereas a core study from the behaviourist perspective such as Bandura focused on both genetics and the environment. Bandura wanted to investigate to what extent does a role model influence a child. They did this by using aggressive and non-aggressive conditions and found that children who had the same sex model were more influenced on the behavior they showed. The results showed that boys were more physically aggressive than girls because of the behavior that was shown to them by the role model.

Examiner commentary

This is a weak answer as only one poorly made comparison point is made and for an 8 mark question two comparison points should be given. There is really only one piece of supporting evidence given from the behavioural perspective as the example from the biological area is mentioned but not described.
Question 9(e)

Describe how the biological area is reductionist. Support your answer with evidence from one appropriate core study.

Medium level answer – 3 marks

Q9e) The biological area refers to how all behaviour has a physiological origin and all thoughts, feelings and behaviours have a biological basis. These behaviours are also displayed through genetics but the way that these genetics are demonstrated can be influenced by the environment someone has grown up in or is exposed to. Reductionism refers to how behaviour is broken down into its constituent parts and behaviour is defined as being down to a single factor such as genes. One study from the biological area of psychology which can be considered to be reductionist is through Casey’s longitudinal study into delayed gratification. In this study Casey outlined how the high delayers can increased activity shown in their right inferior pre-frontal cortex compared to low delayers and this was in part the reason why they were high delayers. However, Casey does not take into consideration other factors which may have impacted whether or not a participant was a high or low delayer such as how they were raised as children to respond to gratification or the environment in which they grew up in. Instead, Casey focussed on solely biological factors which explained why people where either high or low delayers, making this study reductionist.

Examiner commentary

There is an explicit description of how Casey’s study is located in the biological area and how this is reductionist. For 4 marks the candidate needs to show a good knowledge and understanding of reductionism and this candidate falls short.
Low/Medium level answer – 2 marks

The biological area is reductionist as it ignores the other factors that may be influencing our behaviour, such as culture and education. It reduces us down to only a product of our biology and nothing more. An example is the split brains, who only looked at the influence of our neurophysiology on our behaviour in this case whether or not someone was epileptic and had hemispheric deconnection.

Examiner commentary

The candidate has shown good knowledge and understanding of reductionism but has not been able to provide supporting evidence from Sperry’s study to show how this study is reductionist.
Question 10(a)

Outline one possible reason why it was necessary to divide the students into a superior and inferior group to test for discrimination in this study. Justify your answer in relation to the source.

Low level answer – 1 marks

A psychology teacher splits her class of 20 students into two groups based on the colour of their eyes to test if this would lead to one group discriminating against the other. The blue-eyed group are told they are the superior group; they are her best students. The blue-eyed students are given extra support from the teacher and always praised for their behaviour. The brown-eyed children are set the same tasks in lessons, but are expected to work in silence without support. When a brown-eyed student asks for support with the lesson activity, the teacher points out that no blue-eyed children have asked for support; she says openly to the class “Not following instructions and low intelligence are clearly traits of brown-eyed students”. In response to this the blue-eyed students laughed.

During the study, the brown-eyed students became withdrawn, angry and the quality of their work declined. The blue-eyed children exceeded their predicted grades. The blue-eyed children went along with the situation even though they knew it was wrong. A brown-eyed student forgot their pencil case and one blue-eyed student remarked “that’s the sort of thing a brown-eyed student would do.”

10 (a) Outline one possible reason why it was necessary to divide the students into a superior and inferior group to test for discrimination in this study. Justify your answer in relation to the source.

This was to show how when someone is labelled as superior they believe they are better than the other group and are ‘best students’ when in fact they are the same but have lived up to their label.

Examiner commentary

Limited understanding of a reason for dividing the students into a superior and inferior group which is poorly expressed. There is no mention of creating distinct groups, to find out about discrimination or any clear context.
Question 10(b)

Outline one possible reason why it was necessary to divide the students into a superior and inferior group to test for discrimination in this study. Justify your answer in relation to the source.

High level answer – 3 marks

One possible reason could be... The students were in a situation where they were receiving more help, given care, support, and always recorded for their work, praised for their behaviour. In this situation, students could be more motivated and would learn more.

Examiner commentary

There is good knowledge and understanding of how teacher praise can increase the motivation of students to do well and this is answered in context.

Medium level answer – 2 marks

The blue-eyed students 'exceeded their predicted grades' because they wanted to do well. This is because they are told they are the 'superior group' and want to live up and work hard to the expectations of being the 'best students'.

Examiner commentary

There is reasonable knowledge and understanding of how teacher praise can increase the motivation of students to do well and this is answered in context but the answer lacks clarity.
Question 10(c)

Explain two ways the study in the source was not ethically considerate. Justify your answer in relation to the source.

High level answer – 6 marks

Examiner commentary
This answer gives two ways that the study in the source is not ethically considerate. They are both identified, i.e. protection and informed consent, they are elaborated and justified in the context of evidence from the source.
Medium level answer – 4 marks

Examiner commentary

This answer gives two ways that the study in the source is not ethically considerate. They are both identified, i.e., protection and informed consent; they are not clearly elaborated but are justified in the context of evidence from the source.
Question 10(d)

Outline one reason the blue-eyed children ‘went along with the situation even though they knew it was wrong’ Support your answer with evidence from the source.

High level answer – 3 marks

Examiner commentary

Good understanding and knowledge of why the teacher, acting as an authority figure was able to influence the children to go along with the situation. The answer is given in context.
Question 10(e)

Explain how the source is relevant to the social area of psychology. Support your answer with evidence from the source.

High level answer – 4 marks

It is relevant as it shows that our behaviour is influenced by our surroundings of others even if they are not in the presence of them. This is shown as a blue-eyed student said ‘that’s the sort of thing a brown-eyed would do even without the presence of the teacher.’

Examiner commentary

Good answer with good interpretation of the social area and explicit, accurate application to the source. The answer shows good understanding of how the source links to the social area in context.
Question 10(f)

Describe two changes you could make to the experiment detailed in the source material.

High level answer – 6 marks

Two clear changes described and details of how these changes could be carried out are given in the context of the source (3+3 marks).

Examiner commentary

Two clear changes described and details of how these changes could be carried out are given in the context of the source (3+3 marks).
Low level answer – 3 marks

I would first brief the students and explain what is going to happen. This would allow them to properly give informed consent so that they will not be going into something un-aware of what it really is. I would make sure in the brief that they knew not all studies are like this so they don’t lose faith in psychology. The second change would be to make sure they had a clear right to withdraw, so if the emotional stress and harm was too much, they could stop. This means they should feel more comfortable taking part and not feel bad about joining in more psychology studies in the future.

Examiner commentary

The first change suggested is muddled and not given any credit (0 marks) but the second change – right to withdraw is identified, detailed and an explanation of how the change could take place is given in the context of the source. (0 +3 marks).
Question 10(g)

Describe **two** changes you could make to the experiment detailed in the source material.

High level answer – 9 marks

Examiner commentary

This answer is in the top mark band as there is a good discussion which is coherently presented with a clear understanding of the points raised. The candidate has discussed both of the suggested changes and has made reference to their suggestions i.e. informed consent and protection. A range of both positive and negative implications are considered.
Medium level answer – 5 marks

Examiner commentary

This response addresses both of the suggested changes with both positive and negative implications being considered. However, the candidate has provided limited evidence form the suggestions in 10f and the discussion is limited.
Low level answer – 3 marks

Examiner commentary

This response is in the bottom band as there is little reference to the source or the context of the suggestions made in 10f. The candidate has made little use of psychological terminology and the discussion is basic.
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