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# A LEVEL

*Examiners' report*

# PSYCHOLOGY

**H567**
For first teaching in 2015

# H567/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

# Contents

# Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

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# Paper 2 series overview

H567/02 is one of three A Level units. It assesses candidates' knowledge and understanding of up to twenty core studies which represent a range of areas of psychology as well as classic and contemporary research. Candidates can be asked to describe details of these studies, as well as evaluate, analyse and compare them. Understanding of core studies is also assessed in relation to psychological themes although these themes can also be assessed in isolation or in relation to a larger body of research. Candidates are also required to apply what can be learnt from different studies, areas and perspectives and this includes dealing with a novel source of information. Finally, candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and the ability to evaluate, the psychological areas and perspectives listed in the specification.

To do well on this paper, candidates need to have an accurate and detailed knowledge of all the core studies, including understanding background, procedure, findings and conclusions. They also need a sound understanding of the different areas and perspectives in psychology and how these relate to the core studies. In addition, there a number of themes that run through this paper that need to be related to both studies and areas. The ability to apply knowledge and understanding to novel sources is also important for success. Lastly, candidates' evaluation skills need to be evident and to be effective to achieve the higher marks on this paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper were able to demonstrate the range of psychological skills assessed through this A Level. Candidates who did less well often showed limited knowledge of key ideas and found application of understanding a challenge. Their attempts to evaluate sometimes lacked focus or were limited in terms of depth.

| *Most successful topic/question/set texts* | *Least successful topic/question/set texts* |
|---|---|
| More successful candidates were able to compare different studies where required, and to deal with issues such as reliability and validity in relation to core studies. They also evaluated to good effect, especially in terms of discussing areas, perspectives and debates. Finally, more successful responses were able to use and interpret the novel source and to demonstrate strong skills of application. | Candidates who did less well on this paper tended to rely too much on describing studies, even where this was not a requirement of the question. Their suggestions for ways of improving the lives of individuals with autism were often basic and did not go much beyond common sense and the evaluation of these suggestions tended to be limited too. |

# Section A overview

This section is designed to focus on the core studies alone with questions that assess basic knowledge at one of the scale and deeper analysis of research issues at the other end. Candidates demonstrated sound knowledge of most studies but needed to be better prepared to outline the background of a study.

## Question 1

**SECTION A – Core studies**

1   Explain how the findings from Milgram's study relate to the key theme of responses to people in authority.

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Most candidates were able to earn two marks here – normally for referring to obedience or a similar concept and by outlining how obedience was measured in the study. Fewer candidates made the explicit link between the experimenter and authority figure which was what was needed for the third mark.

## Question 2 (a)

2   Piliavin et al. carried out a study into responses to people in need.

(a)   Identify **two** materials used in this study.

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Most candidates were able to identify two appropriate materials and earn both marks.

| ? | **Misconception** | A significant number of candidates offered people as examples of materials. It is therefore important that all candidates are familiar with this potentially straightforward concept. |
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# Question 2 (b) (i) and (ii)

**(b)** Give **two** ways in which this study may be considered ethnocentric.

   **(i)** ..................................................................................................................................................

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  **(ii)** ..................................................................................................................................................

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Most candidates recognised that carrying out the study in one city or one country made it ethnocentric. There were some good responses among candidates who earned both marks – for example identifying the cultural assumptions present in the way the experiment was set up, or the fact the confederates were not representative of all ethnic groups.

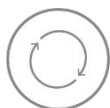| | **AfL** | It is important that candidates have a broad understanding of the concept of ethnocentrism and recognise that it applies to more than just the sample of participants used in a study. |
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# Question 2 (c)

**(c)** Compare Piliavin et al.'s study with Levine et al.'s study into responses to people in need by suggesting **either** one difference **or** one similarity between them.

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Candidates answered this question well with most identifying a valid similarity or difference which they were then able to apply to the studies concerned, often with clarity and accuracy. More candidates needed to expand on this similarity/difference for the fourth mark.

| | **AfL** | In questions where candidates are required to compare studies, their point of comparison needs to be one that can be explained further for the top marks. It is therefore useful to get candidates to think through their possible responses and choose one that allows them to do this. |
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# Question 3 (a)

3   (a)   Outline **one** strength of the type of data collected in Moray's study into attention.

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Most candidates focused on quantitative data and were able to give an appropriate strength with ease of analysis being a popular response. Candidates found it more of a challenge to apply their stated strength to the Moray study. Many just quoted findings from the study which did not help to illustrate the strength.

# Question 3 (b)

   (b)   Using Simons & Chabris' study into attention, explain **one** way in which the procedure would have increased the reliability of the research.

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Most candidates recognised this as a cue to write about standardisation, and many were able to give accurate examples of how Simon & Chabris used standardisation in their study although some did refer to features of the study that changed rather than stayed the same. A few candidates could articulate how standardisation increases reliability, e.g. through making replication easier. It was this third mark that some candidates found it difficult to access.

## Question 4

4    Explain **one** way in which Bandura et al.'s study into aggression can be considered unethical.
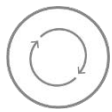
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Nearly all candidates scored marks on this question by identifying a relevant ethical issue that they could then apply to Bandura et al.'s study. There was variability in how well this was explained in the context of the study which distinguished between 2 and 3 mark responses.

| | **AfL** | This question sometimes resulted in candidates offering more than one ethical issue. It is important that candidates understand that when asked for one thing only this is all that can be credited and that this will also be their first response only. |
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## Question 5

5    Discuss to what extent Lee et al.'s contemporary study in developmental psychology changes our understanding of moral development when compared to Kohlberg's study from 1968.

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There were some high scoring responses to this challenging question which had a clear focus on the idea of changing understanding (or not, if that is what the candidate wanted to argue). The most successful responses tended to focus on Kohlberg's idea of universal stages of development and how these were challenged by Lee et al.'s discovery of cross-cultural variations. Less successful responses tended to describe the two studies without making explicit the evidence for changed understanding.

## Exemplar 1

Kohlberg's study had found that moral reasoning [development] was universal as there was no difference in the stages that [of moral development] [other] [children] [are] each child was at even when comparing children from Taiwan and Malaysia, both children displayed the moral [for the philosophical dilemma they were proposed (Hans man stole to feed his] [wife)] reasoning Kohlberg expected of a child during the stage 2 which was self-interest. The only difference was that rather than worrying about the man having to pay funeral costs the Taiwanese children explained into the same moral act by saying the man would have noone to [cook] pay for him. In contrast, Lee's cross-cultural study of 120 Chinese and 108 Canadian [5] children showed differences in the actual moral beliefs between cultures. For example Chinese children began to rate lie telling in prosocial situations increasingly positively with age (-0.06 at 7 yrs old and ?? 0.98 at 11 yrs old whereas even at 11 year old Canadian children rated lie telling negatively at -1.00. This displays the differences in the western moral values of lie telling being wrong in all situations and truth telling being positive the Chinese moral value of being an 'unsung' hero!

This response is not only accurate and detailed, but more importantly explicitly and clearly deals with the issue of changes in understanding as demanded by the question.

# Question 6

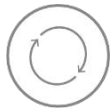6    Describe how **one** of the core studies relates to the biological area.

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Nearly all candidates selected an appropriate study to describe here and this was with varying degrees of detail and accuracy. One of the four marks was for making the link with a principle or concept of the biological area and most candidates were able to do this.

| | **AfL** | Some candidates identified a principle or concept of the biological area that did not relate to the chosen study or how the study was described. It would be useful for candidates to understand how each core study relates to its relevant area but in a way that makes links with specific principles and concepts of the area. |
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# Question 7 (a)

7    (a)  Describe the background to Gould's study into intelligence testing.

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Most candidates scored some marks for relevant knowledge of the background to Gould's study. Some marks were limited by the fact that findings were included as part of the background.

## Question 7 (b)

**(b)** Explain **one** way in which Hancock et al.'s study into the language of psychopaths may lack validity.

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Nearly all candidates were able to identify a relevant issue relating to validity and, in many cases, this was explicitly named. The issue was often successfully illustrated through appropriate reference to features of the study. The third mark was earned by some candidates and it was those that were able to explain the consequence of a lack of validity on the outcomes of the study.

# Section B overview

Section B – Areas, perspectives and debates

This section focused on two main areas this series – the cognitive approach and the psychodynamic perspective. Candidates demonstrated good understanding of both. The final question was open and invited candidates to include studies from a range of areas and perspectives. Some candidates included studies in every, or most, responses even though marks were not necessarily given in all cases.

## Question 8 (a)

**SECTION B – Areas, perspectives and debates**

8    (a)   Outline the defining principles and concepts of the cognitive area.

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Candidates could earn full marks either through responding through breadth or through depth. The issue for a number of candidates is that they did not offer enough principles or concepts to earn the marks available, or they knew some but couldn't explain them fully enough for full marks.

## Question 8 (b)

(b)   Describe **one** application of the principles and concepts of the cognitive area.

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The vast majority of candidates knew what was meant by an application, and references to eyewitness testimony or use of memory techniques in the classroom were common here. Many candidates could explain their chosen application to some degree with a minority going into enough detail to earn all four marks.

# Question 8 (c)

(c) Compare the cognitive area and the psychodynamic perspective in terms of strengths and weaknesses.

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Many candidates were able to identify relevant strengths and weaknesses of both areas, with some candidates explaining these and demonstrating good insight. For higher marks, there needed to be some level of comparison and this was evident in a lot of candidates' responses – for example, by comparing the two areas on their scientific value.

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| ? | **Misconception** | Some candidates assumed they needed to include core studies in their response to this question, but this was not a requirement. In fact, it rarely added to their response when they did. Candidates need to be careful to read what the question is actually asking for rather than making assumptions based on previous questions they may have encountered. |
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## Exemplar 2

A strength of the cognitive area and the psychodynamic perspective is that both areas ~~practice~~ can be considered useful. The cognitive area can be considered useful as it enhances our knowledge in terms of information processing and the impact of observation on memory. This is a strength because by enhancing our knowledge we can develop practical applications in relation to the impact on memory such as noise, it may be better to learn and recall something in silent than noise. The psychodynamic area can be considered useful as it explains a cause of behaviour being due to develop-ment and the unconscious mind of the id, ego and superego. This enhances our knowlege as we know that behaviour is an impact of factors out of our control. Both areas are useful as they enhance our knowledge and allow us to develop practical applications which benefits the reputation of psychology.

A weakness of the cognitive area and the psychodynamic area is that both areas are [continued on additional paper] [8]

considered to be reductionist. This is when only one aspect is taken into consideration and other causes are ignored. The cognitive area suggests that behaviour is a result of observation and information processing being reductionist as it doesn't identify the cause of it being due biological factors such as the brain or social factors such as the environ-ment. Similarly the psychodynamic area is considered to also be reductionist as it suggests that behaviour is a result of

the unconscious mind, so we have not control over it, however it ignores biological causes of behaviour such as genes. This is a weakness of both areas as they reduce that the cause of behaviour being a social factor or biological factor. A strength of the cognitive area is that it can also be studied more easily and can be high in reliability as the method of testing can be repeated and replicable results can be found as it's testable and can establish an IV and a DV. However a weakness of the psychodynamic area is that it can be hard to study as every individual is unique and behaviour changes through experiences. This makes it difficult to test and observe behaviour and the method of testing maybe difficult to apply to every different individual reducing the reliability of the psychodynamic area.

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This response has a good focus on the question. Both areas are considered in detail, and both strengths and weaknesses are considered. The candidate has also structured the responses to demonstrate their ability to compare the two areas.

# Question 8 (d)

**(d)** Describe how research supporting the psychodynamic perspective can be seen as socially sensitive.

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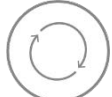
Most candidates demonstrated some knowledge of what is meant by socially sensitive research. There was some muddling with research which is unethical, and this did not gain any marks. Some candidates did make links between relevant research and social sensitivity despite this being challenging. Those that used Freud's case studies found it easiest to access these additional marks.

# Question 8 (e)

**(e)\*** Discuss the reductionism/holism debate in psychology. Use examples from appropriate research to support your answer.                                                   **[15]**

Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of the debate both explicitly and implicitly. Candidates were also effective at selecting and outlining research studies that could be used to illustrate both sides of the debate. Sometimes, candidates relied on this skill too much and covered more studies than was necessary rather than taking time to discuss the actual debate itself. The strongest responses included an analysis of the debate by looking at the strengths and limitations of taking a reductionist approach as opposed to a holistic approach and vice versa.

| ? | **Misconception** | Some candidates seemed to think that the reductionist/holism debate could be discussed in relation to sample size i.e. a small sample made a study reductionist whereas a large sample made it holistic. |
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| ⟳ | **AfL** | Candidates are increasingly better at applying reductionist ideas correctly to areas and studies but some still need to understand that a theory is not simply reductionist because it ignores other theories or explanations. If candidates reflect on what holism represents – recognising the interaction of multiple factors rather than accepting many or all theories - then they should be able to make sense of what reductionism represents. |
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# Section C overview

This section used a web-based source which included a number of quotes. Some candidates were able to make effective use of the source to score high marks on the questions that followed. At the other end of the scale, some candidates relied too much on existing knowledge rather than applying what they knew to the information they were given.

## Question 9 (a) (i) and (ii)

**SECTION C – Practical applications**

9   (a)   Describe **two** features of the area of individual differences **and** briefly explain how they apply to this article.

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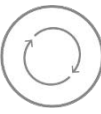
[6]

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Most candidates were able to identify one relevant feature, and some could identify two. There was a tendency for candidates to offer two features which were too similar to receive separate credit. Better responses outlined the chosen features further and made a clear link between the feature and the article. However, it was rare for candidates to score full marks on this question.

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| | **AfL** | When responding to this kind of question, candidates need to get in the habit of starting with the source to decide how the content can be related to what they know already. With this year's question, it appeared that candidates were first identifying a feature of the individual differences area and then trying to find information from within the source to illustrate – this wasn't always a successful strategy. |
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## Question 9 (b)

**(b)** Outline what is meant by a case study **and** briefly explain how this method could apply to the article.

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Many candidates were able to earn the two marks available for outlining the features of a case study. There was more variability in candidates' ability to apply their knowledge to the article. Good responses focused on the small number of children referenced in the article and then suggested a focus for an investigation of these children that would provide rich and detailed data.

## Question 9 (c)

**(c)** Describe Baron-Cohen et al.'s study into autism **and** briefly explain how its findings relate to the article.

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Candidates generally demonstrated sound knowledge of Baron-Cohen et al.'s study with many scoring most or all of the five marks available for a description of it. Most candidates were able to make a simple link to the article – usually by explaining that children with autism may find it hard to socialise because of a lack of theory of mind. Some candidates did earn full marks by further explaining the link between the study and the article.

# Question 9 (d)

**(d)** Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest ways in which the lives of individuals with autism could be improved.

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This question elicited a variety of responses. Most candidates focused on two suggestions which was enough if done well. The best responses had a clear psychological basis to their ideas which included reference to key terminology and concepts. There was also an obvious focus on how these ideas would improve the lives of individuals with autism whereas in other responses this was only implied.

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# Question 9 (e)

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

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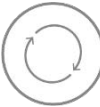
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As with Question 9(d), there was real variability in the quality of response. In general, those candidates who scored well in the previous question also tended to do well on this one. Strong evaluation was characterised by a balanced approach which considered all suggestions in some depth and where the discussion was around key themes and debates in psychology rather than just looking at the pragmatics of implementing a particular idea.

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| | **AfL** | Candidates are still tending to evaluate any suggestions they make for an idea or initiative based on issues such as time and cost. To score well, candidates need to learn to go beyond this and consider bigger issues centred around the debates and other themes. Candidates should not worry about the validity of the suggestions that they make in Question 9 (d) as a weak or limited idea is easier to evaluate. |
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## Exemplar 3

This could be done using social learning theory. For example, parents of children with autism are a role model, so they should allow their child to observe them socialising with other people. This observation of a role model makes the autistic child likely to imitate the behaviour, meaning that they will learn how to act in social situations. Therefore, behaviourism will be useful in improving the lives of individuals with autism. In addition, operant positive reinforcement could be used to improve lives of autistic people. For example, when an individual with autism interacts with someone in a socially correct way, they could be rewarded with a small gift, like chocolate. This will encourage this social interaction to continue because the individual [8]

will keep wanting to receive the reward. Therefore, operant conditioning will work in the form of a token economy to improve the lives of individuals with autism.

This response shows good psychological knowledge as well as outlining feasible strategies.

## Exemplar 4

Using social learning theory to require improve lives is very deterministic. SLT assumes that all behaviour is influenced by learning, thus removing the element of choice for the individuals. This means that the persons ability to make their own choice (free-will) is ignored when seeing how people with ASD socialise.

However, SLT is scientific as Bandura studied the impacts of this in a controlled observation of the aggression of 72 children with a bobo doll. This means that SLT is a reliable as belief for the cause of behaviour, so is very likely to be effective in improving the lives of people with autism.

Operant conditioning ignores the individual differences of each person with with autism. For example, one person may be able to resist the temptation of a reward more than another person. Therefore, using operant conditioning may not be effective in improving the lives of every person with autism.

Alternatively, operant conditioning supports the nurture side of the nature - nurture debate. This [10]

means that behaviour is due to a person's

environmental influences, so believes that people with autism are able to change. Therefore, lives of people with autism are a result of environmental factors, which can be successfully altered using operant conditioning.

The evaluation in this response goes beyond the basics and begins to explore psychological themes and concepts.

| ? | **Misconception** | Some candidates believe that writing about the rationale behind an initiative or idea or explaining its potential impact counts as evaluation. If anything, this type of content is better included in Question 9 (d) as it really counts as further description. |

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