

**A LEVEL**

Student guide

# PSYCHOLOGY

**H167, H567**

For first teaching in 2015

**Guide to assessment – Component 2**  
**Psychological themes through core studies**

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# Introduction

The purpose of this resource is to be a student friendly guide explaining assessment of Component 2 (Paper 2) H567/02 in A Level Psychology where everything can be found all in one location for ease of accessibility.

Please note, the material found in this document has been produced by combining information from INSET courses, candidate style answers and other materials already available.

Material from all INSETs can be freely [downloaded](#).

Students will be examined on three written papers with an opportunity to choose optional topic areas in Component 3/ Paper 3. There are a mix of short answer questions, use of sources and extended essay style answers and multiple-choice questions across A Level Psychology.

**This guide will focus on the questions and the style of answers for Paper 2 only.**



# Question paper: Content, structure and how to approach

H567/02 or Component 2 (as it is often referred to) is split into three sections: Section A, B and C.

Component 2 covers several key areas of psychology, together with a knowledge and understanding of research methods. In addition, there are the debates and issues that consider the impact psychology will have on our understanding of human behaviour.

Section A assesses knowledge and understanding of the core studies and the theme of psychology they illustrate, together with the evaluation of them in terms of their research methodology.

Section B assesses the issues and debates in psychology. These will also be related to the core studies.

Finally, as psychology is something that explains human behaviour, there are practical applications of our psychological knowledge, and this use and application of psychology is assessed in Section C. Again, this will reflect the knowledge and understanding gained from the core studies.

## Assessment objectives

The three skills of: knowledge and understanding; application of psychological knowledge and evaluation or analysis, are the basis for the questions, and the content and structure of high mark answers.

These skills are known throughout all A Levels as Assessment Objectives, and when questions papers are set the proportion of these skills will be very similar each year.

Assessment Objective	
<b>AO1</b>	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.
<b>AO2</b>	Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in a theoretical context</li> <li>• in a practical context</li> <li>• when handling qualitative data</li> <li>• when handling quantitative data.</li> </ul>
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make judgements and reach conclusions</li> <li>• develop and refine practical design and procedures .</li> </ul>

For Component 2 the percentage of each assessment objective in the exam paper is approximately

**AO1 40%      AO2 15%      AO3 45%**

You can see that there are many marks for knowledge and understanding of the studies and even more for the evaluation of the studies, ideas and including making judgements and evaluating. The fewest number of marks are available for the applying your knowledge to practical or theoretical contexts.



## Timing and approach

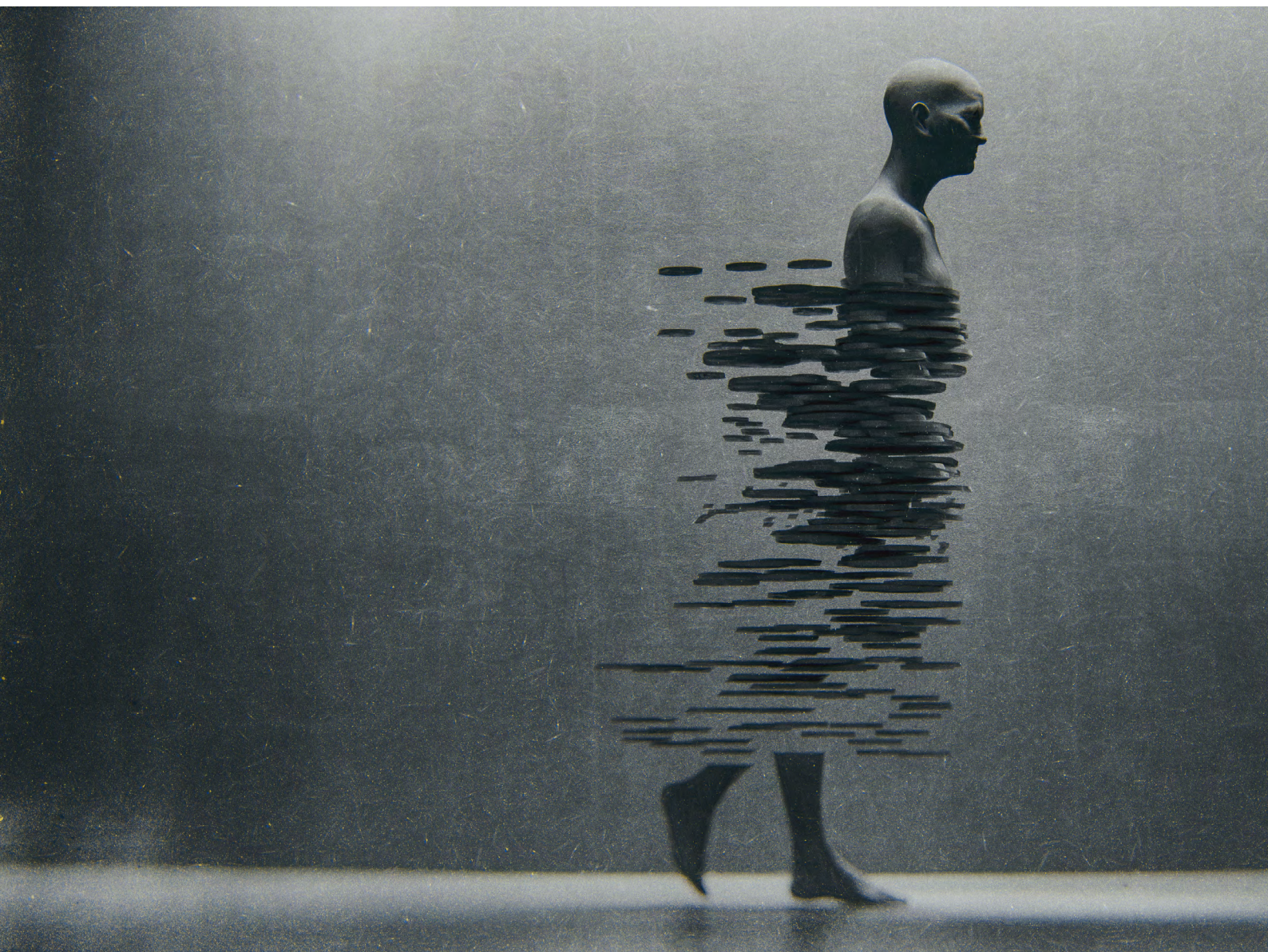
Using past papers will help you get familiar with the style of questions. You can use the AS and A Level papers, whichever exam you are taking. The questions will be assessing the same skills, but you will find the AS questions may be worth fewer marks. For example the essay may be worth 12 instead of 15 marks. This would imply you could answer with fewer evaluation points, but the structure will still be the same.

Evaluation in the AS paper could cover anything on the specification but will often require less elaboration or higher level analysis skills. Again this will be reflected in the marks available for the question. If you are using the AS paper to prepare for an A Level exam, make sure you consider how you would answer the question if it was asked in an A Level exam.



### Top tip

Always answer the question using a structure which will help you to gain maximum marks. Don't try to guess what should or shouldn't be in the answer, and always contextualise your answer in the appropriate core study.





## Section A: Core studies

This section is designed to focus on the core studies alone, with questions that assess basic knowledge at one end of the scale and deeper analysis of research issues at the other end

These questions will often be worth few marks each, but there are about 15-20 of them. Some will be linked and some will be stand alone, but they will relate to the core studies. Sometimes knowledge and understanding, sometimes evaluation and sometimes applying to issues or debates are the skills being assessed.

### Questions worth 1-2 marks

These will mostly be asking for your knowledge of the core studies, with maybe some understanding of different aspects.

For example, they might ask you to identify two features of a sample, or one control used in a study.

For 1 mark you will have to identify one feature of the core study but if the questions asks about one feature for two marks, then you will need to elaborate.

For example 'Identify the sampling technique used in Milgram's study' for 1 mark would need the answer, self-selected.

However for a question asking, 'Outline the sampling technique in Milgram's study' for 2 marks, you would need to identify the technique plus some more information such as 'Self-selected from males who read the New Haven Register newspaper'.

### Exemplar questions and responses

#### June 2019 Paper - Question 2(a)

This question asks you to identify two things: for 2 marks so all you need to do is name two materials. This is definitely an AO1 question, assessing knowledge.

#### Exemplar 1

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

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

A liquor bottle wrapped tightly in brown paper in the 'drunk' condition and a black cane was used in the 'ill' condition! [2]

#### Examiner commentary

Two clear materials have been identified here so therefore both available marks have been awarded.

But the question then goes on to ask:

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

Now you have to have an understanding of ethnocentrism and the study, but it is still only assessing knowledge and understanding. It isn't asking you to make a judgement about anything or apply to a practical situation.

Here are two responses: Exemplar 2 got 2 marks for showing the understanding of ethnocentrism Exemplar 3 only got 1 mark because it did not show full understanding of the how the study is ethnocentric and the two points made were very similar to each other.

### Exemplar 2

- (i) One way Piliavin is ethnocentric is that the study only took place in New York, ~~there~~..... [1]
- (ii) Another way Piliavin is ethnocentric is that the researchers only used one black confederate in the study..... [1]

### Examiner commentary

A mark given for each. This candidate has a broader understanding of ethnocentrism, as illustrated in their second point that the confederates were not representative of all ethnic groups.

### Exemplar 3

- (i) It was only conducted in America so can only be generalised to the western population..... [1]
- (ii) Also only done in New York so only represents a certain city with a specific type of society..... [1]

### Examiner commentary

One mark awarded for (i) as this candidate has recognised that the study was only conducted in America. Their second point (ii) is too similar to the first and suggests a limited understanding of ethnocentrism overall. As mentioned in the examiners' report, most candidates were able to recognise that carrying out a study in one city or country made it ethnocentric.

However, you could be asked to identify something in the context of the core study, which would mean you have to make sure there is some detail in your answer which relates to the study.

## June 2018 Paper - Question 1(b)

Here is a question from June 2018 about Freud's study of Little Hans.

**(b)** From Freud's study of Little Hans:

Explain why the study can be considered a longitudinal study.

### Exemplar 4

Little Hans was involved in a case study from the age of 3 until 5 years old. His father recorded his behaviour frequently and he met Freud twice, meaning the study occurred over a longer period of time. [2]  
The results occurred at several ages.

### Examiner commentary

*The candidate makes a clear statement to demonstrate knowledge of longitudinal studies and precedes this with accurate information from the study to illustrate the method.*

*The candidate has identified what the case study is (over a longer period of time) and then contextualised it with information about Little Hans such as it was from age 3-5 years.*

When you contextualise a study, you must use information that means it could only apply to that one core study. So, if the answer had been, 'A case study takes place over a long period of time, such as for two years', this doesn't give the context of Freud and wouldn't have gained the context mark.



### Top tip

Don't worry about trying to guess whether or not you should be adding study context. ALWAYS contextualise EVERY answer.



## Questions worth 3-6 marks

There are many ways in which questions worth 3 marks can be written.

Most often it will ask you to:

- identify something
- show understanding
- and then contextualise your answer.

## Exemplar questions and responses

### June 2018 Paper – Question 6(a)

6 (a) From Moray's study into auditory attention:

Describe the research method used in Experiment 2.

This question asks you to identify two things: for 2 marks so all you need to do is name two materials. This is definitely an AO1 question, assessing knowledge.

#### Exemplar 1

Experiment 2 was a lab study in a repeated measures design. Participants completed 6 trials of this, 3 in which your name was used and 3 without. The experimenter had told the participants to try and make as few mistakes as possible throughout the tasks. They were told to follow instructions in one ear whilst recalling information in [3] another.

#### Examiner commentary

*Marks for the location of experiment, experimental design and IV.*

This answer clearly describes (not just identifies) what a lab experiment is (it has IV and DV) but also relates it clearly to Moray's research. So, 1 mark for correct identification, 1 mark for showing understanding of what a lab experiment is, and 1 mark for context. A good format for a 3 mark answer to this type of question.

However, the two answers below miss out key information needed for 3 marks:

## Exemplar 2

The research method used in experiment 2 was a controlled lab experiment whereby they sat down with headphones on and listened to sounds being played simultaneously into each ear

### Examiner commentary

One mark for the location of the experiment.

Elaborating by saying 'a controlled lab experiment' doesn't show any understanding of a lab experiment. The context isn't detailed or specific enough to gain credit.

## Exemplar 3

The research method used in experiment 2 was a lab experiment using ~~using~~ independent measures design. Ppts had to wear headphones and listen to a prose in the attended ear and words in the unattended. They had to complete a test for the words recalled, meaning self-report as questionnaire was also used. [3]

### Examiner commentary

One mark for the location of the experiment and 1 mark for the experimental design.

## June 2018 Paper – Question 6(b)

(b) From Simon and Chabris's study into visual attention:

Outline the 'gorilla condition'.

This is a similar style question which requires context of the study for Simon and Chabris and outlining the gorilla condition. It is still a 3 mark question.

### Exemplar 4

The 'gorilla condition' consisted of a woman dressed in a costume walking across the teams in the video ~~either in an opaque or transparent setting~~. Groups consisted of two teams of three either black or white coloured t-shirt teams ranging from a hard condition (Cuenca) or an easy condition (beane passes). The gorilla was smaller than the other umbrella condition and did not interact <sup>with the participants</sup>. [3]

### Examiner commentary

A clear and accurate response which includes the use of teams, the appearance of the gorilla, and the fact that it did not interact with the players.

This response gained 3 marks.

Other 3 mark questions could be asking about a strength or weakness. Sometimes the question will be for one of each and will be worth 6 marks, so break it down into 3 marks, using the Identify (Point), Elaborate, Context format. Now the question will be assessing the AO3 skill of evaluation and analysis, making a judgement.

## June 2019 Paper – Question 4

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

This question in June 2019 you are given the weakness to use, the ethical weakness of the core study by Bandura. You could be asked for any weakness of a study and chose to consider how it is unethical. The format for the answer is the same.

## Exemplar 5

Bandura's study can be seen to be unethical (immoral) as it may cause psychological harm to children (who are especially vulnerable) this is because children are exposed to a model behaving aggressively, punching and hammering a Bobo doll and shouting 'sock' and 'pork' this may frighten children causing them further harm. Also, as children may then think it is right to display aggression, they may have imitated this aggression themselves. Teaching children aggressive traits could also be seen as unethical. [3]

### Examiner commentary

One mark given for the identification of an ethical issue (psychological harm). Second and third mark given for explaining this issue in the context of the study. This candidate has given a specific example of what happened within the study and has further expanded this to suggest that this may have frightened the children.

## June 2019 Paper – 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.

There are many topics that 3 mark questions can cover. Here is one on reliability from June 2019:

## Exemplar 6

The procedure was standardised so all participants were given the same instructions, time limits and video type which means the study would be replicable in future externally and could see if it produced consistent results. [3]

### Examiner commentary

One mark given for reference to standardisation. One mark given for providing an example from the study (same video for example). One mark given for explaining how standardisation increases reliability 'the study would be replicable'. It was this final third point that some candidates found difficult to access, and is a good example to illustrate how to access all 3 marks available.

However, keep the Identify (Point), Elaborate and Contextualise format in mind whenever you see a question worth 3 marks.

This format would also be useful for structuring an answer to a question asking you to say how a study applies to a particular debate, issue (such as is psychology a science?), area or perspective.



## June 2018 Paper – Question 3

In June 2018 there was a question asking how Bandura relates to the developmental approach:

- 3 Explain why Bandura et al.'s study on the transmission of aggression can be placed in the developmental area.

The three points to make are:

1. What is the developmental area.
2. What is the part of Bandura that is relevant.
3. Then a link between the two.

The two responses below gained 2 marks out of the 3 available, both missing out one key feature.

### Exemplar 7

Bandura's study is developmental as the developmental approach looks at how behaviour forms/changes over time. Bandura showed that aggression develops over time through the observation and imitation of aggressive role models, as well as positive reinforcement. [3]

### Examiner commentary

This response gains 1 mark for demonstrating an understanding of the developmental area and 1 mark for linking this to Bandura et al's study.

### Exemplar 8

Bandura's study is placed in the developmental area, as it looks at the way in which children grow and change. Bandura researched how models can influence a child's behaviour, and he found that introducing aggressive role models led to more aggressive children. The developmental area looks at how influences can affect a child and the way they grow. [3]

### Examiner commentary

Exemplar 8 gains 1 mark for an understanding of the developmental area and 1 mark for stating relevant findings from Bandura et al's study.

## Activity

Can you use the two previous examples to construct an answer worth 3 marks? You are looking for:

- definition of developmental
- findings from Bandura
- a link between the two.

There isn't a prescriptive way to gain marks, though the answer always has to meet the demands of the mark scheme.

## Questions worth 4 marks

Questions which are worth 4 marks are often comparison of two studies, or application of studies to their theme, or linking a study to a debate or issue.

## Exemplar questions and responses

### June 2019 Paper – Question 6

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

The two responses below show how 4 marks can be gained by relating one study to a biological area. This time the question is worth 4 marks. Again, don't stress whether a 3 or 4 mark answer is required - go for writing a 4 mark answer to any questions asking how a core study (named or unnamed) links to an area or perspective.

#### Exemplar 1

Maguire's study. The biological area is concerned with the physiognomy of the brain. Maguire et al.'s study of ~~land~~ hippocampal volume in ~~the~~ London taxi drivers can be said to relate to the biological area as it is looking ~~study~~ is investigating brain plasticity & how the brain ~~ad~~ adapts to meet increased environmental demands. For example, correlational analysis showed that increased navigational experience (years as a taxi driver & on the knowledge) correlated positively with increased posterior hippocampal volume which indicates the posterior hippocampus is involved when using existing mental maps. [4]

#### Examiner commentary

Four marks. The candidate identifies the biological areas focus of physiology of the brain plus the correct area of hippocampus. The 'it' looks at how this is affected by external influences and talks correctly about the changes in volume, not size. This answer shows good understanding and application of the study to the area.

A point to note here is that this student has used the wrong word 'physiognomy' instead of 'physiology' but we have chosen to ignore this as their understanding is clear. BOD means benefit of the doubt, we have credited something that appears to be incorrect as we are not the spelling police.

## Exemplar 2

The Biological area suggests that all behaviour has a direct <sup>Casey</sup> physical cause and this can be studied scientifically. ~~Casey Maguire~~ can link to this as he suggested that ~~taxi drivers~~ high delayers (those who are able to resist temptation and delay rewards) were more likely to have higher activity in their inferior frontal gyrus allowing them to be able to control impulses better. Low delayers were more likely to have higher activity in the ventral striatum meaning they struggle to control impulses. <sup>Loggeline</sup> [4] the behaviour of impulse control is directly caused by functions of the brain. This could be tested scientifically through MRI scans to see which areas functioned more than others.

## Examiner commentary

This candidate also gained 4 marks (full marks) by looking at two features of the biological area, referring to the scientific study plus referencing the brains' influence on behaviours.

This answer uses one core study (which is what the question asks for) and links it to two of the features of the biological area. For four marks this is looking like a feature of biological + core study support x 2. If the second feature had used a different core study the mark for core study support would have been lost even if it was correct. This is important to note, that the question has one in bold letters, so you can only get marks for one core study used.

## June 2019 Paper – Question 2(c)

An example of a 4 mark comparison question is this question comparing Piliavin et al and Levine et al (June 2019) and it asks for one similarity or difference but is for four marks. The examiner commentary tells you what gained credit. Can you find all four in the answer given?

- (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.

### Exemplar 3

One similarity between them is that they are both field experiments. This is when it is conducted in a natural environment. In Piliavin's study, it was conducted on the NY subway as trains A and D and therefore occurred in the natural environment. Levine also conducted his research in a real-life setting as participants were selected from the streets in each of the 25 cities and so the experiment was in a natural setting. [4] <sup>see extra</sup>

2c) This therefore shows how Piliavin and Levine are similar as they conducted a field experiment manipulating the IV <sup>and</sup> but conducting it in a natural environment.

### Examiner commentary

One mark given for the point of comparison 'field experiments'. One mark given for the expansion to show knowledge/understanding of the point of comparison 'natural environment'. Two further marks given for identifying the natural environment in both Piliavin and Levine's study so therefore the evidence has been applied to the point made. For the 4 marks, candidates needed to answer with clarity and accuracy as this answer demonstrates well.



## Questions worth 5 marks

Questions worth 5 marks may include a more detailed comparison of studies, link to the theme/issue/debate or area. In this case, read the question carefully to see what extra is needed.

You could be asked about both studies, or you could be asked about two ways one study relates to the theme.

Often they can be asking:

- how a contemporary study increases our understanding from the original study or
- how a contemporary study changes our understanding from an original study?

This format is a good one to bear in mind to get 5 marks:

1. What did the original study say?
2. Why did they say it? What evidence was it based on?
3. What did the contemporary study say?
4. Why did they say it? What evidence was it based on?
5. So, what is the change to our understanding?

## Exemplar questions and responses

This question in June 2019 asks about how Lee's contemporary study changes understanding of moral development compared to Kohlberg's study. This answer below ticks all the boxes, as you can see.

### June 2019 Paper – Question 5

#### Exemplar 1

Kohlberg's study had found that moral <sup>development</sup> reasoning was universal as there was no difference in the <sup>of moral development</sup> stages that <sup>of moral</sup> each child was at even when comparing children from Taiwan and Malaysia, both children displayed the moral reasoning <sup>for the philosophical dilemma they were proposed (elderly man stole to feed his wife)</sup> 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 it to the same moral act by saying the man would have none to <sup>cock</sup> pay for him. In contrast, Lee's cross-cultural study of 120 Chinese and 108 Canadian 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 years 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 <sup>with</sup> lie telling being <sup>positive</sup> the Chinese moral value of being an 'unsung hero'.

## Examiner commentary

*Five marks. The candidate identifies the universality with details from the study on Kohlberg e.g. philosophical dilemmas. Then they discuss Lee's change that cultural influences can affect moral development, with detail about children's views on pro-social lying. Then a conclusion to explain the change. This is a well structured response.*

## Questions worth 6 marks

For 6 marks you are most likely in Section A to be asked for two points: a strength and weakness, two comparison points; two features which improved validity, etc. Treat these as two 3 mark answers. It may just say compare the two studies, and if it is worth 6 marks it is up to you to see that you need to write two comparison points.

**Note:** If the question says 'compare two studies', and doesn't specify what to compare, you can choose any comparison point you wish and it could be a similarity or a difference. If the question is worth 6 marks and doesn't say 'one similarity and one difference' then you can choose to do two similarities or two differences, or one similarity and one difference. These are the key words you need to identify when reading the question. You should decode questions and read them carefully to see exactly what you are being asked to do.





# Top tips

## Top tips for Section A

1. **Don't stress** about the marks given: always write a full, but relevant answer to the question with contextualisation. You won't lose marks for writing something not asked for but you will definitely lose a mark if you miss something out.
2. **Be specific and detailed** in your answer, so for example in a question about Milgram you would need to identify THE authority figure not a generic authority figure.
3. The materials of a study **are never people** (even if they are stooges). This was mentioned in the Examiner Report in 2019 in the question on materials used in Piliavin study.
4. We can't say this enough... **CONTEXTUALISE**. If the question asks for a strength 'in this study' then it should be related to 'this study' about 50% of students don't get the second context mark.
5. Know what factors influence reliability and validity. And make sure you know key terms such as socially sensitive, ethnocentrism. You need to know what they mean and how to work with them in any study. Knowing a definition is not enough - **you have to understand them**.
6. Make sure that the background of studies is **clear**. It is usually a study which has done similar work, but Gould highlighted the test bias, Yerkes didn't, so the background of Gould was not the criticism of Yerkes (that was the conclusion in Gould's review) it was what made Gould go 'Wow, I need to look into that' and that was what Yerkes had said about race and IQ in his conclusions.
7. A **good structure** for questions that ask about issues such as validity, ethics and reliability is this one:
  - **identify** what makes something reliable/unethical/lack validity i.e. standardisation,
  - **say why** this makes results consistent/accurate or unethical,
  - **contextualise** with the study.
8. Read the question checking out key words of:
  - **STUDY** – which core study and is it the whole of the study
  - **TOPIC** – is it sample, ethics, reliability
  - **PLURALITY** – do you need to do one or two (won't usually be more than this in Section A)
  - **SPECIFICS** – is it asking for similarities or differences, strengths or weaknesses or just comparison and evaluation.

## Section B: Areas, perspectives and debates

The total marks for Section B will always be 35 but these can be allocated to different number of questions, with different mark allocations each year.

This section will start with short answer questions, and will reflect the format and expectations from Section A. So, a 3 mark answer will be much the same as a 3 mark answer in Section A. However, it will be more focused on the area, perspective or debate, but usually requiring some context from a core study.

### Questions worth 2-7 marks

There is no way to predict how many questions there will be in terms of mark allocation: there could be one 2 mark question or three 2 mark questions at the beginning, or straight in with a 4 mark question. So, it is worth keeping the format for answering the short questions in your mind when you start this section.

Exemplar questions and responses

#### June 2018 Paper – Question 8(a)

8 (a) Describe the concept of freewill.

##### Exemplar 1

Being free will shows that your future behaviour isn't determined. You can be born and surrounded by different social factors, but it does not affect / predict your future behaviour. [2]

##### Examiner commentary

This response does not answer the question clearly or directly enough. No real understanding of the concept demonstrated.

##### Exemplar 2

Free will suggests that everyone has the ability to make their own choice and are free to do so.

##### Examiner commentary

One mark for a single comment on the concept.



### Exemplar 3

Free-will is linked to the idea of an individual having their own choice on the way they behave. In this people are held fully ~~also~~ responsible for their actions. [2]

### Examiner commentary

Two marks for a developed description which goes beyond a simple definition.

There is no need to contextualise this, and realistically most core studies don't adopt a position of freewill versus determinism in that debate. But could you answer the question if it had been 'Describe the concept of determinism and give an example of this from a core study?' How many marks do you think such a question would be worth? Probably 3 marks.

### June 2019 Paper – Question 8(a)

In a different year, however, the first question in this section was worth 4 marks.

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

### Exemplar 4

The cognitive area focuses on internal mental processes, including how we input, store and output information. The way in which we process information determines our behaviour. The cognitive approach is often compared to our mind to a computer. The way information is processed also depends on attention and retention. [4]

### Examiner commentary

Three marks. There were very few answers with full marks. This identifies the mental processes and elaboration of the process, plus the idea of the computer analogy but doesn't go on to elaborate on this. The information processed 'depends on attention and retention' is not linked to the computer analogy.

Here again, as it says 'principles and concepts' (which is what it says in the specification) you need two, so for 4 marks 2+2 seems the best way to tackle this question.

If the question had asked for one concept (or application) for 4 marks you would have had to go into a lot more depth. It would be more likely to need core study evidence if it was worth 4 marks. You need to really unpick a question by reading it carefully, and if you want to circle or underline anything that you must make sure is in your answer.

A 4 mark question used in June 2019 is:

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

In this type of question, you have to show you know what the psychodynamic perspective is, use research which is psychodynamic (Freud, Hancock) and what socially sensitive means (impacting on a small group of people, often discriminating against them). So, a definition of both of these terms would get 2 marks (if they are accurate and clear) and then evidence from one or two studies to show how the research could have been considered socially sensitive, for example who could have been discriminated against, or embarrassed by the findings.

**Note:** It is worth noting here that if the question asks for one (application or principle) and you write about two, you will only be marked on the first one you write. We can't mark the best one, only the first one.

### June 2019 Paper – Question 8(b)

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


The Exemplar 5 response gives the first application as CBT but the use of Grant to improve studying is a second application so can't be marked. And the CBT is limited so only worth 2 out of the 4 marks.

#### Exemplar 5

If our behaviour is a result of internal mental processes, it can help to understand how to treat faulty cognitions in our mental processing, leading to treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy. For example, in Grant's study can be applied to students who struggle to recall information in an exam, by improving how they <sup>input</sup> information. [4]  
by running in silent conditions to match test conditions.

## Examiner commentary

*We focus on the first application only which identifies CBT as the application. There is also some description of the application ('treat faulty cognitions') however this description is brief. Further description needed for full marks, for example the candidate could show knowledge of CBT and how this aims individuals suffering with a mental health issue to change faulty/irrational internal thought processes in order to change their feelings and therefore behaviour.*



**Top tip**  
Always check if it asks for more than one, either by the question asking for one or more, two, or by indicating a plural such as applications.

Another point to note is whether the question specifies you have to use core studies only or if it is general one, such as this question on application, when you could use your psychological knowledge from Component 3. However, it is better if you can keep to the core studies, as you don't want to be having to work out, in the exam, whether you can or cannot use material from Component 3.

## Remember timing in the exam

Don't spend time writing material and detail that is not asked for and goes beyond what is needed for the exam question, only include what is relevant to the question. When you are using a core study to support a point you make, for example Loftus and Palmer's use of a lab experiment reducing ecological validity, make sure you **ONLY** use the part of the study that is relevant. So, you might say the setting lacked ecological validity due to being in a lab, and/or the task of watching a film clip lacked ecological validity as it did not have the emotional impact of witnessing an accident in real life. What you **DON'T** need to do is include what happened after they had watched the clips. Details about the critical question or their speed estimates is not relevant to this answer and, although it may not lose you marks, it will take up time you may need to answer another question.

## Questions worth 8 marks

These questions will clearly identify what is required. For example, the question may ask for two comparison points or two strengths or will be a general 'compare' or a 'consider strengths and weaknesses' question. All of these will mean you can use the 4 mark structure twice.

- Point
- Elaboration
- Evidence from study one to illustrate
- Evidence from study two to illustrate

## Past paper questions

1. Explain why Chaney et al.'s Funhler study can be considered useful. 3 marks
2. Describe two weaknesses of the individual differences area. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies. 4 marks
3. Suggest why research in the individual differences area is often considered socially sensitive. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies. 5 marks
4. Compare the individual differences area with the behavioural perspective. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies. 6 marks
5. Compare the cognitive area and the psychodynamic perspective in terms of strengths and weaknesses. 8 marks

Here are some examples of previous questions from Section B, and the marks they were worth.

Using what you know about how to answer questions in section A, can you work out what structure you would use to answer them?

## Past paper questions - suggested structures

**Q1** – Point about usefulness (definition), elaboration and evidence from Chaney.

**Q2** – Identify weakness of individual differences area, give support from a core study, identify weakness of individual differences area, give support from a different core study. (Did you spot the plural?)

**Q3** – Define individual difference, define social sensitive, link the two and give evidence from TWO core studies.

**Q4** – Comparison point, elaboration evidence from a core study; 2nd comparison point, elaboration evidence from SECOND core study. (The question talks about relevant core studies, so there must be 2 mentioned)

**Q5** – Point of similarity or difference, explain how they are similar or different (both strengths or both weaknesses or different - strength for one and weakness for the other), evidence from first core study, evidence from second core study. Repeat with different point.

## Questions worth 10-15 marks

### Essay type questions

There will always be a question requiring an extended answer. It will be marked with an \* to show you need to structure this as an essay. It could be worth 10, 12 or 15 marks. The total marks for Section B will always be 35 but these can be allocated to different number of questions, with different mark allocations each year.

The essay will be related to a debate, a perspective, or an issue. It will ask you to use examples from appropriate research (core studies will be enough for you to use) to support the points you make.

This is where there are usually about 35% AO1 marks for knowledge of the core studies and for the debate, perspective or issue, 25% for the research examples and 40% for the analysis and judgement made.

You may have learned the Point Example Comment (PEC) technique for answering this type of question and it will be fine to use it here. Although if you answer the question using a different technique it could still gain full credit.

The way to tackle this essay question is to take a minute or two to plan your answer, this can be done on the paper, or at the end of the paper, it could gain credit if you don't finish so don't cross it out. It won't take marks away from what you have written in your answer.

## June 2019 Paper – Question 8(e)

Here is an example of an essay question from June 2019:

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

To break it down you have to:

**Identify** what is the topic – in this case reductionism/holism debate. So, this must be your starting point.

You have to '**discuss**' this debate, which means describing it (AO1) and evaluating it (AO3).

So, what points can you make about reductionism or holism?


You can **define** both reductionism and holism. This will show your knowledge and understanding.

You could then **identify** two types of reductionism, biological and environmental reductionism. Again, this is more knowledge and understanding and would give you four creditworthy points if they are clear and correct.

Having started with a definition of reductionism, which shows knowledge and understanding, you need a core study which illustrates this. Most core studies will be reductionist as having an identifiable IV will mean you have reduced the probable cause of behaviour to one factor.

Then finally you need to make some comment about the consequences or effect or strength of the point you have made. So, *adopting a reductionist approach, in a core study which suggests behaviour is due to one factor, means you may increase validity if you eliminate all other possible factors, or may mean you take a too simplistic to explain complex human behaviour.*

As the question wants you to 'discuss' the debate you need to make the judgement for the third mark, to gain the AO3 marks about the debate .



**Top tip**  
Do NOT start with 'X's study is reductionist...'; as you will then, most likely, end up with an evaluation of the study which won't get much, if any, credit.



Here is a candidate's response from the exam.

### Exemplar 1

Reductionism is where behaviour is put down to one factor and other factors that could have caused this behaviour are ignored. An example of research that could be seen as reductionist is research by Bandura into the effect of role models on children's aggressive behaviour. In Bandura's study he suggests ~~for~~ social learning theory, that children imitated aggression significantly more in room 3 because they had been exposed to an aggressive role model who displayed aggressive behaviour on the Bobo doll e.g. hitting it with a hammer. This shows Bandura ~~sees~~ can be seen as reductionist as he puts children ~~at~~ displaying aggressive acts solely down to which role model they were exposed to. Similarly Chaney's study can be seen as reductionist as he suggests ~~that medical compliance of children~~ adherence of children to a medical regime was down to positive reinforcement from the 'Funhaler'. He suggests that many more people were found to medicate their child successfully (3/30 compared to 22/30 with the Funhaler) and he puts the higher rate of compliance solely down to the positive reinforcement of the Funhaler, it encouraged children to adhere as it was more 'fun' than the normal inhaler (it included toys etc).

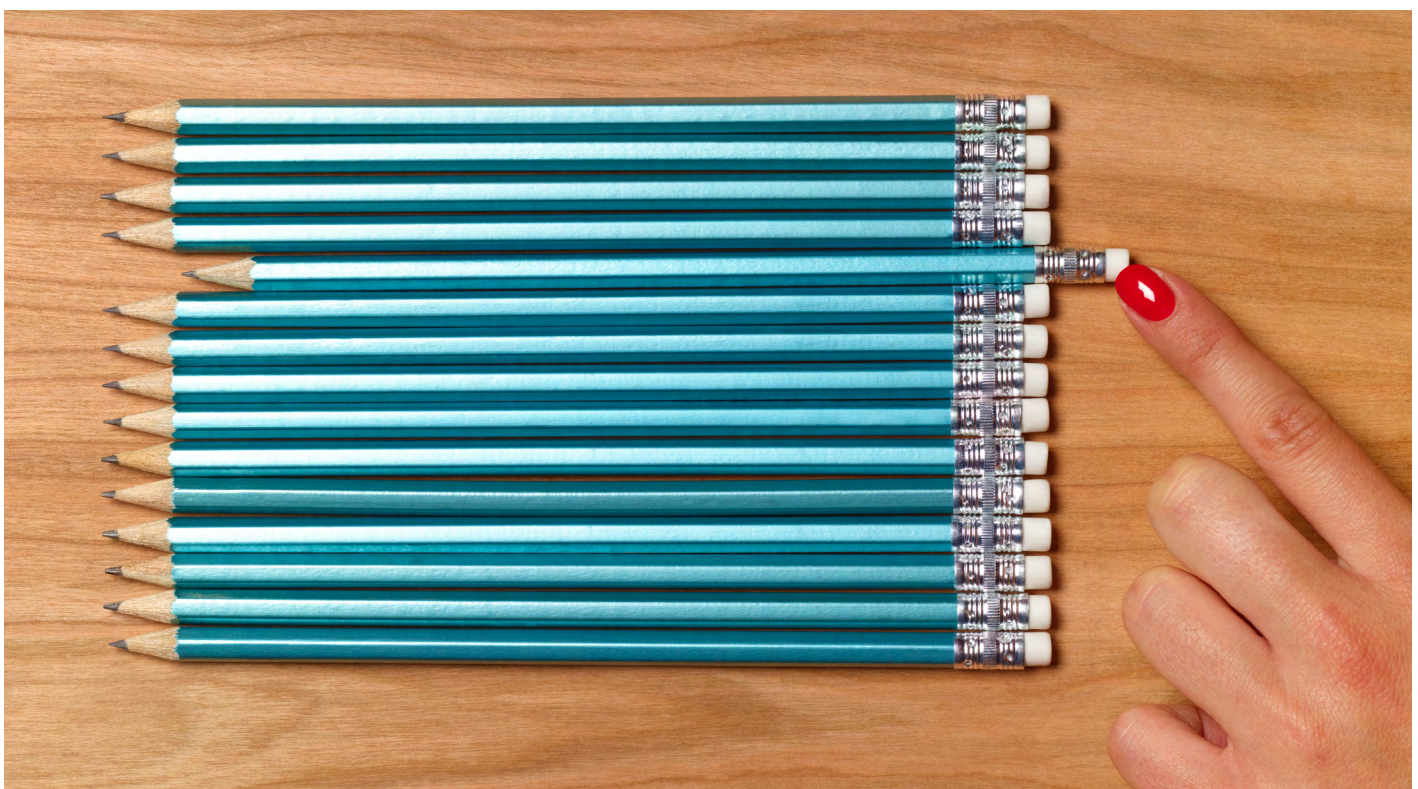
An advantage of being reductionist would be that it is useful as it helps generate practical applications, for example Bandura's social learning theory suggests that behaviour is down to role models, therefore if children are provided with good role models, they will behave well. Also ~~Chaney's study~~ for Chaney reduced behaviour down to ~~posit~~ operant conditioning, this can therefore be used to get people to comply

by giving them positive reinforcement. These practical applications can then be used to benefit society, enhancing the reputation of psychology.

### What did this person do?

- ✓ This person has attempted a plan which is good. But it is a little brief.
- ✗ This person has only discussed reductionism, there is nothing about holism.
- ✓ This person has defined reductionism but it is very brief, showing no understanding, yet.
- ✓ This person has used research to show how human behaviour is explain one factor as a cause. The Chaney research is good as it is only the Funhaler that is considered. however, Bandura could actually be considered less reductionist as it suggests role model, gender of role model and gender of child can all impact on behaviour
- ✗ This person has written a lot about the core studies, making the same point with two lengthy descriptions so has wasted time. There are limited marks for using research examples and you won't get them all for lots of evidence for one point. They need to be spread out over a range of points.
- ✓ This person has attempted some judgement about this saying that if you can identify one cause of behaviour it makes it easier to apply to behaviour change in real life.
- ✗ There isn't really a clear explanation of why reductionism leads to useful applications.

This person gained 7/15 marks.





## What could this person have done better? How can they improve?

ADD: Made a more detailed definition of reductionism, maybe giving an example such as 'Social psychologists might suggest one social factor such as an authority figure'.

CUT: Only given one piece of research in support of the point.

ADD: Made a more detailed evaluation about why reductionism increases usefulness and elaborated on the use of role models in children's tv programmes, or the 9.00 watershed

ADD: Made a point about biological and environmental reductionism with examples from Casey and Chaney.

ADD: Added the other side of the debate to answer the whole question. Giving a definition, example from research and an evaluative judgement about Holism – NOT just repeating the opposite of the one already given as a strength for reductionism.

And this is what the examiner said...

## Examiner commentary

*This candidate has included knowledge of the reductionism side of the debate. There is also relevant supporting evidence from Bandura and Chaney that the candidate applies effectively to reductionism. The candidate then evaluates reductionism giving just one advantage that is briefly explained. This answer therefore has a limited discussion with limited understanding of the debate and its strengths/weaknesses. For further marks the candidate should have also considered the holism side of the debate, used supporting evidence and evaluated. The evaluation in this essay is particularly lacking.*

## June 2017 Paper – Question 9(c)

**(c)\*** Discuss the extent to which psychology can be considered a science. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer.

For this question you would need to identify and explain three (maybe four but three would be enough if done well) features of science and then consider using evidence from more than one core study, if there is research evidence to justify saying psychology is or is not a science.

You need to summarise the points you have made to conclude with a judgement of 'to what extent'.

Here is the start of a good answer which addresses the question, with the point about experimental method, an example from Grant and a counter point example from Hancock. It carries on in much the same style and gained full marks.

## Exemplar 2

Psychology can be considered a science to some extent as research is often conducted as lab experiments that provide cause and effect relationships by involve the manipulation of variables 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 - matched (noisy or silent) or mismatched (noisy-silent or silent-noisy) for the learning and retrieval of information from a psychoimmunology article. The manipulation of the independent variable here ~~shows~~ proved the cause and effect relationship of context and memory recall. ~~Also~~, 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 & some provide qualitative data. Such as Hancock et al's study into the <sup>→ from the individual differences area...</sup> language of psychopathic murderers - though the method was scientific, the





## Top tips

### Top tips for Section B

1. **Don't** use the same issue or debate that is in another question.
2. Make sure you **elaborate** your points and comments.
3. Only use **one** piece of research to support each point.
4. For issue/debate questions **always** start with the issue or the debate not the study.
5. Make sure you have **identified** the key points of the question: the command word, the topic, the core study (or part of the core study).
6. Check if it is **one** or **two** studies, points, etc that you have to use, sometimes it will say and sometimes you have to work out if there are any plurals such as studies or strengths.





## Section C: Practical applications

This section will involve you having to apply your knowledge to a new situation, often one that could arise in real life. It will be linked to a source 'article' about a topic you will have come across in your A Level. There will be some questions on how your psychological knowledge could be relevant to the article. You will then be asked to make some suggestions of practical applications based on psychology and evaluate your suggestions. Again, there is no obvious pattern to the questions and marks although there appears to be a pattern with the suggestions and evaluation forming the last part of this section.

### Using sources

The 'articles' can be quite long, so you might want to have a quick look at the questions you are going to be asked before you read it so that you can underline parts you think might be relevant as you read it.

Here is a source used in an AS exam from June 2017.

### Example source - 'The Fun Theory'

A Volkswagen initiative called "The Fun Theory" is setting out to prove that people's behaviour can be changed for the better by making mundane activities fun. In a recent experiment, they set up musical piano steps on the staircase of a Stockholm subway station to see if more people would be more willing to choose the healthier option and take the stairs instead of the escalator. That day, 66% more people took the stairs than usual, suggesting that introducing a fun element to tasks is the best way to get people to make a change to their behaviour.

### Answering questions on sources

There is likely to be a question asking you to either find a link (more likely in the A Level paper), which will be obvious if you have studied the A Level, or giving you the link and asking you to explain it (more likely in an AS paper). It may be worded as finding psychological issues, this means any psychological concepts not necessarily limited to the issues listed on the specification.

If you know you are looking for something psychological you can read the article with that in mind.

### Typical questions

1. Identify **one** psychological issue raised by the above article.  
Support your answer with evidence from the article. (AS paper) 3 marks
2. Briefly describe **two** psychological issues raised by this article. 4 marks
3. Outline the behaviourist perspective in psychology and briefly explain how it applies to this article. (AS paper) 5 marks
4. Outline **one** principle or concept of the cognitive area and briefly explain how it relates to this article. 4 marks
5. Explain how the source is relevant to the social area of psychology.  
Support your answer with evidence from the source. 4 marks
6. Describe **two** features of the area of individual differences **and** briefly explain how they apply to this article. 6 marks
7. Identify **two** psychological issues raised by the article above.  
Support your answer with evidence from the article. 6 marks

## Answering typical questions

To answer these questions, you need to be clear what you need to include in your answer. So, it is important throughout this section to unpick the key terms from the question to make sure you cover it all in your answer.

- From the questions above you can see that you are asked to choose one, two or an unspecified number, remember this so that you can see clearly if the answer has the specified number in it.
- Next you must work out if it is asking you to look for a particular area or perspective or is it any psychological issues.
- Hint: If it is a general find a link, a quick glance at the following questions might help you with a named core study.
- You will see all of the questions ask for some evidence from the article to support your psychological assumptions. This is VERY important, as you will always lose marks if you don't include a quote from or a reference specific to the article.
- Make a plan. This just means jotting down a couple of words or underlining some key words in the article to help you make sure you have all you need to write your answer.
- Write your answer so that you and the examiner can clearly see you have done all of it. Use phrases such as 'One feature is.....' 'This means.....' 'A second issue is.....' 'This means.....' Then highlight your link to the article by saying something like 'This is shown in the article where it says.....'

### June 2018 Paper – Question 9 (a)

In June 2018 we asked the question:

- 9 (a) Identify **two** psychological issues raised by the article above. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

#### Exemplar 1

One psychological issue raised is the social issue of responses to people in need. In this article, the ~~next~~ Mexican athlete ~~also~~ demonstrates a need to be helped, and the Brazilian ~~hinner~~ sacrifices his own potential success for the benefit of another. ~~Therefore~~ This could arguably exemplify ~~not~~ altruism, and shows a potential response ~~to~~ to people in need, while the American's ~~rejects~~ decision to not help provides another. Another psychological issue raised by the article is the social issue of responses to people in authority. The American [6] athlete claimed that he was 'only obeying orders'. This demonstrates the social impact

It on our behaviours of orders which  
come from people who we perceive to  
be authoritative.

### Examiner commentary

Both are well developed points with a clear focus on the candidate's learning from psychology. Each point identifies a clear theme, applies it effectively to the article, and then explains the point further.

### Linking a core study

Another way to test if you can apply your knowledge to a situation is to ask you to link a core study to the article.

Again, this can be worded differently depending on the marks available for this question.

1. Briefly outline one of the experiments from the core study into eyewitness testimony by Loftus and Palmer and explain how it could relate to the article. (AS paper) 4 marks
2. Outline how Chaney et al.'s Funhaler study links to the above article. Support your answer with evidence from the article. (AS paper) 4 marks
3. Describe Baron-Cohen et al.'s study into autism and briefly explain how its findings relate to the article. 7 marks
4. Describe the Loftus et al (1974) study into memory and briefly explain how it relates to this article. 7 marks
5. Outline Piliavin et al.'s 'Subway Samaritan' study and describe ways in which it could relate to the article. Support your answer with evidence from the article. 8 marks

Here there are several points to identify.

### What is the core study being referred to?

Notice in the first question it is only asking for ONE experiment of Loftus and Palmer and is worth four marks, whereas in the fourth question it asks for description of Loftus and Palmer and is worth seven marks. This would indicate the amount of detail needed.

The second question isn't really wanting much detail about Chaney's study - it just wants the links to the article - but you will need to show you know the relevant parts of the study. In other words, it wants to see the reward in the study linking with the reward in the article, but be specific - use the words 'the whistle and spinner on the Funhaler' and 'the musical piano steps on the staircase'.

### How may links?

You can see different ways this question is worded, so you need to make sure if it says ways or it is worth more than 4 marks you should be looking to make two links.

Here is a guide to a possible structure:

- Outline how it links (more emphasis on the links, the study detail will just be to illustrate the link).
- Describe ways in which it could relate (needs two links if it's worth 8 marks).
- Briefly explain how it relates (less detail of one link).

### How do you make the link(s) with the article?

Be explicit with your reference: Don't just write 'this links to the article on eyewitness testimony being inaccurate', write specifically about the article for example, 'this is shown in the article which says "During the suspect's trial, it became clear that eyewitness testimonies had been extremely inaccurate"'. Giving a direct quote from the article is always a good thing to do.

### June 2018 Paper – Question 9(c)

- (c) Outline Piliavin et al.'s 'Subway Samaritan' study **and** describe ways in which it could relate to the article. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

#### Exemplar 2

Here is a good 8 mark answer which describes the study in some detail, (may be more than enough detail), plus clear links to the article. Even without the article you can see what the article included in it and its links to aspects of the study. With 105 marks to be gained in 120 minutes there is time to write for a little bit longer than 1 mark per minute, so this could have been 10 minutes' worth of writing to gain 8 marks.

Piliavin also found that race to race help was most common, although race itself was not a significant factor. The article also shows how help between a Mexican and Brazilian who are both from a Simpatia culture increased helping behaviour even if there is a high cost. Both the article and Piliavin can conclude that the diffusion of responsibility aspect cannot be found. Piliavin's results suggest that the presence of more people actually increased helping behaviour. The article also showed that the person in second place was prepared to lose and help even when nobody else appeared to want to.

Piliavin aims to see how situational factors aim to increase the likelihood of helping, likewise in the article they look at different athlete's views on what to do in a situation like that. Piliavin was a field study and likewise the article is a real life situation from a newspaper. However it may be different as it looks at several different cultures compared to a mainly one in New York. Piliavin's study used 103 trials on the New York subway. Both the article and Piliavin look



at how a critical situation, harm to someone around you affects behaviour. Piliavin has 4 independent variables and one includes the risk of helping, either a drunk man or the man with a cane. The article looks at 'the heat began to take its toll and he started to weave across the course'. This shows how both the article and Piliavin involve danger. The results from Piliavin suggest that helping behaviour increased by 83% in the drunk man situation when an observer stepped in and helped. Piliavin (8)

### Examiner commentary

Two marks for an outline of the study. Two additional marks for identifying the issue of same race helping in the study and for how this can be applied to the article. Two further marks for identifying the issue of blame in the study and for how this can be applied to the article. Overall, the response shows reasonable knowledge and understanding of the named study with two links made although not that fully developed.

There may be some more questions which focus on an issue or debate, and the link it has with the article:

### June 2018 Paper – Question 9(b)

- (b) Briefly consider the individual/situational debate in relation to the article above. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

5 marks

Or some on research methods:

### June 2019 Paper – Question 9(b)

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

4 marks

### June 2017 Paper – Question 9(b)

- (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.

4 marks

Here again you need to unpick the question to find out what the answer should contain.

- What is the debate/research method/issue?
- Is there a specific number of points to be made?
- Does it need links to the article? (it nearly always will)

Where does this answer fall down on meeting the demands of the question?

### Exemplar 3

Answering the June 2018 question above:

The Individual debate says that behaviour is due to the individual and who they are as a person. The situational debate suggests our behaviour is due to our situation. The Brazilian says he helped as 'in Brazil we are always encouraged to be friendly, helpful and agreeable.' This leans to the situational side, as the fact he is from Brazil seems to have affected his behaviour. It is individual as he personally believes this is the way to behave, but it is situational due to the country. [5]

The first part of the answer really just gives a weak definition of the individual side of the debate being about being an individual and the situational side of the debate being about our situation. This is what we call a tautological answer in that it simply repeats the question. If there had been an example this would have shown some understanding.

Then the answer deals with the individual side in terms of a person who has had an upbringing in Brazil, so has made him have a helpful temperament. The word situation is mentioned and is implied very weakly that this is due to the country he lived in. So, it just about gets 2 out of the 5 marks available.

If it had followed the 3 mark structure for the individual side of the debate and then the situational side of the debate, with one quote for each point as only one article is being used, it would have improved a lot.

1. **Point** – what is individual side of the debate with some.
2. **Elaboration** from the situation in the article.
3. **Point** – what is the situational side of the debate with some.
4. **Elaboration** from the situation in the article.
5. **Example** – quote(s) from the article.

## Questions on practical suggestions

The final part of the question paper is one which you can prepare for the structure but not the question.

There could be any number of articles used on any psychological aspect of human or animal behaviour, and then you could be given any context for your suggestions to relate to. So, for example, the article could be on any aspect of behaviourism and then suggestions related to any topic, such as education or work or sport or mental health. It could be in any format, for example a campaign, a technique, a suggestion, a research methodology and so on.

If the questions aren't predictable, and the number of marks is not predictable, then what is? Well the mark scheme doesn't change in terms of what the question will require, and the level at which each mark is given. What will change is what is good, reasonable, limited and basic, as the marks given will set the quantity of the answer. The quality will not alter. Good will always be a good answer, bearing in mind the content of the question.

As you can see from the descriptors for each skill at each level, the good response will always have; accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding; applications which are relevant, explicit and accurate, and analysis and evaluation that is relevant, valid and shows good understanding. If the question asks for two suggestions then a good answer will include two suggestions, one suggestion would be at the Limited level.

**LEVELS OF RESPONSE – LEVEL DESCRIPTORS**

	<b>A01</b>	<b>A02</b>	<b>A03</b>
<b>Good</b>	Response demonstrates good relevant knowledge and understanding. Accurate and detailed description.	Response demonstrates good application of psychological knowledge and understanding. Application will be mainly explicit, accurate and relevant.	Response demonstrates good analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation that is mainly relevant to the demand of the question. Valid conclusions that effectively summarise issues and argument is highly skilled and shows good understanding.
<b>Reasonable</b>	Response demonstrates reasonable relevant knowledge and understanding. Generally accurate description lacking some detail.	Response demonstrates reasonable application of psychological knowledge and understanding. Application will be partially explicit, accurate and relevant.	Response demonstrates reasonable analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation that is partially relevant to the demand of the question. Valid conclusions that effectively summarise issues and argument are competent and understanding is reasonable.
<b>Limited</b>	Response demonstrates limited relevant knowledge and understanding. Limited description lacking in detail.	Response demonstrates limited application of psychological knowledge and understanding. Application may be related to the general topic area rather than the specific question.	Response demonstrates limited analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation that may be related to topic area. Some valid conclusions that summarise issues and arguments.
<b>Basic</b>	Response demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding that is only partially relevant. Basic description with no detail.	Response demonstrates basic application of psychological knowledge and understanding. Responses will be generalised lacking focus on the question.	Response demonstrates basic analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation that is not related to the question. Basic or no valid conclusions that attempt to summarise issues. No evidence of arguments.

Your suggestions should have a psychological basis, so not an economical basis, (cheaper) or moral basis (to make it legal). They should be related to psychology, so rewards/punishment, authority figures, role models, research methods, ethical considerations, memory techniques, etc. If you understand other psychological concepts, such as evolution, altruism you could use them but you will always be able to answer the question based on the A Level content.

The questions will ask you for some changes which will impact on a behaviour related to the article. If the article is about autism, the suggestions could be ways to improve education for children with autism. Often it will say to improve someone's life, but it may just say suggest some changes.

Please DON'T suggest anything that is not realistically do-able. So, scanning the brain of every baby born and locking away or killing the ones that have some kind of brain difference, is NOT going to get any credit.

Some of the suggestions you make may be possible but unethical, which you can identify in your answer to the next question. Putting all children with aggressive tendencies in a school for the aggressive with only positive role models is possible (we might call it a young person's institution) but may not be ethical.

## What do you have to include in your suggestions?

Again, **the mark scheme** is the source of general guidance:

### Good answer

The response shows good knowledge of how behaviour may be changed/encouraged.

There is a good application of psychological knowledge to support the suggestions.

There is a good description of how the suggested ways could be implemented and these are feasible.

### Reasonable answer

The response shows reasonable knowledge of how behaviour may be changed/encouraged.

There is a reasonable application of psychological knowledge to support the suggestions.

There is a reasonable description of how the suggested ways could be implemented and these/this tend to be feasible.

### Limited answer

The response shows a limited knowledge of how behaviours may be changed/encouraged.

There is limited application of psychological knowledge to support the suggestions. There is a limited description of how the suggested way(s) could be implemented.

### Basic answer

The response shows a basic knowledge of how behaviours may be changed/encouraged.

There is no real application of psychological knowledge to support the suggestions.

There is unlikely to be description of how the suggested ways could be implemented.

If you only write about one suggestion when the questions says suggestions or ways, you are never going to get into the Good level. You would be hard pushed to get into Reasonable and, with only one suggestion, your response is much more likely to be classed as Limited.

Finally, as you come to the end of your exam, you have to write an evaluation of the suggestions you have just written about. It is worth thinking of these as you plan your suggestions.

## Some top tips for evaluation

1. Evaluate all of your suggestions separately, even if the point is the same. It should relate slightly differently to different suggestions.
2. Make sure it is based in debates and issues you have learned about, so it has a psychological base not so much an evaluation based on cost or time base. You can consider funding issues but not really the cost of implementing your suggestion. You could look at individual differences in its effectiveness; in its usefulness, if this limited to certain situations; is it ethical; is it appropriate for the target population; would it work in real life.
3. As a rule of thumb 2 PECs (Point – Example - Comment) for each suggestion, done well, would be enough for top band. So, plan your structure as follows:
  - What is the evaluation point?
  - Is it good or bad and why?
  - How does it relate to the suggestion in that context?

Here is an example of what could have been really good answers to these two questions, but lack of detail kept the marks down.



## June 2019 Paper – Question 9 (d) and (e)

- (d) Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest ways in which the lives of individuals with autism could be improved.
- (e) Evaluate the suggestions you have made in part (d) with reference to issues and debates you have studied in psychology.

Evaluation was discussed in the June 2019 Examiners' report in relation to Question 9 (e):

*AfL (Assessment for Learning) 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.*

### Exemplar 4

CBT can be used to bring about any difficulties autistic people may face when trying to socialise with people and then targeting <sup>this</sup> by the use of positive behaviours. The article states that, autistic people do like socialising but they find it difficult so a therapist may help overcome this difficulty. CBT aims to target any negative thoughts (so this would be aimed towards any negative connotations autistic people may have in regards to socialising) and counteracting this by reinforcing positive behaviours instead which might reduce the difficulty of autistic people when they want to socialise. Also, vicarious reinforcement could be used to teach the autistic kids about social behaviours through the use of imitation. Models could be used to display social behaviours [8] for the autistic people to learn through which could remove any difficulties they may face.

### Examiner commentary

There are two suggestions in this answer, CBT and Vicarious Reinforcement, and the psychological foundation for these suggestions is clear. CBT helps to overcome negative thoughts and vicarious reinforcement is based on the effect of role models. However, what it doesn't explain is exactly how to do this. So, it is limited. Some suggestions of how often the CBT might take place, and a technique that could be used, such as diary keeping would have shown more understanding. This answer was given 4 out of 8 marks.



### Top tip

Think of **who** (is going to have the intervention) **how** (will it be done in some detail) **when** (how often, in what situation) **where** (location) and **why** (what is the psychological basis for the suggestion).

And here is the same candidate's evaluation of their suggestions:

CBT will require many follow up sessions and may be hard for autistic people to talk to a therapist as they already have socialising problems. Vicarious reinforcement could prove useful as the social learning theory states that people learn through imitation however and this can be seen in Bandura's study which supports nurture (behaviour is learnt so is due to the environment) however some may argue that autism is due to nature so it would be hard to get rid of behaviours we have already by learning or other extraneous factors.

### Examiner commentary

The evaluation is limited. The individual differences of people with autism may restrict their ability to talk to a therapist. But there is no real elaboration in terms of how they might not be able to speak about their emotions in a one-to-one session. It may be limited to high functioning people with autism. So, what might be the problem with this, could they feel even more socially isolated? The vicarious reinforcement is useful but apart from the support from Bandura (which didn't actually research vicarious reinforcement) there is some confusion, but there is an attempt to link the nature/nurture debate, questioning can we actually relearn behaviours which are not learned. But this lack of clarity and detail keeps this answer in the Limited level so this answer gained 4 marks out of 10.

# Content and structure of answers

Having looked at the structure of the exam paper and how to structure your answers to the different types of questions, this section will look at what you might use in your answers.

It is no use knowing the structure of the answer if you don't have any content to put into the answer. But conversely you need to know how to answer the question using what you know.

## Command terms (Injunctions) and assessment objectives (AO1, AO2, AO3)

### AO1

First, the content of your answer will depend on what the command term used in the question. AO1 skills are assessed by asking for facts and elaboration to show understanding. The command terms will be Describe, Outline, Identify. Work out how much detail you need to include. The injunctions will give you some idea of the amount of detail, but don't worry too much.

**'Identify'** means to name something, often not needing context, but it's always worth adding it if possible. For example, identify the sampling technique for 1 mark might just need the name but it's always worth adding the how or who, and if it's worth two marks or the question says 'in this study' then it is essential.

**'Briefly describe'** means don't include a whole page of description, just what are the key features, relevant to the question. So briefly describe the sample of a study might just need a couple of key features (age, gender, number) and not the technique or target population.

**'Outline'** would mean much the same as briefly describe, with the relevant key features being amount of detail is required.

**'Describe'** means more detail is needed, for example describe the sample of a study might want the sampling technique, number, gender and age, plus the target population. Description of a study is unlikely to ever be worth more than 5 marks in this paper, so don't be tempted to spend more than 5 or 6 minutes writing it.

However, for the sake of getting a good mark, you can 'describe' every time, just don't write too much and waste time.

### AO2

For AO2 skills, the questions will ask you to apply your knowledge to a specific situation. Most of these marks will be in Section C, where you have to come up with suggestions based on the scenario.

Here are some questions which ask for an application (or more than one):

- Using your psychological knowledge, suggest how eyewitness testimony could have been improved in relation to the incident reported in the article. (AS Paper) 8 marks
- Describe **two** changes you could make to the experiment detailed in the source material. 8 marks
- Using your psychological knowledge, suggest **two** ways in which positive helping behaviours may be encouraged in athletes from countries such as America. 8 marks

As you can see you are being asked to describe suggestions for changing behaviour or changing research methods in a practical setting. These questions are worth 8 marks but this may not be the case every year. It will depend how many application marks are assessed in the previous questions.

Here a question worth 5 marks which is asking for an application so is AO2 skills based.

- Outline **one** way the individual differences area has been applied to explaining human behaviour. Justify your response with evidence from a relevant core study.

For this question you will need to:

- define the individual differences area
- apply it to human behaviour – probably one that relates to a core study, such as IQ or criminal behaviour of psychopaths
- give example from core study – Gould's study if you are using IQ, Hancock if you are using crime.

Again, the injunctions could be the same as for AO1 so use the guidance there for how much detail you may need if it is 'outline an application' or 'briefly describe an application'. Beware of plurals. Does it say one, two or just applications. Two would be enough if it says applications, but if it only says one and you write two we can only mark the first one you write. Don't waste time on the second one.

### AO3

AO3 skills are the evaluation, analysis and judgements you are asked to make. These injunctions could also include an element of description. Discuss would suggest you need to describe and evaluate but remember the description should be appropriate to half the marks given for the question. For example, you would get equal AO1 and AO3 marks for this question.

- Discuss the usefulness of psychological research. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies from the area of individual differences.  
(AS paper) [10 marks]

You will need to define what you mean by usefulness, then evaluate (make a judgement) whether psychological research is or isn't useful according to your definition. Don't forget to check for plurality of the word studies so that you use more than one core study to illustrate different points or different sides to one point.

There will often be many AO3 marks available for the last question on the paper:

- Evaluate the suggestions you made in relation to the incident reported in the article. [10 marks]

Here you are asked to make a judgement about your suggestions such as, that they are unethical, are not useful, etc.

Other evaluation questions occur throughout the paper:

- Explain **one** way the sample used in this study may be considered biased. [3 marks]
- Suggest **one** strength of studying just one individual. [3 marks]
- Describe **two** strengths of the developmental area. [4 marks]

AO3 skills can also include making comparisons, as this is a judgement or analysis of two different areas/methods/issues etc:

- Describe two ways in which the developmental area is similar to the area of individual differences. [6 marks]
- Compare the social area with the biological area. Use examples from relevant core studies to support your answer. [12 marks]

AO3 skills also are assessed by you being asked to analyse how an area might link to a debate

- Describe how the biological area provides an individual explanation of behaviour [3 marks]
- Describe how the social area provides a situational explanation of behaviour [3 marks]
- Discuss the extent to which psychology can be considered a science. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer. [15 marks]

You can use everything you have learned about Section A and Section B questions and answers to check what is required and how to structure your answer to gain all the credit you deserve.



## Applications of areas and perspectives

The practical applications of the areas and perspectives are limited so you don't have to learn new ones for each of the areas. The ones you use do have to be explicitly relevant to the one which is in the question. For example, therapy is an application of all perspectives and areas, but the actual therapy is different. CBT is relevant to a question on Cognition, but drug therapy would be relevant to a question on Biological.

In the same way, most areas and perspectives would lend themselves to practical applications in the classroom. But not all. Behaviourist would be the most obvious, but social and cognitive applications are also relevant. Rewards and punishments, leaders of classes, streaming to match cognitive development all have their place in schools. And you should be able to think of the problems of using these applications in addition to why you would use them.

To think of an application of each area or perspective, you need to consider what their assumption is about behaviour and then how would they therefore change or improve people's lives. This is the basis of all psychology. We need to know what causes behaviour so that we can make sure human behaviour is not harmful to either the individual or society. Then think about how that could be applied to different ages, or in different situations.

### Some suggestions to consider:

- Therapy
- Intervention strategies, e.g. improving environment for children with atypical development or motivation for behaviour change in sport or society
- Education – focusing on the student, teacher, classroom or curriculum
- Assessing e.g. in job applications or assessing developmental stage
- Research strategies e.g. how to identify issues in behaviour
- Motivation
- Leadership
- Communication
- Emotional intelligence
- Decision-making
- Memory
- Money management
- Academic success

A useful place to look for suggestions is the Component 3 specification which has, for each topic, a requirement for at least one application - this might help with some ideas you can develop, if you get stuck.

You may get a question about applications of an area or perspective, or you will most likely get a question applying your knowledge to a scenario on Section C, so it's worth getting used to thinking of applications for various situations.

## Strengths and weaknesses of issues and debates

There are many evaluation points for each issue and debate, but it is how you use them that makes the difference.

First, you must know the strengths and weaknesses of the issues. Past questions have included asking about strengths of conducting socially sensitive research. So, it is not just a strength or weakness of adopting a reductionist approach.

Second, you need to make sure that the point you are making is specific to that issue or debate. So, saying the nature side of the nature/nurture debate is reductionist is not an evaluation it is a statement of fact. So, what is the weakness? The weakness is that because it adopts a reductionist approach the explanations based on nature alone are too simplistic for complex human behaviour. So, taking an interactionist approach of environment impacting on the natural tendencies would be a better explanation.

There has been a common misunderstanding, that has been mentioned in our examiners' reports, e.g. in the June 2018 report we said 'a number of candidates seem to believe a theory is reductionist simply because it ignores other theories. Even if this were true, this would be a weakness that applied to all theories and this was a problem overall – that selected weaknesses were not specific to this area e.g. candidates suggesting it is unethical or socially sensitive as an area when this equally applies to all other areas'.

It is important that you do not make your strengths and weaknesses so generalised that it does not really show off how that is a strength or a weakness of that particular issue or debate. For example assuming all ethical issues apply to every study, you should be selective where this is used best.

## Exemplar questions and responses

### June 2018 Paper – Question 8 (d)

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

Here are some responses:

#### Exemplar 5

One weakness is that the sample sizes are often very small. For example, Freud only looked at one child Little Hans, who was experiencing phobias in childhood. Another weakness is that the research often creates divisions between groups. For example, Galini's series of verbal tests that black <sup>soldier</sup> people were considered to be less intelligent than white soldiers which could lead to discrimination. [4]

### Examiner commentary

Both weaknesses are creditworthy and illustrated appropriately through use of a different study in each case.

This answer gained 4 marks.

In this answer the weakness of small sample is only really a weakness of the individual differences. It could be said to be true occasionally of studies of other areas, but is really a fundamental feature of the individual differences area. The second one of creating divisions between groups refers to the inherent social sensitivity of the Individual areas, simply because of the nature of the topics, in this case IQ testing, but could have been psychopaths or adults with autism. The name suggests this, that some individuals are different. Rather than looking for trends in behaviour which is generally what the other areas do this area highlights the differences.

### Exemplar 6

This example gained 2 marks for the second weakness.

One weakness is that since the area focuses on the ways in which people differ, the samples are often quite small. ~~For~~ An extreme example of this is Freud's research, a case study which focuses on one individual; Little Hans. Another weakness is that research within this area has substantial potential to be put to negative use. A significant example of this is Gould's study. This research shows us that the research conducted by Yerkes was used to assign ~~poor~~ military roles (meaning that those scoring lowest were assigned ranks such as 'ordinary private') and that the results from this research led to an increase in stereotyping towards European immigrants and black Americans, which contributed to and supported the Immigration Act which enforced stricter restrictions on immigration. [4]

### Examiner commentary

The first weakness is not creditworthy because of the way it is stated i.e. more description than evaluation. Stating the sample is small is not the same as suggesting it is too small/unrepresentative etc. The effort to apply is not evaluative either otherwise it could have 'saved' the response. The second weakness is credited. The weakness is 'put to negative use' and this is well explained in the context of Yerkes's study.

Here you can see that the first weakness appears to be the same as the one used in the first example, but it is not made into an evaluative point. So it is important to add the 'why it is a weakness' elaboration.

The second weakness is the social sensitivity of the research which again is creditworthy for this area.

## Exemplar 7

This exemplar response gained 0 marks.

The individual differences area looks at each individual separately and the factors that contribute towards who they are. A weakness of the area would be that it is reductionist. A core study to demonstrate this is Freud's study on little Hans' Oedipus complex. Freud claims every behaviour that Hans has down to the psychosexual stages of development and the [4]

Oedipus complex such as when Hans wants to annoy his little sister, Freud believes that this is because his sister is stopping him from being able to get with his mother. However it could just be that <sup>Hans</sup> ~~Freud~~ <sup>Hans</sup> is jealous of his sister because his mother is spending more time on her than able to get with his mother. However it could just be that <sup>Hans</sup> ~~Freud~~ <sup>Hans</sup> is jealous of his sister because his mother is spending more time on her than on her because he's a baby, not because Hans isn't achieving any sexual desire from his mother.

The first weakness here is reductionism and the only point they say is that Freud reduces the behaviour down to psychosexual stages of development. That could be said about any study, not just studies in the individual area. Memory distortion is due to post event information, or aggression is reduced down to gender of role model. So all studies, and areas the students are familiar with (particularly as there are no humanist studies on the spec) are reductionist. It is not only a feature of the individual differences area.



Another weakness of the individual differences area would be that lots of the data obtained is quantitative and hence lacks detail. Baron Cohen's study into theory of mind only collected quantitative data via the scores on the eyes task hence demonstrating that adults with autism have a lack of theory of mind, however, Baron Cohen fails to collect qualitative data which would have explained what the adults with autism found difficult and why they found it difficult, this would have explained the data and given a reason behind the results.

Again the weakness of qualitative data is not only found in Individual Differences, nor do all individual differences studies gather qualitative data, for example what about Baron-Cohen or Hancock, these use quantitative data, (a point they make in their answer). It is a feature of Freud, yes, but not of the area, so it is not a valid point. And therefore the weakness is study related not area related, and any further elaboration is not going to make it creditworthy.

You can see how this is now taking on the structure of the 3 or 4 mark questions in Section A and B.

1. Point
2. Elaboration (why this is a weakness)
3. Example related to issue or debate
4. If the questions asks you to refer to research then there will be a core study you can use to exemplify your point.



	Strength	Strength	Weakness	Weakness
<b>Nature/Nurture</b>	Nature is reductionist so easier to isolate IV to test	Nurture means we can make interventions as behaviour can be changed	Nature absolves person from responsibility	Nurture means people are source
<b>Free will/determinism</b>	Possible strengths of free will argument: Recognises freedom of choice; gives people responsibility for their actions	Possible strengths of determinism: Able to establish cause and effect, so allows for prediction and control	Possible weaknesses of determinism: Cannot be disproved as it can always be argued that a cause has not yet been discovered.  Treats people like 'machines' that are programmed and cannot exercise free will	Possible weaknesses of free will argument: Difficult to test and measure.  Suggests no predictability or patterns to behaviour
<b>Reductionism/holism</b>	Strength of reductionism Standardised procedures often used so cause and effect can be better established	Strength of holism Easier to apply in terms of treatment/ techniques	Weakness of reductionism Oversimplifying complex human behaviour	Weakness of holism Usually non-scientific as difficult to research
<b>Individual/situational</b>	Individual strength is more holistic as takes into account all individual differences	Situational strength means behaviour is predictable in any given situation	Individual weakness Difficult to generalise or predict behaviour	Situational weakness Reductionist as ignores the individual, which is likely to have impact e.g. gender, emotional state et
<b>The need for ethical guidelines</b>	Protection provided	Respect for psychology	Not using deception may result in demand characteristics	May lead to unnatural behaviour getting consent
<b>Conducting socially sensitive research</b>	Study areas which may need interventions or support	Can have positive outcomes for some minority groups	Research can be controversial, e.g. the notion of childhood sexuality is uncomfortable for many, the debate about whether recovered memories are just false memories leaving innocent people accused of abuse and other crimes	Research risks stigmatising and stereotyping
<b>Is psychology a science?</b>	Yes, as has research methods which can be objective, standardised and controlled	Yes, as has reductionist position	Biased data collection such as self-reports, lack of control	Unable to falsify


## Comparing perspectives and debates

Here is a typical question comparing areas/perspectives from the June 2018 Paper.

Compare the individual differences area with the behaviourist perspective. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies [6]

Possible comparison points for this type of question (note these are not the only points of comparison - you may have others):

- type of data collected (qualitative/quantitative)
- reductionism or holistic view of behaviour
- determinism or freewill of behaviour
- scientific or non-scientific (consider any of the features of a science)
- methodology favoured / utilised (experimental versus non-experimental)
- data collection techniques (observation versus self-report)
- individual/situational explanation of behaviour (biological or social)
- nature or nurture approach.



### Top tip

You will never need more than four - done well, three will be enough points of comparison.

Choose three or four you like and understand and make a comparison chart like this:

Comparison point	Social	Cognitive	Biological	Developmental	Individual differences
Individual or situational	Situation	Individual	Individual	Both? Good comment to be made here	Individual
Type of data	Quantitative and possibly some qualitative	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative or some qualitative	Qualitative but with some psychometric data which are objective
Methodology	Experimental, lab or field	Lab experiments	Lab experiments	Often lab or field experiments	Often case studies of small groups of atypical people
Reductionist or holistic	More towards holistic	More towards Reductionist	Reductionist	More towards holistic	Reductionist as researches one factor such as IQ but they all add up to complex human

## Typical questions comparing debates and areas/perspectives

- Describe one way the individual differences area is different from the biological area.  
– Use examples from relevant core studies to support your answer. 6 marks
- Compare the biological area to the behaviourist perspective. Use examples from appropriate core studies to support your answer. 8 marks
- Compare the social area with the biological area. Use examples from relevant core studies to support your answer. (AS Paper) 12 marks

Comparing or linking an area or perspective to a debate or issue are also questions likely to appear on the paper.

Such as:

- Describe how the social area provides a situational explanation of behaviour. 3 marks
- Describe how the biological area provides an individual explanation of behaviour. 3 marks
- Describe how the biological area is reductionist. Support your answer with evidence from one appropriate core study. 4 marks
- Suggest why research in the individual differences area is often considered socially sensitive. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies. 5 marks
- Discuss ethical considerations in relation to the social area. Support your answer with examples from relevant core studies. 12 marks

## Conclusions

The core studies paper of Component 2 is a demanding paper with questions assessing all three assessment objectives, and using 20 core studies from five areas, plus all the issues and debates. But you can also include your knowledge and understanding of research methods to help in this paper too!

Having said that, there are a lot of resources and materials to help you. Firstly, know the content of the specification. Make sure you understand it. Have a look at the core study guide 1 on the OCR website and Cores studies guide 2 .

There are also a range of endorsed textbooks to help you and you can look at scenarios for Paper 2 and some practice questions

Use the past papers and mark schemes from previous years available on the OCR website.

Test yourself and use the mark scheme to see if you have got everything that is needed in your answer. The mark scheme is the actual one we use when marking exam papers every year, so it is the one you should find most helpful. You can look at the question papers, the mark schemes, the examiner reports and candidate exemplars all of which are on the website for you to look at and use.

Practise looking for psychology in the media. Try and read a newspaper occasionally and ask yourself, what is the psychology behind this article. It won't work for every article, but consider anything in the article that you might be able to link. And try searching newspaper archives for key words such as eye witness testimony.

Most of all enjoy your study of psychology as it is about the most interesting thing – you! With knowledge and exam technique you won't need luck you will already be ready for anything the exam throws at you.



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