

Psychology

It's easy to join us

Moving to Cambridge OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology from Pearson (Edexcel)

Are you currently teaching Pearson (Edexcel)'s A Level in Psychology?

This short guide will take a look at our refreshed A Level in Psychology and show you how it compares to the Pearson (Edexcel) A Level and how you can easily move to teaching our specification.

We **collaborate** with teachers, employers and Higher Education representatives to develop qualifications which are relevant and meet the needs of students.

We **listen**. The decisions we make when we develop our specification are based on teacher and student feedback. To tell us more about your experiences of teaching our qualifications, join our teacher panel and help shape the future of our assessments.

Our A Level in Psychology has lots of **key benefits** for teachers and students:

- a **manageable** amount of content
- a greater emphasis on **practical** investigation
- a **consistent** and **accessible approach** to assessment
- exciting and **relevant** psychological studies
- a **highly structured** approach across the specification and assessment model
- a **familiar** approach to the mathematical requirements
- compulsory sections on the engaging topics of **mental health** and **criminal psychology**
- **option** to study child, environmental or sport and exercise psychology.

Your students will develop:

- a lifelong passion for psychological issues
- a deep understanding of how psychology relates to the wider world
- the key skill of application and be encouraged to think like psychologists
- essential knowledge of the factors that influence human behaviour
- a deep understanding of relevant topics such as mental health and criminal psychology
- essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of psychology and how they relate to each other
- key skills needed to interpret and critically assess scientific data
- the ability to plan, conduct and analyse their own practical investigations
- competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills.



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About our A Level in Psychology

We believe in developing specifications that are engaging and contemporary, equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their studies and beyond.

Informed by research and extensive engagement with the teaching community, we've created specifications that aim to enthuse and inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities, helping you to help them achieve their full potential.

We offer a range of support services to help you at every stage, from preparation to delivery:

- expert **Subject Advisors** who are part of their subject communities and here to support you with advice, updates on resources, and information about training opportunities
- free detailed **assessment resources** including practice materials and examiners' reports to help you navigate the specification and its content
- free comprehensive curriculum planners and schemes of work to support with **planning**
- free teaching resources to use **in the classroom** with your students
- engaging **audio/visual clips** and programmes hosted by the Educational Recording Agency (ERA), that are mapped to the H569 specification
- **textbooks** and a range of teaching and learning **resources** from leading publishers and third parties. For details of all published and digital resources check the Teach Cambridge website
- **ExamBuilder:** our free question-building platform that helps you to build your own tests using Cambridge OCR exam questions as our bank of past live-series grows
- **Active Results:** our free results analysis service to help you review the performance of individual students or whole school
- **Access to Scripts:** a free service for exams officers to download copies of your students' completed question papers.
- an extensive range of both live and on-demand **professional development** courses, covering everything from '**Starting to Teach**' and '**Exploring the Exam**', through to '**Enhancing your teaching**' and '**Exam Review**'.

To find out more about all of our support services, please visit [Teach Cambridge](#).

At a glance specification comparison

	Cambridge OCR Psychology	Pearson (Edexcel) Psychology
Structure	There are three mandatory components which are all externally assessed via examination. There are optional topics in Component (Paper) 3.	There are three mandatory components which are all externally assessed via examination. There are optional units in Paper 2.
Grading	The qualification is graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified.	The qualification is graded on the scale: A*, A, B, C, D, E, where A* is the highest. Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for E will be Unclassified.
Assessment	<p>Paper 1 (H569/01) 2 hours 80 marks</p> <p>Paper 2 (H569/02) 2 hours 80 marks</p> <p>Paper 3 (H569/03) 2 hours 80 marks Optional topics</p>	<p>Paper 1 2 hours 90 marks</p> <p>Paper 2 2 hours 90 marks Optional topics</p> <p>Paper 3 2 hours 80 marks</p>

Comparing assessment models

Cambridge OCR Psychology	Pearson (Edexcel) Psychology
<p>A Level Paper 1 (H569/01) Research methods 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Section A: Multiple choice questions 15 marks Section B: Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 35 marks Section C: Short answer questions 30 marks</p>	<p>A Level Paper 1 Foundations in psychology 35% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 90 marks Sections A–D: short-answer and extended response 70 marks Section E: two extended response questions 20 marks</p>
<p>A Level Paper 2 (H569/02) Psychology through core studies 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Section A: Short and medium answer questions 25 marks Section B: Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 25 marks Section C: Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 30 marks</p>	<p>A Level Paper 2 Applications of psychology 35% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 90 marks Section A: short-answer and extended response 54 marks Section B: choose one of three topic options. Short-answer and extended response questions 36 marks</p>
<p>A Level Paper 3 (H569/03) Applied psychology 33.3% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Section A: Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 30 marks Section B: Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 30 marks Section C: Choose one of three topic options. Short and medium answer questions and one extended response 20 marks</p>	<p>A Level Paper 3 Psychological skills 30% of A Level Written paper 2 hours 80 marks Section A: short-answer questions 24 marks Section B: short-answer questions and one extended response 24 marks Section C: two extended response questions 32 marks</p>

Next steps

It's easy to switch

- If you're a Cambridge OCR-approved centre, all you need to do is download the specification and start teaching.
- [Be kept up-to-date](#) with the latest news including professional development and Teacher Networks.

And finally...

Comparison of papers

Cambridge OCR A Level in Psychology		Edexcel A Level in Psychology			
Paper 1: Research methods		Edexcel Paper 1	Edexcel Paper 2	Edexcel Paper 3	Compulsory or optional content
Section	Content				
1.1 Research methods and techniques	Experiment	✓	✓	✓	C
	Observation	✓	✓	✓	C
	Self-report	✓	✓	✓	C
	Correlation	✓	✓	✓	C
	Case study	✓	✓	✓	C
	Content analysis	✓	✓	✓	C
1.2 Planning and conducting research	Aims and hypotheses	✓	✓	✓	C
	Populations, samples and sampling techniques	✓	✓	✓	C
	Experimental designs	✓	✓	✓	C
	Research designs	✓	✓	✓	C
	Variables and how they are operationalised	✓	✓	✓	C
	Designing observations	✓	✓	✓	C
	Designing self-reports	✓	✓	✓	C
1.3 Data recording, analysis and presentation	Raw data	✓	✓	✓	C
	Levels and types of data	✓	✓	✓	C
	Analysis of qualitative data	✓	✓	✓	C
	Descriptive statistics	✓	✓	✓	C
	Graphs	✓	✓	✓	C
	Inferential statistics	✓	✓	✓	C
	Methodological issues	✓	✓	✓	C
1.4 Report writing	Sections and sub-sections of a practical report	✓	✓	✓	C
	Citing academic references	✓	✓	✓	C
	Peer review	✓	✓	✓	C
1.5 Science in psychology	Nature and principles of scientific enquiry	✓	✓	✓	C
1.6 Practical investigations	Reflect on own practical investigations	✓			C

Cambridge OCR A Level in Psychology		Edexcel A Level in Psychology			
Paper 2: Core studies in psychology		Edexcel Paper 1	Edexcel Paper 2	Edexcel Paper 3	Compulsory or optional content
Section A: Core studies					
Section	Content				
Social Area	Milgram (1963) - Obedience to authority	✓			C
	Piliavin et al. (1969) - Helping behaviour				
	Levine (2001) - Cross cultural altruism				
Cognitive Area	Loftus and Palmer (1974) - Eyewitness testimony		✓		O
	Grant et al. (1998) - Context-dependent memory				
	Simons and Chabris (1999) - Visual inattention				
Developmental Areas	Bandura et al. (1961) - Transmission of aggression	✓			C
	Chaney et al. (2004) - Adherence to medical regimes				
	Lee et al. (1997) - Lying and truth telling				
Biological Area	Sperry (1968) - Lateralisation of function in the brain				
	Casey et al. (2011) - Delayed gratification				
	Maguire et al. (2000) - Brain plasticity				
Individual Differences Area	Freud (1909) - Phobias	✓ (Freud)			C
	Baron-Cohen et al. (1997) - Autism and theory of mind		✓ (Autism)		O
	Van Leeuwen et al. (2008) - Intelligence				
Methodological issues	Analysis and evaluation of psychological research	✓	✓	✓	C

Cambridge OCR A Level in Psychology		Edexcel A Level in Psychology			
Paper 2: Core studies in psychology		Edexcel Paper 1	Edexcel Paper 2	Edexcel Paper 3	Compulsory or optional content
Section B: Areas, perspectives, issues and debates					
Section	Content				
Areas	Social	✓			
	Cognitive	✓			
	Developmental	✓	✓		C/O
	Biological	✓			
	Individual differences	✓	✓		C/O
Perspectives	Behaviourist	✓	✓		C/O
	Psychodynamic	✓			C
Issues	Ethical issues	✓	✓	✓	C/O
	Conducting socially sensitive research	✓	✓	✓	C/O
	Usefulness of research				
Debates	Nature/nurture	✓	✓	✓	C/O
	Freewill/determinism				
	Reductionism/holism	✓	✓	✓	C/O
	Individual/situational explanations				
	Psychology as a science	✓	✓	✓	C/O

Cambridge OCR A Level in Psychology		Edexcel A Level in Psychology			
Paper 2: Core studies in psychology		Edexcel Paper 1	Edexcel Paper 2	Edexcel Paper 3	Compulsory or optional content
Section C: Practical applications					
Section	Content				
The practical applications of psychology	Identify, apply and evaluate the psychological content in the source(s)	<p>Similar to Edexcel, Cambridge OCR also has application to scenarios throughout the papers.</p> <p>However, this section emphasises practical applications of psychology with a longer novel source for students to use.</p>			

Cambridge OCR A Level in Psychology

Edexcel A Level in Psychology

Paper 3: Applied psychology		Edexcel Paper 1	Edexcel Paper 2	Edexcel Paper 3	Compulsory or optional content
Section A	Content				
Mental health (compulsory)	What is mental health?		✓		C
	The medical model		✓		C
	Alternatives to the medical model		✓		C
	Modern approaches to mental health				
Section B	Content				
Criminal psychology (compulsory)	Turning to crime		✓		O
	Building a case				
	In the courtroom		✓		O
	Managing offenders		✓		O
Section C	Content				
Child psychology (Option 1)	Pre-adult brain development				
	Perceptual development				
	The development of attachment		✓		O
Environmental psychology (Option 2)	Biological rhythms				
	Recycling behaviour				
	Psychological effects of the built environment				
Sport and exercise psychology (Option 3)	Exercise and mental health				
	Motivation				
	Audience effects				

Summary of updates

This table outlines updates made in various versions of this resource. For the latest version of our resources, please visit [Teach Cambridge](#).

Section	Change	Version	Date
All	Original content	1.0	January 2024
All	Updated wording in the tables under the 'Comparing assessment models' section and updated version number to 3.0.	3.0	March 2026

Tell us what you think

Your feedback plays an important role in how we develop, market, support and resource qualifications now and into the future. We want you and your students to enjoy and get the best out of our qualifications and resources, but to do that we need your honest opinions to tell us whether we're on the right track or not.

You can email your thoughts to resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk or visit our [feedback page](#) to learn more about how you can help us improve our resources.



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✉ **support@ocr.org.uk**

🌐 **ocr.org.uk**

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When we update our specifications, you'll see a new version number and a summary of the changes. While we do our best to reflect these changes in all associated resources on [Teach Cambridge](#), if you notice any discrepancies, please refer to the latest specification on our website and [let us know](#).

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