

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

H167

For first teaching in 2015

H167/02 Summer 2024 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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Paper 2 series overview

H167/02: Psychological themes through core studies is the second of two examined components for the OCR AS Psychology qualification. This component focuses on:

- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of five key themes
- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a classical and a contemporary study located within each key theme (10 core studies)
- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of areas and perspectives in psychology
- methodological issues relating to the core studies
- issues and debates in psychology
- practical applications of psychology.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed to have a sound knowledge and understanding of all the core studies, areas, perspectives and debates. Evaluation skills needed to be good and candidates needed to be able to apply their psychological knowledge effectively to a novel situation.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • showed extensive knowledge and understanding of the nine core studies cited in Section A and so responded to the questions competently and confidently • had sound knowledge and understanding of the biological area and psychodynamic perspective and gave in-depth and appropriate responses in Section B • appreciated that a discussion of the use of socially sensitive research in psychology involved a good analysis of strengths and weaknesses and was supported by appropriate evidence from relevant core studies in Question 6(f) • could clearly suggest principles or concepts of the social area in Question 7(a) • showed a high standard of understanding of two ways older children could be encouraged to show prosocial behaviour towards younger children and were also able to apply their psychological knowledge within their suggestions effectively in Question 7(c) • showed good evaluation with explicit links to issues/debates in Question 7(d). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presented responses that are pre-learnt and rehearsed and not reading and responding to the specific questions appropriately • confused the details between different core studies and gave muddled responses in Section A and Section B • did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding to respond effectively to questions relating to how core studies relate to the socially sensitive debate • did not demonstrate adequate understating of controls used in studies for Question 2(b) and reliability of procedures in Question 5 • explaining how psychology is unethical as opposed to discussing the use of socially sensitive research in Question 6(f) • simply stating practical strengths and weaknesses of the suggestions they made in Question 7(c) (i.e. cost, availability) without evaluating with issues and debates in psychology.

Section A overview

Section A: Core studies. This section consists of the ten core studies individually, in their pairs or in terms of their key theme. Questions are short responses but range in mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Identify **one** way that qualitative data was collected in Sperry's (1968) split brain study.

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..... [1]

Candidates that did well named one way that qualitative data was collected and contextualised that to Sperry's study. Generic suggestions, such as observations, gained no credit. Some candidates gave ways that would produce quantitative data.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Outline **one** weakness of collecting qualitative data in this study.

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..... [2]

Candidates performed well on this question by explaining a weakness of collecting qualitative data and contextualising the weakness. Some incorrect responses were not relevant to qualitative data, referring to generalisability for example.

Question 1 (c)

- (c) Outline **one** way in which Casey et al.'s (2011) study into neural correlates of delay of gratification can be said to lack ecological validity.

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..... [2]

Understanding of ecological validity was good in answers to this question, but it needed clear contextualising to Casey et al.'s study to receive full marks. Stating 'laboratory' is not contextualisation whereas 'go/no-go task' and 'fMRI' scanner were. A few candidates made incorrect reference to sampling problems (i.e. unrepresentative or ethnocentric), instead of ecological validity. A few candidates identified the incorrect study such as Sperry.

Question 2 (a)

2

- (a) Explain how Loftus and Palmer's (1974) study into eyewitness testimony links to the key theme of memory.

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..... [3]

This question required three parts in the response: an understanding of the term 'memory,' how memory accuracy was tested in Loftus and Palmer's study and what Loftus and Palmer found in relation to 'memory.' Most candidates were able to explain how memory accuracy was tested but neglected to explain memory or express what Loftus and Plamer found in relation to 'memory.'

Question 2 (b)

(b) Outline **two** controls used in Grant et al.'s (1998) study into context-dependent memory.

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[4]

Most candidates performed well on this question. However, a few did not gain any marks because they had not demonstrated any understanding of the word control (e.g. same, all, every, always, standardised, each participant). Many made appropriate reference to controls such as the fact all participants wore headphones and they all read the same article on psychoimmunology.

Question 3 (a)

3

(a) Milgram's (1963) study of obedience is often considered to be a controlled observation.

Explain the term 'controlled observation' in the context of this study.

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[3]

Responses to this question were quite poor. Many candidates are simply describing Milgram rather than explaining how he used a controlled observation, or they are making tautological comments such as 'A controlled observation is one that is done in a controlled environment'. Better responses demonstrated an understanding of the key term 'controlled' and 'observation' separately and went on to support this with evidence of how Milgram controlled the environment.

Question 3 (b)

- (b) Outline **one** result from Bocchiaro et al.'s (2012) study into disobedience and whistle-blowing.

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..... [2]

The question required an outline of an accurate result from Bocchiaro et al.'s study, with correct numerical details. Many candidates gave incorrect percentages and gained no credit. Some responses were often only a few percentages or decimal places away from the correct answer as listed on the mark scheme. Some candidates wasted time by outlining two different results when the question asked for one.

Question 4 (a)

- 4
- (a) Outline **one** difference in the sample used in Freud's (1909) study of Little Hans and Baron-Cohen et al.'s (1997) study into autism in adults.

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..... [2]

This question required candidates to outline one difference between the sample of both Freud and Baron-Cohen et al.'s study and for that difference to be contextualise for both studies. Candidates lost marks by not providing sufficient context from one study, which was predominantly Baron-Cohen's study.

Question 4 (b) (i)

(b) The table below shows data collected in Baron-Cohen et al.'s (1997) study into autism in adults.

	Results of the Eyes Task (out of 25)	
	Mean score	Range of scores
Autism/Asperger Syndrome (AS)	16.3	13–23
Normal	20.3	16–25
Tourette Syndrome (TS)	20.4	16–25

(i) Outline **one** difference in performance on the Eyes Task between the participants with autism/Asperger Syndrome (AS) and participants with Tourette Syndrome (TS).

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..... [2]

Most candidates performed well and accurately used the data from the table in a variety of ways. Credit was given for using the mean score, difference in mean scores, the range of scores and the ceiling of the range of scores. Responses must be supported by evidence from the table to receive full credit and this was not always the case. Some went on to discuss impairments in Theory of Mind but this was not answering the question. A minority gave a difference for the normal participants and this received no credit.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

(ii) Outline **one** conclusion that can be drawn from the above findings.

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..... [2]

Some candidates were able to outline how there is a deficit in the Theory of Mind for those in the autism/AS group. This conclusion needed to be supported by data from the table, and this was rarely the case. Some did therefore not provide conclusions in relation to theory of mind and merely repeated the results from Question 4 (a).

Question 5

- 5 Bandura et al. (1961) conducted a study into the transmission of aggression.

Outline **one** way the procedure increased the reliability of this study.

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..... [2]

Many candidates struggled to provide a clear understanding of reliability and an accurate description of how the procedure used in Bandura et al.'s study increased reliability. Candidates needed to develop their understanding of the term 'reliability' by outlining 'standardised' for example. Many made incorrect reference to how the children were pre-rated for aggression before the study began, which increases validity not reliability.

Section B overview

Section B: Areas, perspectives and debates. Questions in this section focus on areas, perspectives and debates in psychology. Questions range in size and mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

Question 6 (a)

6

- (a) Explain why Freud's (1909) study of Little Hans can be viewed from the psychodynamic perspective.

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Many candidates were able to show an understanding of a principle of the psychodynamic perspective. However, the question required candidates to go on to explain how Freud's study can be seen as psychodynamic and provide appropriate supporting evidence from Freud's study. Candidates often referred to the study (e.g. phobias) but did not provide details to show understanding.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Outline **one** strength of the psychodynamic perspective.

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..... [2]

Most candidates could identify one appropriate strength of the psychodynamic perspective, although this was not always justified. Candidates should refine how they use 'usefulness' as a strength as they needed to refer to the psychodynamic therapy 'psychoanalysis' and then explain how it works.

Question 6 (c)

(c) Outline **one** weakness of the psychodynamic perspective.

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..... [2]

Most candidates could identify one appropriate weakness of the psychodynamic perspective, although this was not always justified. A popular weakness to use was that the psychodynamic perspective is 'unscientific' and this was then justified further (i.e. researcher bias, subjective methodology etc).

Question 6 (d)

- (d) Explain how Sperry's (1968) split brain study can be considered to be located within the biological area of psychology. Support your answer with evidence from this study.

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..... [5]

Candidates often did not meet all the criteria for a top band response. Candidates needed to demonstrate a good understanding of a principle or concept of the biological area, going beyond 'it is biological' to explaining genes, neurotransmitter and brain activity. Most explanations of the biological area given were too brief. Explicit links were required between the biological area and Sperry's study. Most candidates struggled to provide clear support from Sperry's study, with some confusion with regards to terminology use (e.g. 'right eye' and not right visual field).

Question 6 (e)

- (e) Outline why research in the biological area is often considered reductionist. Support your answer with evidence from an appropriate core study.

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Most candidates were able to outline why the biological area is reductionist. Some were able to provide an accurate example from an appropriate core study. The question also required candidates to show clear understanding of the term reductionism and this was not outlined well by candidates.

Question 6 (f)*

- (f)* Discuss the use of socially sensitive research in psychology. Support your answer with evidence from appropriate core studies.

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..... [10]

This question required candidates to discuss strengths and weaknesses of conducting socially sensitive research. Many candidates performed poorly on this question as it was evident that the majority do not really understand what is meant by socially sensitive research nor what the strengths and weaknesses of conducting socially sensitive research are. Many gave responses which were discussing ethical issues instead. Supportive research was needed and this can come from any of the core studies if the candidate has clearly identified how it is socially sensitive (e.g. creating stereotypes, labelling, etc.). Often the research may not always be relevant, however some candidates were able to use clear examples of research that is socially sensitive.

Misconception



Socially sensitive research and ethical issues are different issues in psychology. Teachers should make sure this the difference between the two issues is clear for students.

Exemplar 1

Some socially sensitive research is useful if it will help us in day to day life with dealing with that specific challenge. In the core study of Baron Cohen Et al research was socially sensitive as participants in the autistic group were proven to be lacking Theory of mind. this may be socially sensitive as participant may have a harder time getting jobs but on the other hand with this new found information we can teach as people how to fit into the environment in different ways either with visual or verbal cues. in this study the pros and cons have been weighed up and the ^{pros} of being able to manually teach autistic people has outweighed the ~~pros~~ cons.

In Exemplar 1, the candidate has provided a creditworthy strength of socially sensitive research, suggesting that this type of research can help us deal with daily challenges for some people. They have used appropriate conclusions from the core study of Baron-Cohen et al. to support their point about socially sensitive research. They then go on to explain the strength of this type of research, by teaching people with autism how to read visual and verbal cues. They have also very skilfully used the command word 'discuss' as they also provide a weakness of Baron Cohen's research with their strength - 'they may have a harder time getting a job' due to their lack of theory of mind – which displays a good discussion.

Section C overview

Section C: Practical applications. Questions in this section require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source. Questions range in size and mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

Question 7 (a)

7

- (a) Outline **two** defining principles or concepts of the social area and briefly explain how they relate to the article.

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[6]

Some candidates provided at least one principle or concept of the social area (e.g. influence of other people, the social context, the influence of others can be actual or imagined). This needed to be supported by evidence from the article about Zac's behaviour and an explanation as to why Zac behaved that way. Some candidates are trying to use the key theme (e.g. the idea of authority figures) as a principle or concept of the social area which gained no credit.

Exemplar 2

2. Another principle of the social area is that we tend to obey authoritative figures. When Zacks' mom asked him to help with shopping, he first refused and attempted to stare down his mother but as she was ~~the~~ an authoritative figure she was able to convince him with a couple phrases such as "Come on" and "I'm waiting".

In Exemplar 2, this candidate gained no credit for this response as they are not offering a principle or concept of the social area. Instead, they are suggesting a psychological issue from the key theme. It is important for candidates to know the difference between the principles and concepts of the areas and perspectives and the key themes among the core studies.

Question 7 (b)

- (b)** Briefly outline how this article could be linked to the key theme of external influences on children's behaviour. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

..... [3]

Most candidates could identify an external influence from the article (i.e. Zac's mum, Zac's older cousins) and then outline what Zac did because of the external influence outlined. Knowledge and understanding of the key theme of 'external influences on children's behaviour' was not well addressed and candidates could have used psychological terminology/theories from the key theme (e.g. role models, operant conditioning).

Question 7 (c)

- (c) Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest **and** explain **two** ways in which older children could be encouraged to show prosocial behaviour towards younger children.

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..... [8]

A minority of candidates provided two clearly different suggestions as to how older children could be encouraged to show prosocial behaviour towards younger children which included very effective application of psychological knowledge throughout. The most effective responses were linked to the use of operant conditioning (reinforcement/punishment), and observational learning (SLT/use of role models/imitation). Some suggestions were not clearly explained in enough detail that would allow it to be implemented and included very weak/no application of psychological knowledge. Candidates who provided such responses did not score well. Some candidates misread the question and provided suggestions to make younger children more prosocial with no reference to how to encourage the older children, so these responses gained no credit.

Question 7 (d)*

(d)* Evaluate the suggestions you have made in **7(c)** using your knowledge of psychology.

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..... [8]

This question required candidates to evaluate the suggestions they had made in Question 7(c) using their knowledge of psychology, so references to psychological issues and debates was required. The question required them to evaluate the suggestions they had made in Question 7(c) in relation to psychological issues and debates. For example, if candidates suggested positive reinforcement (rewards) through giving money to older children in Question 7(c) then they could refer to the fact this is a nurture only suggestion and it is deterministic in Question 7(d).

It is a nurture explanation as it suggests that older children can be more prosocial due to external factors but this ignores if the children are naturally prone to be anti-social and it may be deterministic as it is suggesting that the reward will make older children show prosocial behaviour to younger children so they have no choice. Many candidates merely evaluated their previous suggestions with superficial/generic points and therefore did not respond correctly to the question.

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