

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

PSYCHOLOGY

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology

H567

For first teaching in 2015

H567/02 Summer 2025 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 responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

H567/02 is the second of three A Level units assessing candidates' knowledge and understanding of up to twenty core studies representing a range of themes from five areas of psychology. This component focuses on:

- knowledge and understanding of the twenty core studies as well as their ability to evaluate the study on their own and in relation to the study they have been paired with
- knowledge, understanding and evaluation of areas and perspectives in psychology
- methodological issues, themes and debates relating to core studies and areas in psychology
- practical application of the knowledge from theory and research covered in psychology.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• had extensive and accurate knowledge of the core studies • demonstrated a clear understanding of the demands of different questions and responses to command words well • provided a thorough and clear discussion of individual and situational explanations in psychology, where a range of strengths and weaknesses from the two positions were offered with appropriate supporting research • applied psychological knowledge to the applied scenario in section C, making clear links to the article • utilised core studies within their discussions to illustrate points made • considered details about how suggestions made to encourage helping behaviour can be implemented and also related clearly to the context of diverse social and cultural backgrounds • were able to use issues and debates in psychology to evaluate their own suggestions made to improving behaviour.	• missed information on the core studies or included inaccuracies in responses • did not make comparisons between the biological and social area well, giving only vague overviews of studies or kept responses general to the area • did not use the core studies well, providing only basic knowledge without elaboration • lacked discussion on the individual and situational debate in psychology, simply describing research which supported each side • did not develop suggestions in context, providing only a basic overview of 'use rewards' and 'provide models' • reviewed practical strengths only when evaluating their suggestions without referring to issues or debates in their evaluation, limiting the response.

Section A overview

This section consists of questions relating to the twenty core studies. These are short-answer questions ranging in mark allocation and command terms used. Candidates who did well on these questions showed a good understanding of the core studies and were able to evaluate them, making meaningful links to areas and methodological issues. There are a total of 35 marks for this section.

Question 1 (a)

- 1
(a) Outline **one** difference between the samples used in Bandura et al.'s (1961) study into the transmission of aggression and Chaney et al.'s (2004) Funhaller study.

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Most candidates were able to accurately identify a difference between the samples of the two studies and give clear evidence to support the difference given. The most common responses included location, number of participants and sample size. Accurate information was often given from the studies relating to sample sizes/age ranges/locations. Some candidates made the mistake of referring to sample method or only implying a difference rather than stating clearly.

Question 1 (b)

- (b) Outline **one** difference between the experimental designs used in Bandura et al.'s (1961) study into the transmission of aggression and Chaney et al.'s (2004) Funhaler study.

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This question was generally answered well by most candidates. Those that were not given marks for this question described the research methods (field experiment/laboratory experiment or observation/self-report) rather than outlining experimental designs.

Question 2 (a)

- 2 With reference to Kohlberg's (1968) study into the stages of moral development:

- (a) Give **two** reasons why children at the preconventional level say that Heinz should **not** have stolen the drug for his wife.

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Many candidates made general statements about morality rather than referring to the specific stage of moral development required. For example, 'stealing is wrong', 'because it is bad to steal' or 'child has not been taught what is right'. Most candidates were confident giving a reason relating to the obedience and punishment orientation but were less confident with the self-interest orientation.

OCR support

Many candidates did not answer this question well and had limited knowledge on the levels of moral reasoning.

For support with this, see our '[Teacher instruction: Kohlberg](#)' resource designed for teaching and learning of the core study by Kohlberg offering appropriate teacher content for use in class activities. Student activities are included in this document that review the conclusions (stages/levels) of Kohlberg.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Outline **one** conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of Kohlberg's study.

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This was generally answered well by candidates, with most responses focusing on the stages being invariant or universal.

Question 3

3 Outline the background to Moray's (1959) study into auditory attention.

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Most candidates were able to identify 'the cocktail party effect' and give a good outline of the background including Cherry's or Broadbent's research. Those who were successful in getting full marks used key terms well and linked appropriately to Moray's aim.

Question 4 (a)

4 Grant et al.'s (1998) study into context-dependent memory was a laboratory experiment.

(a) Describe **one** strength of using a laboratory experiment in this study.

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Many candidates were able to give an accurate strength with most describing 'high controls' as a strength. Some candidates did not link explicitly to the core study and so only partially answered the question. Links made were not always relevant to the point given, e.g. mentioning matching/mismatching conditions when describing controls.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Outline **two** features of the procedure in this study.

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Candidates generally answered this question well, with most focusing on the study and testing conditions. There were many accurate responses which outlined reading/highlighting the psychoimmunology article and wearing headphones in the tasks. Those that were given partial marks for this question often gave two basic standardised features rather than showing an understanding of the procedure.

Question 5

- 5 Explain how the findings from Bocchiaro et al.'s (2012) study into disobedience and whistle-blowing relate to the key theme of 'responses to people in authority'.

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Most candidates demonstrated reasonable understanding of what the core study was about, and many began with reference to the percentage of obedience to authority or how many whistle-blew which was impressive. Many who got partial marks did not show a clear enough understanding of the task carried out and gave a brief reference to 'an unethical task' or 'participants wrote the letter' which was too vague for credit.

Question 6

- 6 Briefly discuss the extent to which the findings of Maguire et al.'s (2000) study on taxi drivers can be considered valid.

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This question elicited a variety of successful responses that considered elements of Maguire's study affecting the validity. Many candidates attempted to give balance by giving one way that validity could be seen as high and one way it could be seen as low. However, when this was done the 'extent' was not always made clear within the discussion and so were limited to 4 marks at most.

Successful responses discussed how the feature of the study affected validity and did not just refer to key terms without explanation. For example, quite a few candidates referred to 'construct' validity, but the explanation was muddled. Some attempted to discuss ecological validity in an inappropriate way for this research. Those giving more reasonable discussions spent too long describing the research and results before considering validity.

Exemplar 1

Findings of Maguire's research would be considered valid as the person who was in charge of pixel counting to determine volume of the hippocampus was blind to what scan belonged to who, whether it was a taxi driver or not. This increases ~~the~~ internal validity as the observer ~~of~~ bias is reduced. However this study lacks ~~ecological~~ population validity as the study was only done on male ~~taxi~~ taxi drivers from London therefore the results of higher density of hippocampus ~~cannot~~ cannot be generalised to a greater population as it is not representative and does not show effects on women or people outside of London.

[5]

Two points made about validity, one about internal validity and the other population validity. Both supported with appropriate evidence identifiable as Maguire's research. This response has considered the extent of validity in research by offering balance with the statement 'However, this study....'. The candidate showed understanding of validity throughout the response with well used key terms, e.g. population validity, blind researcher.

Question 7

- 7 Explain why Hancock et al.'s (2011) study into the language of psychopaths can be placed in the individual differences area.

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Candidates generally answered this well, with most being able to identify a feature of the Individual differences area. Those not given credit gave tautological responses, e.g. 'Assumes individuals are different' or 'focuses on what makes people different'. The most common accurate response was 'looks at what makes people unique'.

Most candidates showed a good understanding of the core study by Hancock, et al., those getting full marks were able to clearly explain the differences being investigated and what was found in the research.

Question 8

- 8 Explain why Gould (1982) considered Yerkes' research using IQ testing to be ethnocentric.

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Candidates answered this question in a variety of ways, but many brief explanations were given. There was a good understanding of ethnocentrism, specifically that the tests were focused on American culture. Candidates often missed either the consequences of using biased tests or who was disadvantaged/discriminated against in the testing. Vague responses were common with general reference to 'immigrants' being tested.

Responses that got full marks often gave elaboration of the tests, e.g. giving examples of questions asked along with where the non-USA citizens had emigrated from (e.g. Eastern Europe).

Incorrect responses confused ethnocentrism with generalisability and discussed how the research can only be applied to US citizens.

Misconception



Some responses confused ethnocentrism with generalisability suggesting that the research by Yerke's was unable to represent other populations outside of the USA. In these cases, candidates were unable to get marks as they were not showing an understanding of the issue of ethnocentrism.

Section B overview

Questions in this section assess candidates on their knowledge of areas, perspectives and debates in psychology. The areas explored directly were the cognitive, social and biological, with question demands varying from explanation of application, outlining scientific principles and comparing areas using appropriate core studies for support. The final question in this section gave an opportunity to draw on a variety of core studies and how they relate to individual/situational explanations while discussing strengths and weaknesses of the debate. Candidates who did well used relevant core studies to support points made and gave suitable elaboration/development to their responses. Questions ranged in mark allocation from 4 to 15 marks, with a section total of 35 marks.

Question 9 (a)

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(a) Explain **one** application of the cognitive area of psychology.

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Successful responses included a clear application (CBT, interviewing of witnesses by police, improving student revision techniques) supported with research/theory from the cognitive area. Candidates were often not clear what the application was and simply described research/theory leading to no mark being given. Those who did give an application did not often fully expand on how/why it would be used, focusing more on what should not be done rather than what should be done.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should be encouraged to research at least one application for each area studied. This will give them more ability in providing developed responses for this style of question.

When researching their application, they should include the psychology the practice is based on so that clear links can be made to the area.

Question 9 (b)

- (b)** Outline ways in which the biological area can be considered scientific. Support your answer with evidence from any appropriate core studies.

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Most candidates showed a good understanding of scientific principles and how they relate to the biological area. Features were often clearly identified using appropriate terminology. However, many responses lacked elaboration of the points made, preventing them from accessing top marking bands. A commonly misused key term was reliability. Some of those using this in their response were able to get credit if they developed into replicability.

Most candidates opted to outline quantitative data, laboratory experiments and objectivity. Some responses did not get marks if they referred to scientific equipment without clearly stating what was scientific about these techniques.

A range of studies were used to support points made, but these were sometimes brief, e.g. 'Casey, et al. looked at a cause-and-effect relationship' with little contextual understanding shown of what the cause and effect was in this research (ventral striatum activity levels affecting low delayer responses). Errors were also made by not backing up the point being made, e.g. laboratory experiment being supported with Sperry or Maguire.

Some candidates outlined why the biological area cannot be seen as scientific, which was not addressing the command of the question.

Exemplar 2

Research in the biological area can be scientific as it supports its feature of replicability. For example, in ~~cas~~ Sperry's study into split brain patients they used standardised procedures by ~~use~~ displaying the same words on the screen for all participants at 0.1 seconds each so the LVE cannot transfer information to the RVE in time and vice versa. This then increases the reliability of the research as behaviour is being consistently measured.

Research in the biological area can be scientific as it supports its feature of objectivity. For example, in Casey et al's study into the delay of gratification scientific equipment is used such as the fMRI machine ~~with~~ in order to measure brain activity. This is therefore less likely to be misinterpreted by human error. This increases the validity as behaviour is being accurately measured.

Research in the biological area can be scientific. [8]

9(a) as it supports its feature of falsifiability.
 For example, in ^{Maguire's} ~~Casey's~~ study she uses
 MRI machines to measure ~~brain activity~~
 grey matter in the hippocampi and
 found that London taxi drivers
 had more grey matter in the
 posterior hippocampi compared to
 non taxi drivers. This is falsifiable
 as it can be ~~be~~ proven false - uses
 scientific equipment and is real.

In this exemplar, three clear features of science have been outlined with supporting research and some elaboration. The candidate could have gotten full marks by further developing two features, but they managed to secure all marks by adding a third feature of science. The first feature on replicability was appropriately supported with an outline of control from Sperry, with understanding shown with elaboration into consistency. Objectivity as a relevant second point was supported by a different study (Casey) and elaborated with reference to removal of interpretation. The final point of falsifiability showed some understanding of the term (can be proven false) and linked to measures taken within Maguire to support.

Question 9 (c)

- (c) Compare the biological area with the social area. Support your answer with evidence from appropriate core studies.

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Candidates recognised the requirement to give a minimum of two points of comparison and most made an effort to outline these clearly in a structured response.

Successful responses often referred to debates such as nature/nurture, freewill/determinism; or issues such as ethics or psychology as a science. Less successful comparisons overviewed the areas without outlining the points, leading to implicit comparison. Responses outlining practical applications as a similarity tended to only get partial credit as the studies were simply described with no link to what applications are developed from the findings.

Most responses lacked elaboration, and some used studies incorrectly, e.g. Using Milgram and Casey as examples of laboratory experiments. Those discussing methods were less accurate in the description of the research and how it was a similarity/difference.

OCR support



There are a range of *teaching activities* available to review the areas covered with clear learning objectives and worksheets to introduce the area, help students use research to illustrate points and develop comparison of areas in psychology, these can all be downloaded and used in the classroom:

Here are [core study summary work sheets](#), useful as a revision activity to review relevant methodological and ethical issues alongside debates.

[This resource](#) clearly reviewing areas of psychology with teaching activity suggestions to develop confidence in identifying features of each area.

Question 9 (d)*

(d)* Discuss the individual/situational explanations debate in psychology. Support your answer with evidence from appropriate core studies. **[15]**

Many candidates demonstrated confidence with outlining research and describing the individual/situational debate. Some candidates maintained tautological descriptions throughout, showing a basic understanding of the debate. Another error made was responses being study-specific rather than exploring the strengths and limitations leading to many limited/good discussions rather than a thorough discussion as very few evaluated the debate.

Discussion of the situational side was significantly stronger across the responses, with clear links made to core studies in support, e.g. Milgram, Bandura being frequently and accurately referenced. The individual explanation was explored less and often undeveloped, it should be clear to the examiner how the research fits with the debate giving clear overviews of the findings/conclusions made.

Successful responses used other debates to explore the issues arising within explanations supporting the individual and situational position. These evaluations gave consideration of free will/determinism and reductionism/holism. Some candidates were able to gain evaluation marks by considering areas of psychology generating support, e.g. biological area supporting individual explanations and used core study evidence effectively.

Assessment for learning



It would be good practice to get candidates to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the debate alongside how studies relate to them. This will give opportunity for them to discuss what conclusions from studies mean in relation to the debate in question.

Many candidates did not answer this question well and had limited evaluation on the situational and individual debate. For support with this in class, see both the '[Teacher activity guide: debates](#)' and '[Student activity work book: debates](#)' teacher guides which offer appropriate content for developing understanding of the debates.

Section C overview

This section requires candidates to practically apply their knowledge and understanding of core studies to a novel scenario about responses to people in need. Candidates who did well on this section showed an understanding of key terms from the area of social psychology and were able to give developed suggestions on how to encourage people to help others from diverse social and cultural groups.

Question 10 (a)

10

- (a) From Piliavin et al.'s (1969) Subway Samaritan study, outline what 'diffusion of responsibility' means **and** how it relates to this article.

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This was answered well by most candidates, showing a reasonable understanding of diffusion of responsibility. Some did not refer to the setting, e.g. increase in crowds. Many showed an understanding of less personal responsibility due to it being spread among those present. Most responses gave a clear application to the source with 'many Americans being present' believing others would help the man having the seizure.

Question 10 (b)

- (b) From Levine et al.'s (2001) study of cross-cultural altruism, outline what 'simpatia' means **and** how it relates to this article.

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Most responses showed an understanding of simpatia, stating the values of helping and friendly behaviour. A frequent omission from responses was examples of countries/cultures where simpatico is or is not found. Many were able to link to the article and highlight that Carlos was 'from Spain' and that this was a simpatico culture. Further elaboration was often needed to give more detail of other countries with/without the value.

Question 10 (c)

- (c) Explain how this article relates to the social area of psychology. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

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Many candidates did not get a second mark for knowledge and understanding of the social area giving a good but less developed overview. Some candidates did not get marks because they gave tautological responses, e.g. 'it is about the social setting', 'look at the social context'. Many of those not getting marks for the explanation of the social area referred to situational/environmental factors (places/location) rather than social elements (people/interactions)

Links to the article were limited and not always fully elaborated on. Some candidates simply repeated information from the article rather than making it relevant to the assumptions outlined, e.g. lots of points about the American bystanders but not what the incident was.

Question 10 (d)

- (d) Outline the results from Piliavin et al.'s (1969) Subway Samaritan study **and** briefly explain how these results may relate to the article. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

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There was good knowledge of the results of Piliavin shown in most responses. Many were able to give an accurate outline of at least three different results, and some were able to elaborate on these to gain more marks. Those that included statistics showed that they had a good understanding of the study and were able to give a more accurate outline.

Some responses did detail the procedure of the study which did not meet the command of the question and so gained no marks. These responses often had less information on the results or provided incorrect results about same race helping and the model intervention.

Many applications to the article were given. Some only briefly explained in relation to results highlighted. Mistakes relating to the article arose when discussing results on race effect as many candidates made an assumption that all of the American bystanders in the article were white within their explanation of why they did not help.

Exemplar 3

In Piliavin's study he found that the median person with a cane (the ill condition) received help over 90% of the time & the drunk condition only received help 50% of the time. As well as this there was a slight same race effect of helping so if the victim was black they were more likely to be helped by someone who was also black. The median latency was higher in the drunk condition than the ill condition & group size had no real effect. Men were more likely to help than women & a comment was noted 'that's a men job'. In the article the victim was a man & he was helped by a man this may be due to similar reasons as Piliavin as the victims were always men in the study & women may feel more awkward or uncomfortable when helping a man.

In this exemplar, results were clearly given with elaboration on the percentage of help offered in each condition. Slight same race effect was highlighted along with speed of helping between the drunk and ill condition. The final credited result is that there was no effect of group size found. This candidate has given extra results saying men are more likely to help than women and including comments made by the women in the subway. These did not gain marks as there were only 5 marks available for results. Application is made to the article with reference to the helper being a man. The last sentence does not add clarity to the link as it was uncertain who the other 'bystanders' in the article were, and it cannot be assumed that they were women.

Question 10 (e)

- (e) Using your psychological knowledge, suggest **and** explain at least **two** ways in which individuals may be encouraged to help others from diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

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Common responses used role models and rewards as suggestions and many responses included at least two ways helping behaviour could be encouraged. Some candidates gave more vague ideas which were not grounded in psychological theory, e.g. awareness campaigns, teaching values of helping. Successful responses considered how it would be applied to the groups of people needing to be helped. Many responses aimed for increasing helping behaviours generally rather than applying their suggestion to diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This was often done superficially by repeating words in the question. More explicit links were needed to focus their suggestion, i.e. homelessness, race.

Candidates were successful at linking to psychological theory to underpin their ideas with social learning theory and operant conditioning referred to well and with appropriate key terms. On occasion, too much development into Bandura's or Skinner's research was given which led to the question not being answered as the suggestion was no longer the focus of the answer.

Successful responses clearly linked to social and cultural diversity and explained well how they can improve this. This question was more likely to be left unanswered compared to other questions in the exam, indicating candidates were running out of time towards the end of exam.

Question 10 (f)*

(f)* Evaluate the suggestions you have made in part (e) using your knowledge of psychology.

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Most responses given included two or three evaluation issues, with common issues being reductionism, ethics and effectiveness based on research. Some points were not always elaborated on or linked to the suggestion made in Question 10 (e). The application of their strategies did not often go beyond 'my suggestion of using a role model' meaning discussion was limited and without context. Some candidates did not complete this question or left no response, possibly due to time running out in the exam.

The more successful responses focused on ethnocentrism, social sensitivity, reductionism and determinism and so had considered issues and debates linking to their suggestions. Less successful responses focused on practical issues which affecting the effectiveness of their suggestion. Some candidate responses appeared as opinions rather than psychological evaluation. This question was the one most commonly left unanswered, indicative of candidates running out of time towards the end of the exam.

Assessment for learning



Teaching guides on psychological applied learning scenarios can be found on the OCR website, such as [this one on medical obedience](#) and [this one on Twitter trolls](#), which can be used to practice developing and evaluating suggestions.

Centres should give candidates opportunities to develop suggestions from the applied learning scenarios and encourage them to check how the strategies would be implemented. Candidates would benefit from trying to operationalise the behaviour and fully detail 'how' it will be carried out.

Moving on to evaluating what they suggest, with more detail included there is more context they can refer to in their discussion for their evaluation. They should be familiar with a range of debates, themes and issues from the specification. This can be used as a checklist for points which can be raised when evaluating their suggestions. Some debates apply more readily to certain suggestions than others, so practice is key to gain confidence with working through a generated suggestion. The depth in the discussion is important so candidates do not need to discuss each debate in their evaluations but do need to show how it is demonstrated in the suggestion given.

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