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OCR
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Examiners' report

AS LEVEL

PSYCHOLOGY

OCR Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Psychology

H167

For first teaching in 2015

H167/01 Summer 2025 series

Version 1

ocr.org.uk/psychology

Contents

Introduction

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

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. 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.

Paper 1 series overview

This is the first of the two examined components for the OCR AS Psychology qualification. Overall, the standard of responses was good. There was a wide range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated fairly. Higher achieving candidates wrote more extended and detailed responses that were contextualised and made good use of appropriate terminology. Some candidates found it difficult to use terminology appropriately and used concepts such as validity and reliability with some confusion. Those candidates often struggled with contextualising their responses – they have simply rewritten the question stem/scenario detailed to introduce their answers throughout Sections B and C and then forgot to apply their evaluation points to the scenario introduced. The mere presence of 'context words' in the response was not sufficient to contextualise the response.

As in the previous series, it was necessary for candidates to have practice in the design and implementation of their own practical activities. This should have reinforced their knowledge and understanding of research methods in general, as well as some of the specific terms and concepts they could be assessed on. This would help candidates to comment on how conducting their own research has helped in the planning of novel research presented in this examination. It is important to note that research methods should be reinforced through the core studies, since section A might require candidates to identify the research methods used in any of the core studies. Finally, candidates should be encouraged to use examples in order to illustrate key points that they make. This will help them to convey their understanding better.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• contextualised their responses • had a good understanding of observations and self-reports (and were able to provide strengths and weaknesses for these in their responses) as well as demand characteristics and inter-rater reliability • wrote extended responses appropriate to the number of marks each question was worth • understood the difference between findings and conclusions • had a good understanding of how to calculate Spearman's Rho • had a good understanding of terminology.	• showed inconsistency in contextualising responses • had some understanding of observations and self-reports, demand characteristics and inter-rater reliability although this was inconsistent • wrote less extended responses sometimes not appropriate to the number of marks each question was worth • identified findings without drawing or inferring any conclusions • frequently lacked understanding of how to use Spearman's Rho • had limited understanding of terminology present, for example confusing validity and reliability.

Section A overview

Candidates generally showed good knowledge and understanding across the range of questions asked. In this section, candidates need to be also prepared to identify research methods concepts in the core studies.

Overall feedback

Candidates have answered the majority of the multiple-choice questions well. Incorrect responses were varied. The notable exceptions are outlined below.

Question 5

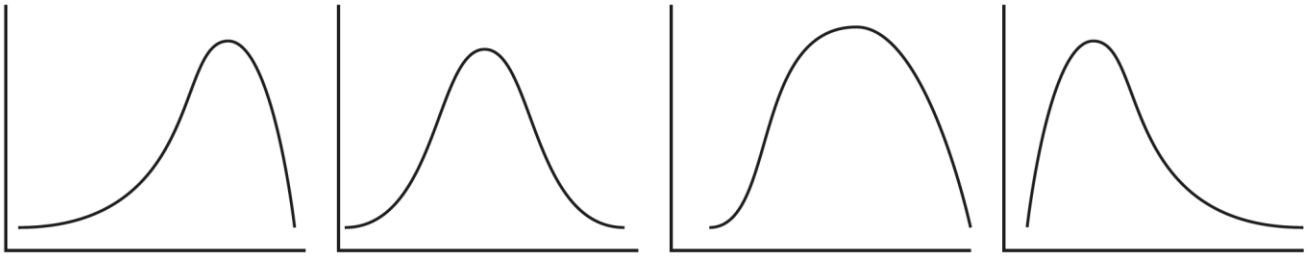
5 Which graph shows a positively skewed distribution curve?

A 1

B 2

C 3

D 4



1 **2** **3** **4**

Your answer [ ] **[1]**

Responses to this question were varied with the majority of candidates answering incorrectly.

Question 10

10 Which of these is **not** a criterion for using parametric inferential statistical tests?

A data in each condition should be from the same participants

B data in each condition should have similar variances

C data should be at least interval level

D data should be from a normally distributed population

Your answer [ ] **[1]**

The vast majority of candidates answered incorrectly.

Question 11

11 Which of these research methods best describes what was used in Loftus and Palmer's (1974) study into eyewitness testimony?

A independent measures design laboratory experiment

B independent measures design laboratory experiment and self-report

C repeated measures design laboratory experiment

D repeated measures design laboratory experiment and self-report

Your answer [ ] **[1]**

The majority of the candidates struggled with this question forgetting that responding to the critical question (e.g. How fast were the cars going when they _____ into each other?) is a form of self-report.

Question 14

14 Which of these could **not** be the result of a Chi-square inferential statistical test?

A −0.05

B 0.00

C 3.42

D 11.68

Your answer [ ] **[1]**

The majority of candidates have struggled with this question not recognising the fact that out of the five tests that they are required to learn, only Spearman's rank can be expressed between -1 to +1.

Section B overview

In this section on research design and response, candidates are required to present their responses based on a study they design that is related to the scenario presented in the question paper. The design question (Question 16) is fundamental and carries 12 marks. Other questions in this section ranged from 2-6 marks. There was a reasonable understanding of the observations shown, inclusive of knowledge and evaluation, specifically within the required features in the design question. To improve, candidates need to make sure they are familiar with all of the terminology in the specification so that they can address all questions accurately. Many would have benefitted from adding more detail in their answers, consistently contextualising their response and elaborating on their evaluation.

Contextualising responses

Rewriting the question stem/scenario detailed to introduce answers throughout Sections B and C will not gain context marks unless evaluation points are applied to the scenario directly. The mere presence of 'context words' in the response is not sufficient to contextualise the response.

Question 16*

Class act

Pupils behave in many different ways in a classroom during a lesson and reveal individual differences that may reflect their personality and style of learning. Some are able to maintain focus and concentrate. Others are easily distracted and may use their phone when they shouldn't, talk to others, and fidget. Knowledge of this could be useful in helping design more effective lessons. A psychologist wants to investigate this further by using the observation method to record the behaviour of pupils in a lesson.

16* Explain how you would use the observation method to investigate the behaviour of pupils in a classroom during a lesson. Justify your decisions as part of your explanation.
You must refer to:

- the behavioural categories in your coding scheme (five behaviours you will look out for)
- the use of time or event sampling
- details of how one ethical consideration would be addressed.

You should use your own experience of practical activities to inform your response. **[12]**

There was a variety of responses to this question, although candidates have struggled to achieve the marks in the highest band. The best responses were characterised by writing a separate paragraph relating to each of the RFs. Most candidates achieved marks within the limited band due to a lack of detail in their responses, context or justification. Some candidates wrote more about their own practical activity than they did about the explanation of the study they had planned based on the stem.

For RF1 (behavioural categories), candidates were able to identify five behavioural categories and operationalise most of them. Those who gained marks in basic or limited level, often listed less than five behavioural categories or suggested unclear behavioural categories.

RF2 (time and event sampling) was a good differentiator. Candidates gaining reasonable and good marks were able to identify and describe either time or event sampling with enough detail enabling replication. A small proportion of candidates however, identified time sampling while describing event sampling and vice versa.

For RF3 (one ethical issues), most candidates were able to identify and deal with a relevant ethical issue, carefully considering the scenario (i.e. understanding that informed consent must be obtained from parents, since participants are under 16).

Assessment for learning

The best responses are characterised by addressing each RF separately. Within each paragraph candidates should:

- demonstrate an understanding of RF and how to address it in context of the scenario given

- justify the decisions made in context of the scenario given

- draw on own experiences of conducting research and demonstrate how it informed their planning of the currently proposed research.

Question 17

17 Outline how you could use self-selected sampling to obtain a class of pupils from a school to use as participants for this study.

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..... **[2]**

Most candidates achieved 2 marks on this question. A small number of candidates referred to choosing/picking participants, which often linked to opportunity sampling and gained no credit.

Question 18

18 Outline **one** strength and **one** weakness of the use of the observation method in this study.

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..... **[6]**

Candidates who scored full marks were able to identify strengths and weaknesses in context and explained why this would be considered a strength or a weakness. Responses that did not score well either did not include context or would not comment as to why something is a strength or a weakness. Some candidates would simply state 'therefore more/less valid and/or reliable' rather than being specific. Those who scored 0 marks focused on generic evaluation points that could apply to any research method (e.g. cheap/easy).

Assessment for learning

Questions requiring candidates to outline one strength and/or weakness tend to be answered well if they follow point, explain, context structure.

Question 19

19 Outline **two** ways that inter-rater reliability could be increased if there were two researchers responsible for recording the behaviour in this study.

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2 .....

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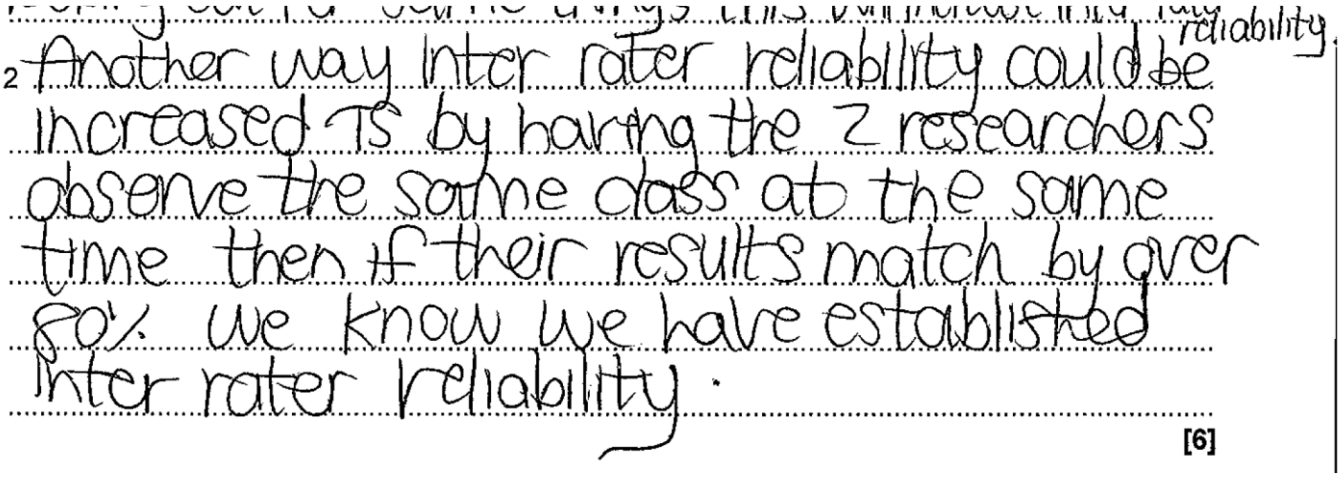
[6]

The majority of candidates have struggled with this question. Better responses were able to identify features increasing inter-rater reliability (e.g. the use of pilot studies or training the observers ensuring that they are both clear how to use the behavioural categories tally) as well as explain them in context. Weaker responses were either attempting to define inter-rater reliability (e.g. see if there is an 80% agreement or use more than one researcher) or suggesting ways that would reduce inter-rater reliability/make it impossible to check for it (e.g. observe from different positions so that each observer can focus on different students, each observer in different classroom or observe on different days). Other responses suggested that having two observers is useful as when one misses some behaviours, the other observer might notice them, so no behaviour will be missed. This was not creditworthy.

Misconception

Inter-rater reliability is <u>not</u> the extent to which if the study were repeated the same findings would be obtained. It is concerned with the ability of two or more observers to look out for and record the same behaviours in the same way.

Exemplar 1


reliability.

2 Another way inter rater reliability could be increased TS by having the 2 researchers observe the same class at the same time then if their results match by over 80% we know we have established inter rater reliability.

[6]

Responses like this were very common – however, these simply attempt to define inter-rater reliability rather than identify factors that could increase it.

Question 20

20 Outline **two** ways that you could reduce possible demand characteristics in your design of this study.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[6]

Better responses identified possible ways of reducing demand characteristics in context as well as elaborated on them to explain why those features would help with reducing demand characteristics. There was a large number who gained less than 6 marks for mixed reasons: first, candidates sometimes miss out context; second, candidates are sometimes unable to elaborate on their points for the final marks.

Exemplar 2

2 A second way could be through observing the lesson through a camera.
This would mean that the ~~ppt~~ there would not be a stranger in the
classroom that could influence pupil's behaviours. Instead they would be
unaware they are being observed and this would increase the chance of
them displaying natural behaviour and not demand characteristics.
however, a debrief (and consent) would need to be given afterwards.

[6]

This response would get 3 marks (NB. as per mark scheme, one way can get up to 3 marks). Candidate has suggested one way to reduce demand characteristics (observe through the camera) and explained why this would help (there would not be a stranger in the classroom/unaware of being observed, therefore displaying natural behaviour). All of this was written in the context of the study.

Question 21

21 Outline what information you would include in a debrief with participants at the end of the study.

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..... **[3]**

Candidates often gained full marks here, however a small proportion of candidates were unable to suggest specific information to be included in the debrief. Some of the suggestions were simply too broad (e.g. tell them about the study).

Section C overview

A good understanding of scatter graphs and self-reports was shown by many candidates. This section of the examination had the most questions that were not attempted by candidates due to the lack of understanding of Spearman's Rho and type 2 errors. Weaker responses tended to be brief.

Contextualising responses

Rewriting the question stem/scenario detailed to introduce answers throughout Sections B and C will not gain context marks unless evaluation points are applied to the scenario directly. The mere presence of 'context words' in the response is not sufficient to contextualise response.

Question 22 (a)

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another individual and may be related to the willingness to help another person.

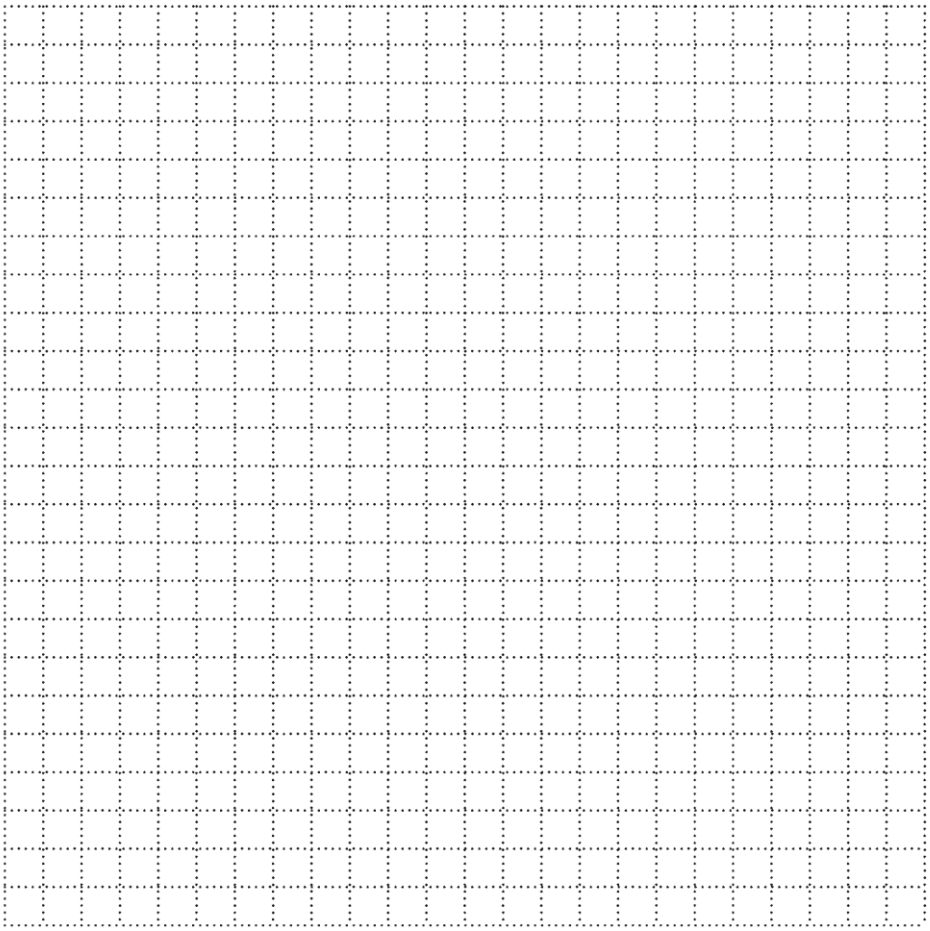
Helping someone is often regarded as being 'kind-hearted', but could it be more of a cognitive process related to the way a person thinks?

To investigate this, a psychologist conducted a correlation study to investigate the relationship between empathy and helping behaviour. Ten people were given a set of 12 questions assessing their ability to empathise. They were then asked to indicate if they would offer help or not in 12 hypothetical situations where a person needed help of some kind.

The table shows the data collected in this study.

Participant	Empathy score (0 to 12)	Helping score (0 to 12)
a	7	9
b	12	12
c	3	5
d	6	7
e	10	11
f	2	4
g	1	3
h	11	2
i	4	6
j	8	10

(a) Draw a fully labelled scatter diagram displaying the data from this study.



[4]

Almost all candidates knew how the scatter graph is supposed to look like. However, a significant proportion of candidates have lost at least 1 mark. The most common mistakes included not fully operationalising the labels or the title (or not including it at all).

Question 22 (b)

(b) Outline **two** conclusions that can be made from the data displayed in this scatter diagram.

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2 .....

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[6]

Candidates really struggle to differentiate between findings and conclusions. Although most candidates included context in their answer, the vast majority of those simply noted a finding and did not explain what the implications of the finding are. Better responses were able to identify a possible conclusion supported by a finding. They were also able to suggest a plausible explanation for the conclusion given.

Assessment for learning

Candidates need to practice forming a conclusion. Phrases such as 'this is because…', 'this suggests that…' might be useful.

Question 23

23 Outline **one** strength and **one** weakness of the use of the self-report method to gather data in this study.

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..... **[6]**

Stronger responses identified a strength and a weakness suitable for the self-report used in the study. They were also able to explain why these would be considered a strength or a weakness. Weaker responses often did not include context and/or did not elaborate on the point made. Some of the strengths and weaknesses were evaluating types of questions used within the self-report (e.g. closed questions), rather than self-report itself and therefore not answering the question.

Question 24

24 Explain why Spearman's Rho would be the appropriate non-parametric inferential statistical test to use to analyse the data from this study.

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..... **[3]**

Better responses offered two appropriate reasons (with at least one in context) for the use of Spearman's Rho. Weaker responses rarely contextualised their response.

Question 25

25 Use the formula for Spearman's Rho provided to calculate the value of r_s.
The value of $\Sigma d^2 = 72$.
Show your workings.

Write your answer to **2** significant figures.

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6(\Sigma d^2)}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

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..... **[3]**

This question was interesting as candidates often gained 3 or 0 marks. Those who knew what n stands for were able to substitute the formula correctly and achieved full marks. Those who scored 0 marks often substituted the number of participants incorrectly (used 12 rather than 10), which led them to incorrect responses. A small proportion of candidates knew how to calculate Spearman's Rho; however their final answer was not written to two significant figures.

Question 26

26 Explain what it would mean if a type 2 error was made following the analysis of the data in this study.

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..... **[3]**

This question had the most NR (no response) marks. Those who attempted the question often were unable to explain what is meant by type 2 error or confused it with type 1 error. Better responses were able to explain type 2 error in the context of the scenario.

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