

PSYCHOLOGY A-Level

HEAD OF

DEPARTMENT:

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Psychology is all about being curious:

What does 'IQ'
stand for?

What happens
with thoughts
once they are
forgotten?

How does an
MRI scanner
work?

Why do we
dream at night?

Why red makes a
good colour for
sweets packaging?

Are criminals
born evil or learn
to become evil?

Why did
soldiers obey
Hitler?

Do plants think?

Why do we fall
in love with
certain people
but not others?



What is PSYCHOLOGY?

It is the study of **mental processes** (such as memorising or forgetting) **and behaviour** (such as obedience or conformity).

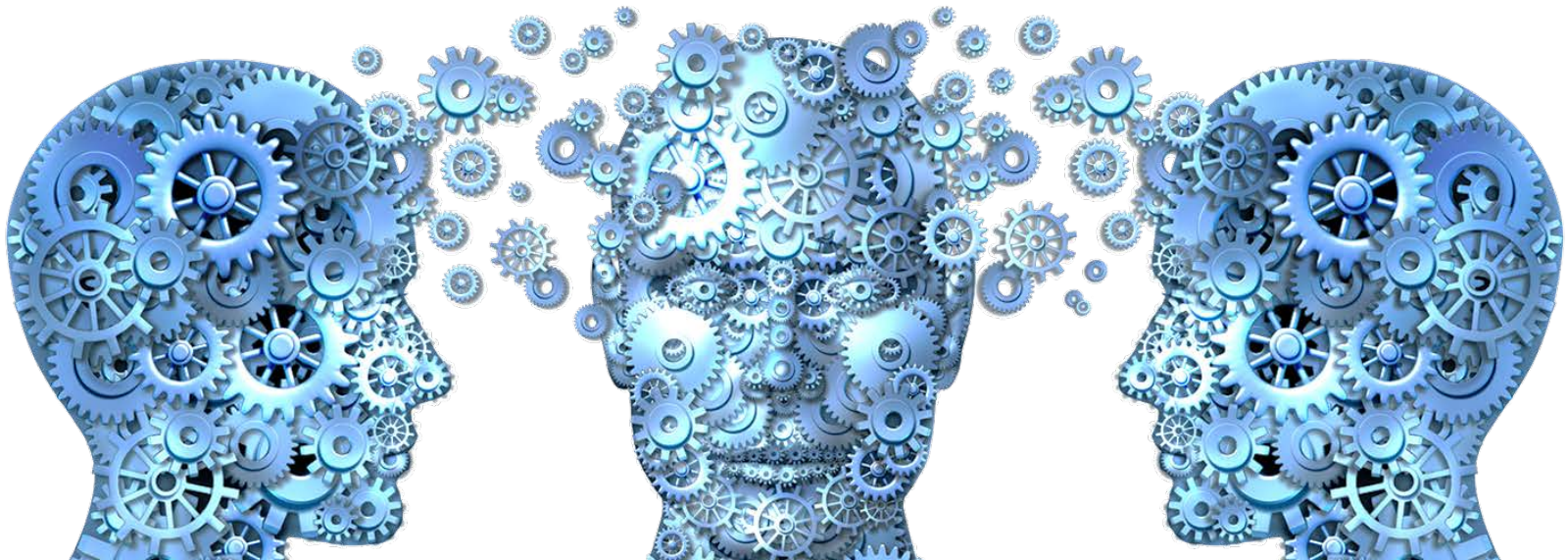
Psychologists study mental processes and behaviour **in many different ways**. The topics which are studied aim to reflect these different approaches. One of the units will look at Social Psychology.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Focuses on how people change their behaviour in **group situations**. One famous study is the **Asch experiment** which is a good example of how social psychologists carry out an investigation.

Watch the following clip...

[Asche's line experiment](#)



Asch experiment



If the video doesn't load automatically, you can watch it via youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA-gbpt7Ts8&t=1s&ab_channel=QuestionEverything

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Experiments like Asch's enable psychologists to work out **which factors influence conformity.**

For example we could change the number of participants, the number of dissenters, the difficulty of the task, etc. to see which ones have the greatest effect on conformity rates.

It will be necessary for you to **learn how to design experiments, how to use statistics to analyse the results and also how to see the evaluation points (strengths and limitations) in such experiments.**

APPROACHES:

Learning approaches - Pavlov, Skinner, Bandura...

Psychodynamic approach – Freud...therapy

Biological/Cognitive approach – Brain structure, neurotransmitters...

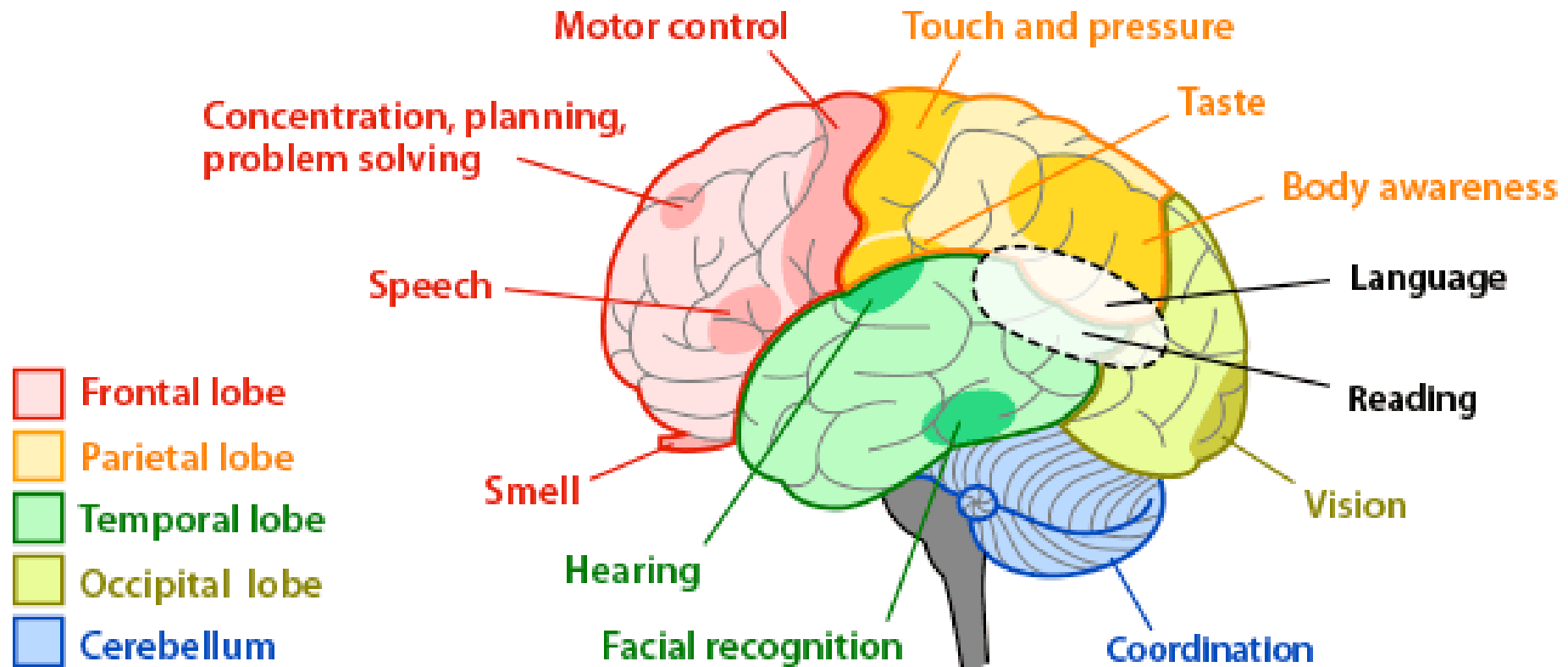
We will see how psychology evolved as a science. We will look into **Pavlov's experiments on animals** to analyse **commonalities in human and animal behaviour**.

Furthermore, we will **study different brain parts** to see which ones have involved in different functions, such as speech, vision or emotion.



The structure of the brain...

biopsychology/neuropsychology



Freud...psychodynamic approach



- We will also look into the subconscious and invisible part of your mind: **personality**.
- We will use theories devised by Freud to understand how your personality shapes itself throughout your lifetime.
- Moreover, we will explore psychotherapies introduced by Freud, including hypnosis and dream analysis.

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

- Hannibal Lecter? Phobia, depression, OCD, schizophrenia...
- **We will try to understand the symptoms, causes and treatment** for some of the most common and uncommon mental disorders.
- To give you an example of an unusual mental disorder, watch the following clip of a narcoleptic patient.



Narcolepsy



If the video doesn't load automatically, you can watch it via youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2x14qETS7E&ab_channel=DeeDaud

Case studies of patients

Case studies, like that of Muhammad, can show us which specific brain structures are important for maintaining your awareness and consciousness.

In addition, they provide evidence which can be used to support or refute various theories, e.g. the existence of endogenous pacemakers.

Students will be required to use case studies for this purpose, in addition to understanding the strengths and limitations of such research.

RESEARCH METHODS

You have to be careful how you carry out your experiments... you want valid and reliable conclusions, ideally WITHOUT harming your participants!!

In Research Methods unit we will study the principles behind experiments, including control of variables, ethics, sample collection, experimental designs, calculating statistics and drawing graphs for our results.

Your GCSE Maths skills will be essential here.



What if I didn't study Psychology at GCSE?



The course is designed to give everyone a good introduction to Psychology.



If you've studied Psychology GCSE, then you will find A-Level even more enjoyable.



Some topics covered in GCSE, like Memory, will be re-visited in more detail, while there will also be a number of totally new modules that will capture your interest.



We will also cover new studies and learn about new mental disorders.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXAM?



We will run the 2-year A-Level course in Psychology as part of the Academic Pathway. (It cannot be taken with Criminology here).



The entry requirements are explained in the Sixth Form booklet; most importantly, you need to have good English Language abilities (minimum grade 5) 5 in Eng Lang and Maths, + 6 in Biology or 6/6 in Combined Science



The entire course is assessed in the form of exam (x 3 two hour papers for the A-Level taken at the end of Year 13; a mix of multiple choice, short, medium and essay questions are to be expected). NB. There is no coursework.

Careers in Psychology

An awareness of psychology is becoming increasingly important in a range of disciplines from:

Sports and exercise psychology

Human resources,

Management,

Advertising & marketing,

Criminology/Police/Forensics

Health care professions,

Social services and teaching.

Counselling/psychiatric doctors

Questions...

Thank you for listening!

Time for questions?

