

PSYCHOLOGY A-Level

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Psychology is all about being curious:

What does 'IQ' stand for?

Is the brain like a computer?

How does an MRI scanner work?

Why do we dream at night?

How would you test if red makes a good colour for sweet packaging?

Are criminals born evil or do they learn to be evil?

Why did soldiers obey Hitler?

Do we have free will?

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.....

Which topics are studied here...

Year 1

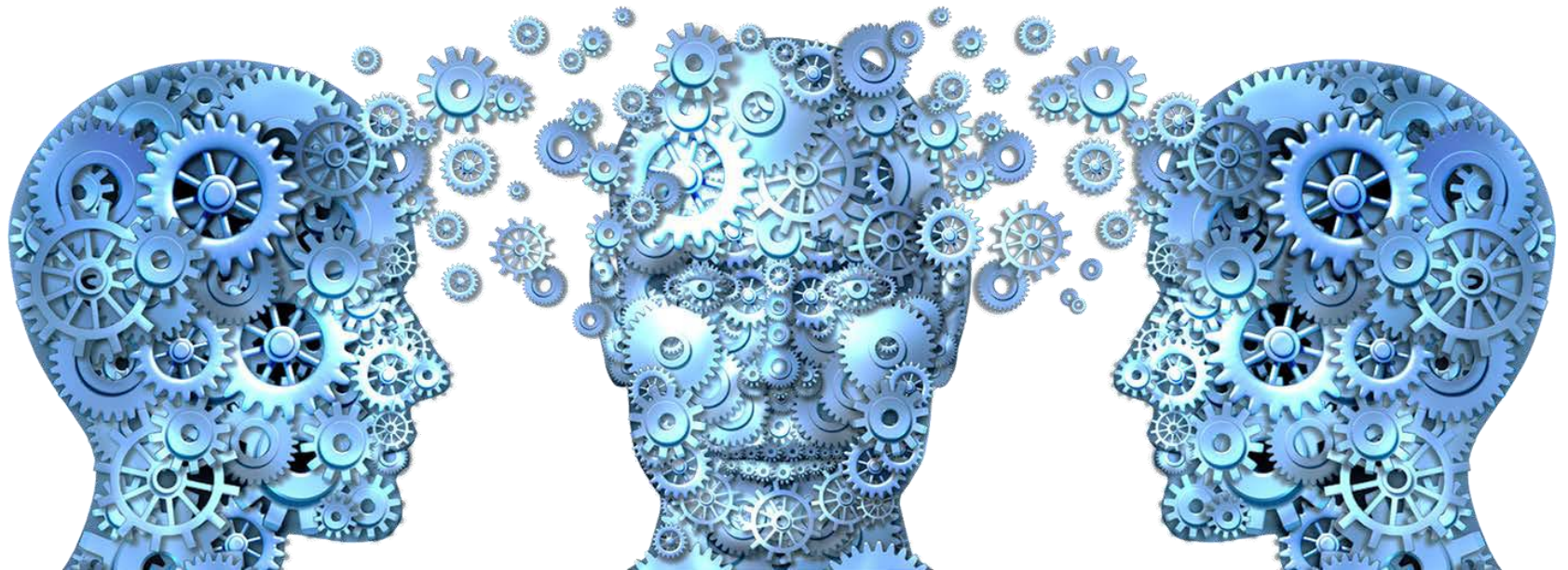
- Attachment
- Memory
- Social Influence
- Approaches
- Psychopathology
- Biopsychology
- Research Methods

Year 2

- Schizophrenia
- Relationships
- Forensic Psychology
- Research Methods
- Issues and Debates

Topic example: 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...



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 weak points in such experiments.**

COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

This is the study of mental processes.
Since memory is an example of a mental process,
memory is one of our topics.

One way that memory is investigated is by the use
of case studies. **One famous case study was that of
patient HM.** Watch the following clip...



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Case studies like that of HM can show us which specific brain structures are important for memory.

In addition, they provide evidence which can be used to support or refute various theories of memory. ***Students will be required to use case studies for this purpose, in addition to understanding the strengths and limitations of such research.***

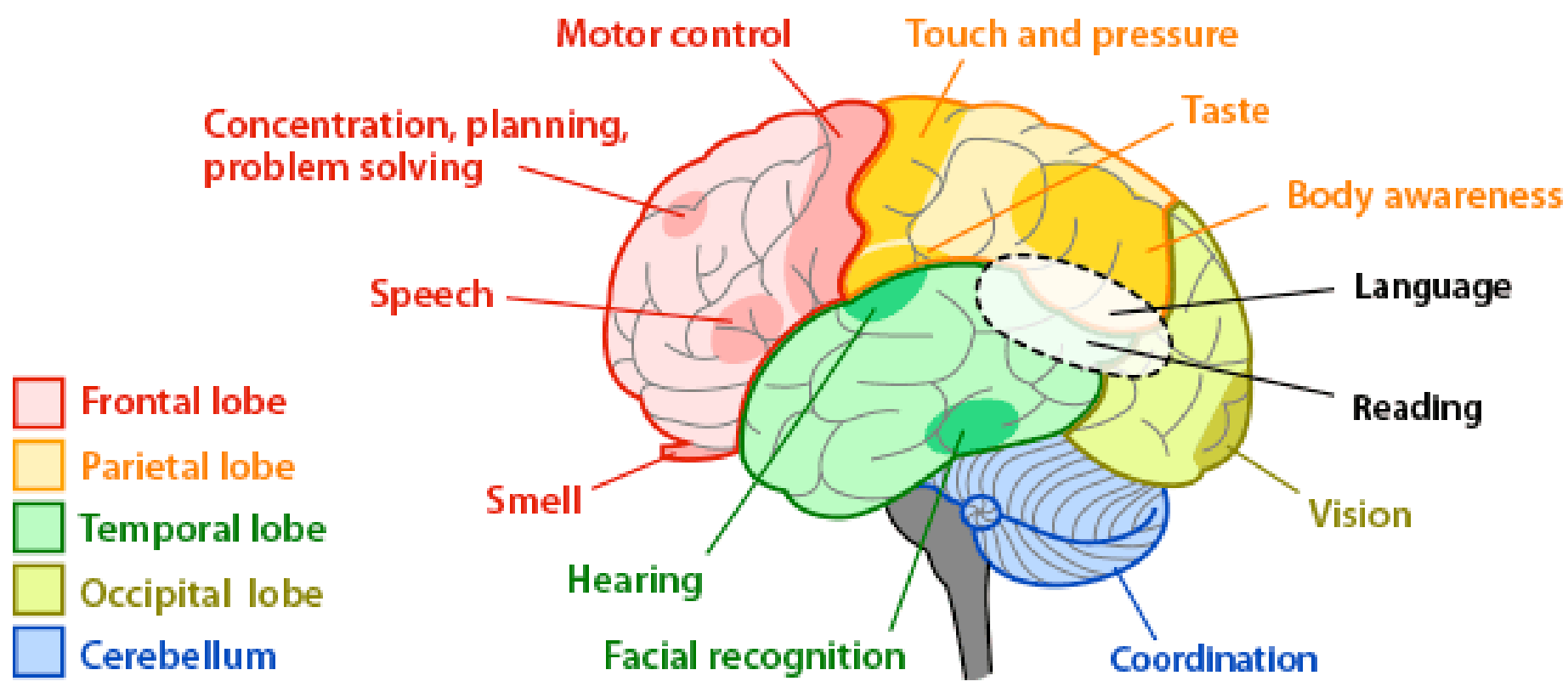
APPROACHES: P for Pavlov, F for Freud, B for Brain

We will see how psychology evolved as a science. We will start with foundational studies such as **Pavlov's classical conditioning experiments on dogs** and **Watson's on conditioning a phobia into a baby human!**

We will look at all the different types of psychology, up to and including modern **cognitive neuroscience**. We will find out how **the different parts of the brain are studied and find out** which ones are involved in different functions, such as **speech, vision or emotion**.



B for Brain...



F for Freud...



We will also study the effects of the unconscious and invisible part of your mind according to Freud's famous theories . We will find out how his ideas have influenced modern psychology. Moreover, we will learn about the therapies 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

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 did/didn't study Psychology at GCSE?

The course is designed to give everyone a good introduction to Psychology, so if you've never heard of Psychology before – that is absolutely fine; the majority of students will not have either. We will make sure you understand the subject throughout.

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, e.g. Attachment, Relationships and Forensics. 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.

The entry requirements are explained in the Sixth Form booklet; most importantly, you need to have good English Language abilities (minimum grade 5) as well as be confident in Maths and Sciences.

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

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

An awareness of psychology is becoming increasingly important in a range of disciplines from **sports and exercise psychology to human resources, management, advertising, marketing, criminology, health care professions, social services and teaching.**

The subject will give you a wide range of skills as it touches on many areas from history and sociology to biology and statistics. It will be a great asset whether you decide to follow the university route or decide to enter employment after Sixth Form.

Any further questions?

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- Miss Smith
- Mr Marris

