

## What are the aims and intentions of this curriculum?

The two-year A-level course is designed for students to learn progressively. In psychology the aim is to give students a good grounding in the way research is done in the social sciences. Students will understand that different approaches to doing research will reach different conclusions.

The intention is that they will complete the course with an understanding of how psychology might be applied to different situations and problems. They will appreciate the extent to which said research might be considered 'useful'. This subject might serve as an introduction to psychology at degree level; or as an introduction to the study of different methodologies and explanations in any subject. Students are encouraged to ask a question they might not encounter on other science courses: what is science?

On the second year, for A-level Psychology, there is **new content for Unit 3: Issues in Mental Health, Criminal Psychology, and Child Psychology**. There is also the repetition of content from the AS course (Research Methods for Unit 1 is now studied at a higher level; and there are now more Core Studies for Unit 2).

**Issues in Mental Health** includes the way abnormality is socially constructed as well as examples of how mental disorders like schizophrenia and depression have been studied.

**Criminal Psychology** includes explanations of criminality, the way crime is investigated, and the way jury persuasion in the courtroom might work.

**Child Psychology** includes cognitive development (how the child's 'thinking skills' evolve), how infants form different kinds of attachment with caregivers, and the way children learn gender roles from TV advertising.

Term	Topics	Knowledge and key terms	Skills developed	Assessment
Autumn 1	<p><b>Criminal Psychology</b> From the new Unit 3 – topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'making' of the criminal</li> <li>How crime is investigated</li> <li>How crime might be prevented</li> <li>The effects of different kinds of punishment and prison regime</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research methods</li> </ul>	<p><b>Criminal Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge and key terms from the AS course as appropriate: how can we apply knowledge to this new topic?</li> <li>The course is based on research studies, for example the comparison of a longitudinal study from social psychology with a study using brain-scanning technology (biological psychology)</li> <li>Learned behaviour</li> <li>Forensic investigation</li> <li>Interviewing and interrogation techniques</li> <li>Persuasion by expert witnesses</li> <li>Broken windows theory and zero tolerance</li> <li>Punishment vs rehabilitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>An appreciation of contested knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no 'right' answer: students must discuss the work produced by professional researchers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Revision and retrieval:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borrowing from the AS course to apply knowledge in different situations.</li> <li>Homework topic: different work in class and for homework reinforces the need for constant revision</li> </ul> <p><b>Criminal Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making connections between different topics: the first stage in learning the importance of synopticism for this part of the course.</li> <li>For example: if you believe someone is a 'born criminal' you might be inclined to prioritise 'punishment' over 'rehabilitation'</li> <li>Writing for assessment: an understanding of the requirements for this new topic</li> <li>This first topic will require more lesson time to establish the way students must write to gain good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three-part questions taken from examination papers (10 + 15 + 10 marks, each part of the question being assessed differently).</li> </ul>

		<p><b>Research methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content as for the AS course</li> </ul>	<p>marks (assessment is similar for Child Psychology where, in this term, fewer lessons will be devoted to the topic).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further, students must establish their understanding of ‘the application of knowledge’</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Autumn 2</b></p>	<p><b>Child Psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues relating to different age groups: infants to young adults (‘adolescents’)</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation for the November Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics will be chosen from criminal and child psychologies</li> <li>• Perhaps also research methods (tbc)</li> <li>• One examination paper</li> <li>• This paper will have been produced to focus on strengths and weaknesses that have emerged in this term.</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal psychology: full sections in anticipation for the November Assessment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Child psychology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligence: innate or learned?</li> <li>• Environmental factors</li> <li>• Pre-adult brain development and risk-taking behaviour</li> <li>• Perceptual development: depth perception and the visual cliff</li> <li>• Comparing development in human and non-human animals</li> <li>• Cognitive development: Piaget and Vygotsky</li> <li>• Tutoring and problem-solving</li> <li>• Attachment in babies</li> <li>• Impact of advertising on children: learned behaviour and gender roles</li> </ul>	<p><b>An appreciation of contested knowledge:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can now move to a more sophisticated understanding of different interpretations when considering the context (including background studies) for a particular topic</li> <li>• They should now see the importance of considering material from any part of the course when drafting responses to examination questions</li> <li>• Work in class will include, for example, discussion of a range of examination questions on one topic: what are the requirements of questions worded slightly differently?</li> <li>• This work will help students refine their application of knowledge.</li> </ul> <p><b>Revision and retrieval</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework on criminal psychology (Autumn 1) will keep this topic fresh</li> </ul> <p><b>Examination preparation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should distinguish ongoing revision of work done in class from focused examination preparation.</li> <li>• The latter requires students to address not just assessment objectives (how to gain good marks) but the need to practise writing in an examination setting.</li> <li>• A-level students will approach examination preparation step-by-step: one examination paper in November and two papers in February.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The November Assessment:</b> a formal examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One paper: length to be confirmed (at least one hour 30 minutes, likely longer).</li> <li>• This examination will be discussed in class and objectives for individual students outlined.</li> </ul>

<b>Spring 1</b>	<p><b>Issues in mental health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on three key studies</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation for the February Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including homework on child psychology</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mental health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historical views of mental health (eg possession)</li> <li>Defining abnormality and classification: Rosenhan and labelling</li> <li>Characteristics of disorders</li> <li>Medical model: Gottesman and heritability</li> <li>Behaviourist explanation and cognitive behavioural therapy</li> <li>Psychodynamic explanation and Freudian theory (eg dream analysis)</li> <li>Szasz: the myth of mental illness</li> </ul>	<p><b>An appreciation of contested knowledge:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions for mental health highlight questions regarding psychology as a science</li> <li>Szasz study will highlight the politics of mental health</li> </ul> <p><b>Revision and retrieval</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homework on child psychology (Autumn 2) will keep this topic fresh</li> <li>Work on, eg, the psychodynamic explanation will recall Freud's case study of Little Hans</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing for assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will focus on theoretical understanding and application of theory</li> </ul>	<p><b>February Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For A-level students: two examination papers</li> <li>Rationale as above for the November Assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>For Mental health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment is different to earlier topics (they are optional and there needs to be standardisation; for mental health there is a greater variety of the kinds of questions asked)</li> </ul>
<b>Spring 2</b>	<p><b>Core studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New (10) and old (10)</li> <li>Topic begins before half-term?</li> </ul> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Core studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New themes</li> <li>Social: prosocial behaviour</li> <li>Cognitive: attention</li> <li>Developmental: morality and moral development of children</li> <li>Biological: brain plasticity</li> <li>Individual differences: measuring differences</li> </ul>	<p><b>Contested knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between classical and contemporary studies: often conflict (eg the reappraisal of work such as the classification of sub-normal intelligences at the start of the C20th)</li> </ul> <p><b>Revision and retrieval</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New studies must mean recall of AS studies</li> <li>Homework on mental health keeps those topics in mind</li> <li>Possible comparison of the classification systems for mental disorders and the way intelligence is classified in Gould or psychopathy in Hancock</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing for assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are encouraged to make connections across the entire course: this will support retrieval and also open up possible comparisons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing for assessment now focuses on writing responses in combination, eventually full papers, always in timed conditions</li> </ul>
<b>Summer 1</b>	<p><b>Final examination preparation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>H567/01</li> <li>H567/02</li> <li>H567/03</li> </ul>	<p>TBA when we get there: based on the lessons available before examinations start in mid-May</p>	<p><b>Examination preparation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students refine pacing in examinations of a particular length</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full papers</li> </ul>