

# AQA A Level Psychology Curriculum Map and Skills Criteria 2024-2026

The AQA Psychology course is 100% examination. There is no coursework content. The intent is to build a conceptual understanding of psychology and apply to real-life

Introduction Year 12	Term 1	Term 1 - 2	Term 2	Term 3
<p><b>Introduction to psychology</b></p> <p>Overview of the content</p> <p>Exam format</p> <p>Subject requirements</p> <p>How to organise notes and create mind maps</p> <p>Investigations</p> <p>Explaining and analysing studies</p> <p>Dismiss misconceptions</p>	<p><b>Research Methods</b></p> <p>IV and DV Hypotheses and variables Experimental methods -laboratory, field and quasi</p> <p>Experimental methods – Interviews, questionnaires, observations, correlations</p> <p>Experimental designs Sampling techniques Pilot studies Measures of central tendency Graphs and types of data Skewed distribution</p> <p>Sign test and application Ethical issues and guidelines Peer reviews Psychology of the economy</p> <p><b>Approaches</b></p> <p>Psychodynamic approach Biological approach Behaviourist approach Social learning theory Cognitive approach Humanistic approach Evolutionary theory</p>	<p><b>Memory</b></p> <p>Keywords in memory The multi store model Sensory memory, STM and LTM Coding, capacity and duration Episodic, procedural and semantic memory in LTM Working memory model Visuo-spatial sketchpad Articulatory phonological loop Central executive Episodic buffer Proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure Eyewitness testimony Leading questions Post event discussion Anxiety Improving eyewitness testimony Cognitive interviews</p> <p><b>Application</b></p> <p>Use knowledge of research methods and approaches to evaluate research</p>	<p><b>Social Psychology</b></p> <p>Types of conformity; compliance identification and internalisation Explanations of conformity; normative and Informational Asch anonymity, difficulty Zimbardo conformity to roles Explanations of obedience; agentic state and legitimacy of authority Social support and locus of control Minority influence; consistency, commitment and flexibility Social influences on social change</p> <p><b>Psychopathology</b></p> <p>Definitions of abnormality Behavioural, emotional and cognitive aspects of phobias. Explanations of phobias; classical and operant conditioning Treatments including systematic desensitisation, relaxation, the use of hierarchy and flooding. Cognitive approach; explaining and treating depression: Beck’s negative triad and Ellis’s ABC Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), challenging irrational thoughts. Biological approach; explaining and treating OCD: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy.</p>	<p><b>Attachment</b></p> <p>Caregiver interaction; reciprocity and interactional synchrony Schaffer’s stages role of the father Animal studies; Lorenz and Harlow Explanations; learning theory and Bowlby’s monotropic theory Critical period and internal model Ainsworth’s attachment types Bowlby; maternal deprivation and institutionalisation and orphanages Early childhood on adult relationships and internal model</p> <p><b>Consolidation, application and exam practice</b></p> <p><b>Introduction to the year 13 course</b></p>

## Key Dates to consider in planning for school holidays

Autumn: 25<sup>th</sup>October - 4<sup>th</sup> November    Christmas: 20<sup>st</sup> December – 6<sup>th</sup> January    Spring: 14<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>rd</sup> February    Easter: 4<sup>th</sup> April – 22<sup>nd</sup> April    Whiston 23<sup>rd</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> June    End of term 23<sup>rd</sup> July

Course overview Year 13	Term 1	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
<p>Overview of the content</p> <p>Exam format</p> <p>Subject requirements</p> <p>How to organise notes and create mind maps</p> <p>Investigations</p> <p>Explaining and analysing studies</p> <p>Dismiss misconceptions</p>	<p><b>Research Methods</b></p> <p>Experimental methods Non-experimental methods Controls, randomisation and standardisation Reliability; test-retest, inter-observer, ways to improve Validity; face, concurrent, ecological, temporal Features of science; replicability, falsifiability, theory construction, hypothesis testing, paradigms Psychology reports; abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion, referencing Content and thematic analysis Inferential statistics; type I and type II errors</p>	<p><b>Biopsychology</b></p> <p>Divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic). Sensory, relay, motor neurons. Synaptic transmission including excitation and inhibition. Endocrine glands and hormones The fight or flight response Localisation of brain function Hemispheric lateralisation: Broca's and Wernicke's area Split brain research by Sperry Plasticity and recovery Brain scans; fMRI, EEGs, ERPs and post-mortem examinations Biological rhythm; circadian, infradian and ultradian Endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle.</p>	<p><b>Forensic Psychology</b></p> <p>Offender profiling: the top-down approach and bottom-up approach, including investigations. Biological explanations of offending behaviour: genetics and neural explanations. Psychological explanations of offending behaviour: Eysenck's theory of criminal personality; level of moral reasoning. Dealing with offending behaviour: the aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Behaviour modification in custody. Anger management and restorative justice programmes.</p> <p><b>Stress</b></p> <p>The physiology of stress, including GAS, SAM and HPA axis. The role of stress in illness; immunosuppression and CHD. Sources of stress: life changes and daily hassles. Workplace stress, Measuring stress: self-report scales (SRRS) and Hassles and Uplifts Individual differences: personality types A, B and C and hardiness, commitment Managing and coping with stress: drug therapy, SIT and biofeedback. Gender differences, social support</p>	<p><b>Relationships</b></p> <p>Evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, sexual selection Factors affecting attraction: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, matching hypothesis; Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's model, filter theory Duck's model of relationship breakdown: Virtual relationships in social media: effects of gating on the nature of virtual relationships. Parasocial relationships: the absorption addiction model</p> <p><b>Issues and Debates</b></p> <p>Gender and culture in Psychology – androcentrism and alpha - beta. Free will determinism: psychic biological and environmental. The scientific emphasis on causality The nature-nurture debate: the; the interactionist approach. Holism and reductionism: levels Idiographic and nomothetic Ethics, including social sensitivity</p>
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	<b>Analysis and application Exam practice for short questions and essays</b>	<b>Analysis of key studies Exam papers, review and improvement</b>	<b>Analysis of key studies Exam papers, review and improvement</b>	<b>Analysis of key studies Exam papers, review and improvement</b>

**Key Dates to consider in planning for school holidays**

Autumn: 25<sup>th</sup>October - 4<sup>th</sup> November    Christmas: 20<sup>st</sup> December – 6<sup>th</sup> January    Spring: 14<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>rd</sup> February    Easter: 4<sup>th</sup> April – 22<sup>nd</sup> April    Whiston 23<sup>rd</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> June    End of term 23<sup>rd</sup> July

**Key Dates to consider in planning for school holidays**

Autumn: 25<sup>th</sup>October - 4<sup>th</sup> November    Christmas: 20<sup>st</sup> December – 6<sup>th</sup> January    Spring: 14<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>rd</sup> February    Easter: 4<sup>th</sup> April – 22<sup>nd</sup> April    Whiston 23<sup>rd</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> June    End of term 23<sup>rd</sup> July