

AS and A-level Psychology: **Where could it take you?**

Student guide



Why choose psychology?

The mind is something intangible that exists within our brain; an unseen process of enzymes, chemicals and electric currents. But why is it that some people suffer from stress or mental illness? Or that others are considered abnormal for deviating from social norms? Psychology looks at questions like these and more. It's a fascinating science with cutting edge research that has real world applications that you are bound to find interesting.

What will I study?

Whether you're studying for the AS or the A-level, your first year will cover the same topic areas:

- **Introductory topics in psychology:** learn about conformity, social norms, how the mind remembers and forgets and how children form attachments
- **Psychology in context:** learn more about the different approaches in psychology and how to design and conduct your own research.

In the second year of the A-level you'll deepen your understanding of human behaviour. You'll study additional topics under Approaches in psychology, Biopsychology, Research methods and Issues and debates in psychology. You then choose three further topics; one from each of three option groups.

Issues and options in psychology: you'll learn more about psychological concepts, research methods and ethical issues.

Issues and debates in psychology: learn about the fascinating tendencies of human behaviour, with options looking into gender differences and the criminal mind.

Option one:

- relationships
- gender
- cognition and development.

Option two:

- schizophrenia
- eating behaviour
- stress.

Option three:

- aggression
- forensic psychology
- addiction.

How will I be assessed?

There are two exams at AS each worth 50% of your AS qualification. Each exam lasts 1 hour 30 minutes and is worth 72 marks. The exams consist of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

At A-level there are three exams, each account for one third of your A-level. The three exams last 2 hours and are worth 96 marks each. The exams consist of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Where will AS and A-level Psychology take you?

Psychology is a great subject to study because it will not only give you a number of transferable skills, it will also teach you more about the way people think. An understanding of the human mind is useful in a number of careers.

“Studying how the human mind develops and functions allowed me to grasp the elements of child development quickly and confidently. To this day I still apply aspects of my A-level Psychology learning to my everyday classroom practice.”

Emily Burningham
Primary School Teacher

“I loved studying A-Level Psychology. I learned so much that has stayed with me. One thing that really helped me during my PhD studies and in my current job is that for every answer you find, there are always more fascinating questions which arise.”

Kat Elliott
Scientific software support

“I chose to study A-level Psychology out of a desire to understand why people do what they do, but it has proved to have far wider applications. The knowledge I gained from the course was useful during the study of business management theories, and the reading and comprehension of case studies helped me develop skills which have helped in the study of law.”

Adrian Roux, Student – Postgraduate Bachelor of Laws (LLB)
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Possible degree options

According to bestcourse4me.com, the top seven degree courses taken by students who have an A-level in psychology are:

- Psychology
- English studies
- Sociology
- Business studies
- Teaching
- Sport and exercise science
- Law.



What skills will I learn?

Our AS and A-level Psychology will help you develop a range of skills that will benefit you, whether you decide to go on to further study or the working world, including:

- analytical thinking
- improved communication
- problem solving
- planning and conducting scientific investigations
- analysing and interpreting data
- critical reasoning skills.

How will it fit in with my other subjects?

Psychology will complement just about any other subject. Students who study psychology often also study biology, sociology, business, English or physical education. Also students, who want a career in any of the caring services, or in marketing or human resources, will find an understanding of psychology useful.

Can't wait to get started?

Your teacher and career adviser will be the best people to help you decide whether this course is the right choice for you. They'll be as passionate as you to find the best subjects to develop your talents.

For more information visit
aqa.org.uk/psychology