# Scheme of work: Forensic psychology

Introduction

This scheme of work is for the second year of the A-level Psychology specification.

* It has been created on the basis that students choose Forensic psychology as their optional topic from 7182/3 Option 3.
* It is based on the spring term, teaching for six weeks.
* The number of teaching hours per week is four and a half.

This is a sample scheme of work and is only one suggestion for how you might plan the delivery of the A-level Psychology specification. It is not intended to be prescriptive or definitive and can be edited to suit your organisation’s delivery model and the particular needs of your learners.

Please remember that assessment is always based on the content of the [specification](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182).

You can find past assessment materials on [Centre Services](https://onlineservices.aqa.org.uk/).

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**Forensic Psychology 4.3.9**

Teach after: Approaches 4.2.1, Biopsychology 4.2.2, Research methods 4.2.3, Issues and debates 4.3.1.

**Week 21**

* Offender profiling:
  + top down application of general principles, eg Ressler
  + organised v disorganised eg Turvey (2002) false dichotomy, eg Canter (2004), Alison (2002)
  + bottom-up approaches data driven statistical profiling Canter Geographical profiling Goodwill & Alison (2006), Davis (1997), eg of bottom-up profiling in Pake & Pake.
* Usefulness of profiling, eg Gudjonsson & Copson 1997.
* Experimental research into profiling, eg Alison et al (2003).
* Overview evaluation of offender profiling, eg Pinizzotto & Fenkell (1990).

**Skills development**

* Use information communication technology (ICT) to research measuring crime.
* Independent learning skills.
* Locating evidence for a specific purpose.
* Weighing evidence.
* Developing lines of argument.
* Exchange ideas having a view on ownership of knowledge and skills.
* Mathematical skills – interpreting percentages.

**Learning outcomes**

* Explain top down approaches to profiling.
* Distinguish between organised and disorganised type of offender.
* Explain bottom up approach to profiling, investigative psychology and geographical profiling.
* Use research evidence to evaluate the usefulness of offender profiling.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

* Introduce the concept of offender profiling and the two main approaches: top-down and bottom-up.
* Students then read the Guardian article.
* Students have to then research profiling and describe the main approaches, their strengths and limitations. They then will review the research into the usefulness of profiling and based on their assessment of the evidence, students post on virtual learning environment (VLE) a 150 word justified challenge or justified support for the view presented in the article.
* Students can read the below journal article on street lighting and present back some of the key conclusions and discussions points it raises.

**Activity 2**

Students go to the Serial Killer files website below to research a serial killer from the list provided. After viewing the clip they should provide a brief description of their crimes in no more than 100 words. They should then justify whether they think the killer was organised or disorganised by referring to the criteria in their textbook. Give students the option of researching a less gruesome crime if they would prefer not to research about a serial killer.

**Resources**

**Activity 1**

* Guardian article [The Guardian: Psychological profiling 'worse than useless'](http://www.theguardian.com/science/2010/sep/14/psychological-profile-behavioural-psychology).
* Extension [Slideshare: Street Lighting Study](http://www.slideshare.net/mattyp99/9-painter-farrington1999-street-lighting-study?next_slideshow=1).

**Activity 2**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* [Serial killer files | Hosted by Rob Gavagan](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQKlHp9A8xVTRbu_ZejFngB7EhEWhgPDo).

**Week 22**

* Biological explanations of offending behaviour: Lombroso’s atavistic form, Sheldon’s somatotype, eg Glueck & Glueck 1956, West and Farington 1973.
* Genetic explanations:
  + twin study, eg Grove (1990), Christiansen (1977)
  + adoption study, eg Mednick (1984) – Focus on gene environment interaction, eg Plomin & Asbury 2005
  + family study genetic abnormality affecting monoamine metabolism, Brunner et al (1993).
* Neurological explanations: maturation retardation, hemispheric dysfunction, eg Raine et al (1997) (2000) PET study, MRI, brain volume and GSR in APD compared with controls.

**Skills development**

* Applying existing knowledge to new topic.
* Independent learning skills.
* Self-assessment.
* Group work.
* Use of evidence to evaluate explanations.
* Using issues and debates to evaluate.
* Extended writing skills.
* Judging and providing feedback.

**Learning outcomes**

Develop understanding of biological explanation for offending behaviour.

Students should be able to:

* outline and evaluate biological theories – Lombroso’s atavistic form, Sheldon’s somatotype
* explain the role of twin and adoption studies in investigating genetic explanations
* describe and evaluate research into the genetic explanation
* describe and evaluate neural explanations
* use knowledge of methodology, issues and debates (confounding variables, sampling control of variables, limitations of correlational research, inferences, nature versus nurture, reductionism, determinism, social sensitivity, policy implications of biological determinism) to evaluate explanations.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

Have students watch the 45-minute video clip on Harold Shipman either in class or for homework. Students draw a table with the headings of each of the approaches on it (biological, behavioural, Social Learning Theory (SLT), psychodynamic, cognitive and humanistic). The he students will speculate as to what the causes were of Shipman’s behaviour from these different perspectives (eg the biological approach would suggest there is a genetic basis for his behaviour). Students can use the information in the clip and also their own knowledge of how the approaches would explain offending behaviour in general.

**Activity 2**

* Flipped classroom in preparation for class session – students to investigate biological explanations for offending behaviour. Each student uses the textbook and the links provided below to produce a summary of early physiological, genetic, neurobiological explanations.
* In class, working in groups, students use the textbook/internet to collect and summarise research evidence for and against the explanations.
* A summary description of studies/evidence is then exchanged with another group who evaluate the evidence in terms of its methodology and the conclusions that can be drawn from the research.
* For homework, students complete the following essay:

Describe and evaluate **one or more** of the following biological explanations for offending: atavistic form, genetics, neural.

**[16 marks]**

**Activity 3**

* Peer Assessment Activity. The essays from activity 2 are to be anonymised and each student to be randomly allocated an essay completed by one of their peers for assessment using the [A-level Paper 3 Issues and options in psychology mark scheme - November 2021 (aqa.org.uk)](https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/sample-papers-and-mark-schemes/2021/november/AQA-71823-MS-NOV21.PDF), p38.
* The student has to:

1. Highlight material showing knowledge of biological explanations.
2. Highlight material showing knowledge of relevant research.
3. Highlight material showing use of evidence to evaluate explanations.
4. Other evaluative material, eg use of issues (methodological, social sensitivity, cultural bias), debates (nature nurture, determinism reductionism) implications for policy practices.
5. Allocate a mark in accordance with the mark scheme.
6. Provide detailed feedback on how the essay could be improved.

* A copy of the highest achieving essay (checked by teacher) to be posted on VLE. All students to identify from feedback two or three things they can do to improve and to make those changes to enhance their own essay.

**Resources**

**Activity 1**

[Harold Shipman: Doctor Death (True Crime Documentary) | Our Life - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1f01Y0yzn4).

**Activity 2**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2 (2nd Ed),* Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* Lombroso [Prezi: Theories of Offending](http://prezi.com/jhulmy9stvuc/theories-of-offending/).
* Sheldon [Prezi: Sheldon's somatype theory](http://prezi.com/pftnpnnmznk2/copy-of-2-sheldons-somatype-theory/) – genetic explanations.
* [Prezi: Biological explanations for criminal behaviour](http://prezi.com/484bqvxrgghb/3-biological-explanations-for-criminal-behaviour/).
* Bio explanations and Eysenck - [YouTube: Origins of Criminal Behavior: Biological Factors](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Evwe88mhGo).

**Week 23**

* Psychological explanations of offending behaviour.
* Personality factors: Eysenck’s theory – the role of extraversion & neuroticism in offending.
* Limitations of correlational research, self-reports and meta-analysis.
* Psychodynamic explanation:
  + inadequate (weak deviant harsh) super ego
  + defence mechanisms – denial and rationalisation v displacement and sublimation
  + maternal deprivation.
* Differential association theory:
  + the role of conditioning, reinforcement and social learning
  + Sutherland (1939) differential association theory. Exposure to social acceptance of criminal norms and values, eg Farrington et al (2006) Cambridge study inappropriate role models, dysfunctional reward systems.

**Skills development**

* Using knowledge of research methodology, reliability, validity, issues and debates to judge explanations.
* Use understanding of research methodology to evaluate studies.
* Reading more complex psychological material.
* Presentation skills.
* Analytic and creative/transformational skills.
* Developing lines of argument.

**Learning outcomes**

Develop understanding of psychological explanations of offending behaviour.

Students should be able to:

* outline key features of Eysenck’s personality dimensions and the role of extraversion and neuroticism in offending
* outline research into the relationship between personality and criminality
* explain methodological limitations of research into the relationship between personality and criminality
* evaluate personality factors in explaining criminality
* outline key features of psychodynamic explanation for offending behaviour
* evaluate psychodynamic explanation for offending behaviour
* outline and evaluate differential association theory
* use research evidence to evaluate psychodynamic and differential association explanation for offending behaviour
* use a range of criteria and knowledge of methodology, issues and debates to evaluate explanations.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

Students write down ten characteristics on a piece of paper that describe their personality. They then fold the piece of paper up and give it back to the teacher who places them in a box in their desk. The teacher then reads out each description to the class who then have to guess who in the class they are referring to. After the students have got some examples of personality, they can then speculate as to which personality traits would be most likely associated with criminal behaviour.

**Activity 2**

* Students complete an online version of Eysenck’s questionnaire at the link below. After briefly discussing their results with their partner, they can use their textbook to make a note of the biological and social causes of the three dimensions of personality as identified by Eysenck. They can then google the traits for psychopathy – the third dimension of personality not covered by the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) below. There are also two other interesting extension resources that students can be set so they can further research Eysenck and personality.
* Next, students work in groups to research evidence to support and challenge Eysenck’s theory. Each group presents a description of one study to the class. This is a whole-class activity to evaluate the reliability and validity of the methods, confidence in the conclusion and so strength of support the study provides for the theory. Points are then recorded and posted on the VLE.
* Possible studies: Farrington et al (1982), Eysenck and Eysenck (1977), Holanchock (1978) and Moffitt (1993).

**Activity 3**

* Students research on the internet definitions/descriptions of catharsis, denial, rationalisation, displacement, sublimation, weak superego, over-harsh superego, deviant superego and maternal deprivation hypothesis.
* They then create a scenario involving a criminal who commits crimes as a result of three of the factors from above. Students then swap round scenarios and then identify which factors the scenario alludes to and why. An example of a scenario they could write would be: ‘Someone commits grievous body harm (GBH) after they lost their job (displacement), but they blame it on their criminal parent (deviant superego) and think the person has exaggerated their injuries even though they had to go to hospital (denial).’

**Activity 4**

* Students use their knowledge of social learning theory (SLT) to explain how it would account for how we acquire criminal behaviour. Teacher writes 4 headings on the board (reinforcement, punishment, vicarious reinforcement, and vicarious punishment) and has students write on post-it notes how each concept would relate to criminal behaviour. Have them stick the post-it notes under the appropriate heading and then the teacher discusses what they have produced and explains how they link to differential association.
* Teacher then instructs students to make notes on the differential association from their textbook below.
* Teacher then presents Farrington et al’s study from the below slideshare resource and then has the students explain how the study relates to differential association.
* Finally, students each take a different evaluation point from their textbook and present a condensed version of it back to the class.

**Resources**

**Activity 2**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* [Eysenck’s Personality Inventory (EPI) - Psychology Test (psychology-test.net)](https://psychology-test.net/test/eysenck-epi/)
* **Extension resources:**
  + [Crime and Personality: Personality Theory and Criminality Examined](http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/377/3/crime-and-personality-personality-theory-and-criminality-examined).
  + [BBC Radio 4: Mind Changers](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00f8n7l).

**Activity 3**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.

**Activity 4**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* [Slideshare: Farrington et al](http://www.slideshare.net/harilouise/farrington-et-al).

**Week 24**

* Cognitive explanations:
  + Kohlberg moral reasoning
  + assumptions stages/levels
  + use of moral dilemmas.
* Research evidence relating to the relationship between moral reasoning and offending behaviour.
* Strengths and limitations of questionnaire/survey research into offending behaviour.
* Cognitive distortions:
  + primary cognitive distortion (egocentric bias)
  + secondary cognitive distortions – attributional biases (hostile attribution bias, excessive blaming) minimalisation of consequences, eg Palmer (2005), Palmer and Hollin (2000) Sykes & Matza (1957).
* Methodological and conceptual issues, Implications and links to issues and debates.

**Skills development**

* Application skills.
* Using knowledge of research methodology, reliability, validity, issues and debates to judge explanations.
* Use understanding of research methodology to evaluate studies.
* Reading more complex psychological material.
* Presentation skills.
* Analytic and creative/transformational skills.
* Developing lines of argument.

**Learning outcomes**

Develop understanding of cognitive explanations for offending behaviour.

Students should be able to:

* describe key features and processes of moral reasoning according to Kohlberg’s theory
* describe the use of dilemmas to investigate reasoning
* outline, evaluate and use research into moral development to evaluate cognitive explanations for offending behaviour.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

* Students watch below video (Kohlberg’s stages) and make notes on the defining characteristics of each stage of moral development.
* Students then use their textbook to self-assess their overview of the stages.
* Students then listen to the interviews of people responding to the Heinz dilemma (sample responses to Heinz dilemma resource below) and for each person interviewed, identify the level and stage they were at and give a justification as to why.
* Teacher then facilitates a class discussion about whether criminality occurs exclusively with those who have pre-conventional morality.
* Students then evaluate the theory and review evidence of its effectiveness in explaining offending behaviour by referring to their textbook

**Activity 2**

* Research in this area (eg Palmer and Hollin, 1998) is based on questionnaire and self-report data. Have students work in a group to identify reasons why that is a good way of gaining insight into offending behaviour and limitations of these techniques.
* Ask students to then write one fully elaborated evaluation on the VLE where they make the point (eg the research has issues surrounding social desirability bias), and then explain how this would affect the results of the study (they may portray themselves as having greater morality) and why this is an issue (it makes the study less reliable evidence in support of Kohlberg’s theory).
* Have students then vote on which response is the best and why.

**Activity 3**

* Teacher led introduction to cognitive distortions providing students with definitions/descriptions (but not examples) of:
  + egocentric bias
  + hostile attribution bias
  + excessive blaming
  + minimalisation of consequences of their actions.
* Students work in pairs to create a series of dialogues between offender and interviewer that illustrate each type of cognitive distortion.
* Each pair enacts one of their dialogues. The rest of the class have to decide on the distortions being illustrated.

**Activity 4**

* Students use their knowledge of other research into offending behaviour to evaluate cognitive explanations.
* They can use any other explanation or study into offending that is not the cognitive approach to criticise the cognitive explanation. Give them an example writing frame for those who would like more structure to complete the task.
* For example: ‘an alternative explanation of offending relates to the biological approach. Research into identical twins has found that they have a higher concordance rate for criminality that non-identical twins which suggests that the more genes you share with a criminal, the more likely you are to be one.
* This challenges the idea that the reason people commit crimes is because they have dysfunctional thinking.
* Aim to ensure that each student uses a different study/explanation so there is more variety in the response when students feed them back.

**Resources**

**Activity 1**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Educationz, 2020.
* Outline of the theory [Kohlberg's Stages.](http://www.teachertube.com/video/kohlbergs-stages-184961)
* Sample responses to Heinz dilemma [Kohlberg's Moral Development](http://www.teachertube.com/video/kohlbergs-moral-development-222575).
* [BBC Radio 4: Mind Changers](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b008drfq).

**Week 25**

Research methods and practical for option topic 3.

**Skills development**

* Using statistical tables.
* Reporting outcome of statistical test.
* Drawing conclusions from quantitative data analysis.
* Investigation design.
* Data collection and recording.
* Time management.
* Understanding ethical obligations.

**Learning outcomes**

Develop understanding of the research methods, scientific processes and data handling.

Students should be able to:

* formulate a hypothesis
* design research to investigate the hypothesis
* develop appropriate materials to collect qualitative and/or quantitative data
* select an appropriate sample
* analyse qualitative and quantitative data
* use descriptive statistics to present data
* use appropriate inferential statistics to test the hypothesis
* use content or thematic analysis of responses to open questions.
* draw conclusions and discuss findings
* identify strengths and limitations of research and suggest improvements.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

* Students to work in pairs to design and carry out an investigation into an aspect of forensic psychology.
* Give students the option of designing their own study with no support, or alternatively, they can do investigations in one of the following two topic areas.
* Possible topics:
  + **Topic A**: Cognitive distortions. Defence mechanisms, levels of moral thinking.
  + This could be carried out through doing a content analysis of interrogation scenes from crime dramas to identify attribution biases/cognitive distortions or defence mechanisms.
  + The investigation should involve collecting and analysing data.
  + Targets to be set in relation to preliminary search for background, submitting design for check on practicality and ethics, developing tools/materials, collecting data, analysing data and drawing conclusions, preparing presentation covering hypothesis, method, results, discussion and conclusions.
  + **Topic B:** Investigating the relationship between extroversion and risk-taking.

**Activity 2**

* Presentation session(s) – each student to briefly present their investigation to the class. Teacher and peer Q&A.
* Develop critical thinking by posing questions specifically related to their study:
* What would you have done differently and why?
* What further research should be done in relation to this topic?
* How do your findings relate to … theory?

**Resources**

**Activity 1**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* Reid, *Personality Theory and Criminality Examined Vol. 3 No. 01*, 2011, p3/4.
* [Crime and Personality: Personality Theory and Criminality Examined](http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/377/2/crime-and-personality-personality-theory-and-criminality-examined).

**Week 26**

* Dealing with offending behaviour:
* The aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Recidivism.
* Behaviour modification in custody.
* Anger management and restorative justice programmes.
* Dealing with offending.
* Role of custodial sentencing, reform, incapacitation, deterrence, retribution, rehabilitation, eg Davies and Raymond (2000).
* Recidivism reduction.
* Reintegration in the non-criminal community.
* Self-efficacy and commitment to change, and have stronger social support networks.
* Scottish Govt report 2011.
* Effects of custodial sentences - Zimbardo prison study.
* Skill development.
* Assessing effectiveness of different methods of treating offending behaviour.
* Use and effectiveness of behaviour modification in custodial setting, eg Cohen & Filipczak (1971), Andrews & Bonta (2006).
* Use and effectiveness of anger management, eg national anger management package Ireland (2000).
* Use and effectiveness of Restorative Justice, eg Sherman & Strang (2007), Hayes (2005).

**Skills development**

* Making links between theory, evidence and policy/practices.
* Making judgements about the effectiveness of policies and practices.
* Appropriate use of terminology.
* Selecting, shaping and structuring information to answer specific questions.

**Learning outcomes**

Develop understanding of ways of dealing with offenders.

Students should be able to:

* outline the purposes and psychological effects of custodial sentences
* explain how the effectiveness of different methods of treating offending behaviour can be assessed
* outline strategies for reducing recidivism
* describe the use and evaluate the effectiveness of behaviour modification in a custodial setting
* describe the use and evaluate the effectiveness of anger management programmes
* describe the use and evaluate the effectiveness of restorative justice programmes
* consider social and economic implications of sentencing in relation to ethics, social sensitivity, issues and debates policy and practices.

**Suggested learning activities**

**Activity 1**

* Students discuss in pairs the aims and impact of custodial sentencing. They then self-assess their answers using their textbook.
* Have students use the Government report below on Transforming rehabilitation so that they can research reasons for why the recidivism rate is so high for prisoners in the UK.
* Follow up activity - bring in practitioner(s) to explain what prison is really like and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing.

**Activity 2**

* Behaviour modification in custody.
* Ask the students to spend 5 minutes writing down all the ideas they can think of in relation to how a behaviourist would treat offending behaviour. Give them all a whiteboard pen and ask them to write their best idea down on the board. Have the students then explain what they have written to the rest of the class. Introduce the concept of token economies by rewarding appropriate behaviour with paper tokens every time a student demonstrates it (eg putting up their hand, writing down a lot, expanding on their answers etc…). Lastly, have the students identify the desirable behaviour they were expected to produce.
* Present the key features of a token economy and ask the students to work in small groups to design their own one for a prison. Have them consider the following criteria that they can then present back:
  + Which target behaviours in prisons would they look to reinforce?
  + What rewards could they exchange their tokens for?
  + How many tokens would each behaviour be worth?
  + What behaviours could lead to people losing their tokens?
  + A time and place for the tokens to be exchanged.

**Activity 3**

* Mind map Relay.
* Students to build a mind map of the forensic unit on the whiteboard.
* All students must participate – all students to stand up, one student begins and passes the pen to another student who must add additional information.
* If the student cannot add then they must sit down. The activity continues until the students can no longer add additional information.
* The last student standing should receive a small prize.
* Photograph of mind-map to be uploaded to the VLE.

**Activity 4**

* Selecting, shaping and organising material to develop a coherent line of argument.
* Students to be provided with a series of A3 pieces of paper with just an essay title from forensic on them.
* The previous 16 mark questions from the AQA website can be used alongside some that haven’t been asked so that all the topic areas are covered.
* Students work in pairs for 3 minutes to select the information they will include for the assessment objective 1, assessment objective 2 (if appropriate) and assessment objective 3 part of the question.
* Each pair then passes their essay plan to the group to the left of them who then add and edit the responses from the previous pair.
* This is repeated until each group has had a chance to attempt each question.
* Each pair then presents the response they finish on back to the rest of the class.
* Afterwards each essay plan can be photographed and posted on the VLE.

**Resources**

**Activity 1**

* Flanagan, Jarvis and Liddle, *AQA Psychology for A-level Year 2* (2nd Ed), Illuminate Publishing, 2020.
* Lawton and Willard, *AQA A-level Psychology (Year 1 and Year 2),* Hodder Education, 2020.
* Government reports on recidivism and reducing reoffending [Transforming Rehabilitation](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243718/evidence-reduce-reoffending.pdf).
* Revision/summary materials: [Simply Psychology – summary of forensic psychology](https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-forensic.html)