



A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

7182/1 Paper 1 Introductory Topics in Psychology
Report on the Examination

7182
Autumn 2021

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General Introduction to the Autumn Series

This has been another unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

Overview of Entry

This was an exceptional series with a small entry and so it is hard to comment on general characteristics. Performance was overall reasonable, though very variable. Along with some impressive scripts, there was also evidence of a lack of preparation in others, with a number of scripts leaving several questions blank.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 01

Virtually all answers focused on Zimbardo's Prison study. Many good answers had full details of the methods used, some in fact writing too much for four marks. A common mistake was to provide details of findings, which were not required by the question.

Question 02

Again, many answers demonstrated impressive knowledge of social influence processes and applied them effectively. There was occasional confusion over the elements of minority influence, while some answers tried to cover too many approaches (e.g. minority influence, informational and normative social influence).

Question 03

Many students did not understand the concept of primary data, although they sometimes received credit for a relevant limitation even where the explanation was incorrect.

Question 04

As with 03 it was clear that a significant number of students did not understand the concept of validity as applied to questionnaires. There were many suggestions of alternative experimental designs (matched pairs, counterbalancing, sample size etc), which were not relevant to the question.

Question 05

Although most students had access to relevant material (especially Milgram and Bickman), some did not shape it to the issue of legitimacy of authority but wrote generally on obedience. Better answers used Milgram's variations effectively, and introduced alternative ideas such as personality variables (locus of control, authoritarian personality) as AO3.

Question 06

Straightforward, and overall performance impressive.

Question 07

Many students simply described the central executive rather than evaluating it. There was little use of research studies, and virtually no positive evaluation.

Question 08

This question produced a range of performance. At the top end answers were clear on the differences between proactive and retroactive interference, and on state and context-dependent retrieval. Research studies were used effectively, and application was detailed. At the lower end there was confusion between types of forgetting, some inaccurate application and limited evaluation, especially of interference theory.

Question 11

Accessible question answered well. Some students had the two attachment styles the wrong way around, but could receive a mark for an accurate difference.

Question 12

Some very good answers covering control and reliability, demand characteristics, focus just on the mother, and cultural and ethical issues. Some students presented procedural details and/or findings, which were not relevant.

Question 13

Overall performance was disappointing, with many students not even attempting this question. There were some excellent answers, and a number of students earned marks for their reasoning even where the incorrect test was identified.

Question 14

Many answers to this question failed to focus on 'childhood relationships'. Material such as Bowlby, Hazan & Shaver, Rutter etc was frequently presented but not shaped explicitly to the question, and there was a general lack of directly relevant studies. AO3 was generally quite limited. Better answers used the internal working model and its implications effectively, and applied it appropriately to the scenario.

Question 16

Although some students were clearly unfamiliar with the cognitive approach and simply restated the question and/or outlined inappropriate methods such as systematic desensitisation, there were some excellent answers showing impressive understanding of e.g. the models of Ellis and Beck.

Question 17

Some excellent answers demonstrated detailed understanding of the use of drug therapy for OCD, describing the synaptic action of e.g. SSRIs. There was occasional confusion on exactly how they worked, while a significant minority of answers focused on the biological approach to explaining OCD, rather than to treating it – indicating a failure to read the question carefully.

Question 18

Students tended to struggle with the statistical infrequency definition, providing weak examples (e.g. weight) rather than focusing on behaviour. There was also a tendency to confuse deviation from social norms with failure to function adequately. Although cultural issues were popular as evaluation, AO3 in general was limited. At the top end students used effective examples e.g.

depression being quite frequent rather than infrequent, and realised that they could use alternative definitions of abnormality to evaluate statistical infrequency and deviation from social norms.

Concluding Remarks

While there were examples of basic gaps in coverage of the Specification, indicating a lack of preparation, there were many examples of excellent work (teaching and learning) at the end of a difficult period for students in terms of preparation.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.