



A-LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

7182/3 Issues and Options 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

The entry was very much smaller than usual, with mostly single-candidate centres. All of the optional topics were represented although some options such as stress and addiction were seen only rarely. As with last autumn, there was some evidence that students had prepared independently for this series, with less obvious reliance on mainstream materials. There was widespread variation in marks, with some extremely highly quality scripts and others that showed little evidence of appropriate academic study.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

The majority of students started well with the correct answer to Q01. Performance on Q02 was rather poorer than anticipated with very few full-mark responses. Students had difficulty explaining the term with many just re-arranging the wording of the question. Many students failed to realise the problem of having two observers and thus failed to grasp the essential point of the second part of the question. Q03 was usually well answered although understanding of validity was mostly implicit rather than explicit. Most responses to Q04 showed some understanding of the process and purpose of statistical testing with a reasonable number referring to comparison of calculated and critical values. Although it was not necessary to choose a suitable test or give a rationale for the test choice, many students did follow that route. There was widespread misunderstanding in Q05, with students often stating that collecting qualitative data/carrying out interviews would be idiographic. Most students made a fair attempt at Q06. Where students presented more than one topic the best topic was credited and the other credited as evaluation where the content allowed.

Section B

The 4-mark knowledge questions tended to be well answered, especially Q07. The 4-mark application questions were less well done, often because there was very little psychological content in the answers. This was particularly the case for Q08. Common errors in Q11 were lack of focus on the cognitive aspect and confusion with social learning. Q14 was rarely seen. Answers to the extended writing questions varied; less successful answers to Q09 often focused on the general nature of parasocial relationships rather than on 'why' they developed, whereas low

scoring answers to Q12 tended to be generalised discussions of social learning theory with scant reference to gender. Q15 was rarely seen, though well done except where answers comprised a laboured account of Piaget's stage theory.

Section C

Very few answers to the Eating and Stress questions were seen. The definitions questions seemed to discriminate quite well in all topics. Where students wrote more than one term per letter only the first answer was credited. The 6-mark evaluation questions often scored poorly because students described the explanation instead of evaluating. The most effective evaluations tended to be those that used evidence to either support or counter the explanation. For Qs17 and 20 evaluations of biological explanations were not credited as the Specification differentiates clearly between psychological and biological explanations in 4.3.5 and 4.3.6. In answers to Q23, Kobasa's hardiness theory was credited as a personality type where it was offered. The 16-mark extended writing responses required students to combine all three skills. In Q18 the knowledge element was often vague but there was much better application and evaluation. In Q21 all three skills tended to be well done. In the few responses to Q24, knowledge of social support was often particularly weak despite specific types being named in the Specification.

Section D

It was pleasing to see how many students answered the multiple-choice question correctly. The naming question after each of the stems was generally answered correctly except for Q31 where several students were unable to name 'restorative justice'. Fortunately, this did not seem to affect the performance on follow-on questions. The 4-mark application questions requiring use of the stem were usually competently answered, although there were some weaker answers with little foundation in psychology. The straightforward 16-mark questions yielded a wide range of marks with some impressively detailed and well-argued answers at the top end.

Concluding Remarks

The paper performed largely as expected, even with this year's minimal entry. As a general recommendation students should be advised to focus on their application skill; this continues to present a challenge with the need to underpin application with psychological knowledge sometimes forgotten.

As was the case last autumn, many students had to prepare for this series in trying circumstances. It was therefore very pleasing to see some really excellent performances. Whatever their achievements here, those students who studied hard and performed to the best of their ability on the day should be congratulated for their hard work and determination in the face of such adversity.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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