Course Title GCSE Psychology

Course Description

GCSE Psychology provides a broad introduction to the field, exploring core concepts like memory, perception, social influence, and the brain's functions. It also delves into psychological problems and how they impact the human mind. Students will learn about research methods and develop critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation skills. The course covers key ideas in Child development, Memory, Psychological Problems, Neuropsychology, Social & Criminal Psychology as well as how psychological phenomena can be explained through a small number of interlinked, universally applicable concepts.

What your child needs to know and be able to do:

Core Areas of Psychology

- Biological Psychology: Study of the brain, nervous system, and genetics as contributors to behaviour.
- Cognitive Psychology: Understanding thought processes, memory, perception, and problem-solving.
- Social Psychology: Examination of social influences, group behaviour, and interpersonal relationships.
- Developmental Psychology: Exploration of human development across the lifespan, focusing on childhood.
- Individual Differences: Analysis of variations in behaviour and mental processes among individuals.

Applications of Psychology

- Use of psychological theories to explain and influence everyday behaviour.
- Understanding of mental health issues, including addiction and depression.

Research Methods

- Knowledge of various research methods, including experiments, observations, and case studies.
- Understanding of data collection, analysis, and interpretation.
- Awareness of ethical considerations in psychological research.

Investigative Skills

- Designing and conducting psychological investigations.
- Formulating hypotheses and operationalising variables.
- Selecting appropriate research methods and sampling techniques.
- Controlling extraneous variables to ensure validity.

Analytical Skills:

- Applying statistical methods to analyse data, including measures of central tendency and dispersion.
- Interpreting results in the context of psychological theories.
- Evaluating the reliability and validity of research findings.

Critical Thinking:

- Assessing the strengths and limitations of psychological studies.
- Debating ethical issues and implications of psychological research.
- Drawing conclusions and making informed judgments based on evidence.

Communication Skills

- Presenting information clearly and coherently.
- Developing arguments and articulating viewpoints effectively.
- Using psychological terminology accurately in discussions and written work.

This breakdown aligns with the Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Psychology specification, which emphasizes the development of both factual knowledge and practical skills in psychological enquiry.

Topic Sequencing

The topics in this course have been deliberately sequenced to allow students to build knowledge gradually, make meaningful connections across all disciplines of Psychology, and develop increasing levels of scientific expertise. Earlier topics lay the groundwork for more complex ideas later in the course, ensuring students revisit and reinforce key concepts as they progress.

Year	Term	Topic	Title
10	**Term 1**	T2 - Memory	What is Memory
		T2 - Memory	Long term & short term memory
		T2 - Memory	Understanding Amnesia
		T2 - Memory	**Studies** - Bartlett (1932) War of the Ghosts
		T2 - Memory	**Studies** - Theory of Reconstructive Memory
		T2 - Memory	**Studies -** Peterson and Peterson (1959) Short-term Retention of Individual Verbal Items
		T2 - Memory	**Studies -** Atkinson & Shiffrin (1968) - The Multi-Store Model Of Memory
		Issues and debates	Reductionism and holism debate

		T1 - Child development	How do you develop - Early brain development
		T1 - Child development	Piaget's stages of development
		T1 - Child development	Piaget's stages - Their roles in education
		T1 - Child development	Piaget's theory & the development of intelligence
		T1 - Child development	Dweck's mindset theory
	Term 2	T1 - Child development	Willingham's learning theory
		T1 - Child development	Willingham's learning theory - Part 2
		T1 - Child development	Studies - Piaget and Inhelder (1956) Three mountains task.
		T1 - Child development	Studies - Gunderson et al. (2013) Parent Praise to 1- to 3-Year-Olds Predicts Children's Motivational Frameworks 5 Years Later.
		Issues and debates	The development of morality

		Issues and debates	The development of morality and empathy
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Unipolar Depression
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Addiction
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Drug Therapy as a Treatment
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Cognitive Theory
		T3 - Psychological Problems	CBT as a Treatment
		T3 - Psychological Problems	**Studies** - Caspi et al. (2003) Influence of Life Stress on Depression: Moderation by a Polymorphism in the 5-HTT Gene.
		T4 - The Brain &	The structure & function of the brain

		Neuropsychology	
		T4 - The Brain & Neuropsychology	Asymmetrical functioning of the hemispheres
		T4 - The Brain & Neuropsychology	The Role of The Central Nervous System
		T4 - The Brain & Neuropsychology	Neurological damage
	Term 3	T4 - The Brain & Neuropsychology	**Studies -**The return of Phineas Gage
		T4 - The Brain & Neuropsychology	**Studies -** T4 - L6 - Sperry (68) - Hemispheric disconnection
		Issues and debates	How Psychology has changed over time

		T5 - Social Psychology	Social Influence research on obedience
		T5 - Social Psychology	The Bystander effect
		T5 - Social Psychology	Conformity
		T5 - Social Psychology	Piliavin (69) - Good Samaritanism
		T5 - Social Psychology	Obedience to an authority figure
		T5 - Social Psychology	Derren brown - 'Pushed to the limit'
		T5 - Social Psychology	Stanford Prison experiment
		T5 - Social Psychology	Social & cultural issues in Psychology
		T5 - Social Psychology	Studies - Piliavin et al. (1969) Good Samaritanism: An Underground Phenomenon?
		T5 - Social Psychology	Studies - Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1973) A Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison.

		T5 - Social Psychology	Studies – Milgram – (1964) – Obedience to an Authority Figure
		Issues and Debates	Understand social and cultural issues in psychology, including: a. the terms ‘society’ and ‘social issues’ b. the term ‘culture’ c. the use of content, theories and research drawn from social influence to explain social and cultural issues in psychology
11	**Term 1**	T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Features & functions of sleep
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Internal influences on sleep
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	External influences on sleep
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Insomnia & Narcolepsy
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Freud's Dream Theory
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Hobson & McCarley - Activation Synthesis
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Freuds Analysis of Little Hans

		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Sifre - 6 Months Alone in a Cave
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Studies - Freud (1909) Little Hans: analysis of a phobia in a five-year-old boy.
		T9 - Sleep & Dreaming	Studies - Siffre (1975) Six months alone in a cave
	Term 2	T10 - Criminal Psychology	Learning theories of criminality
		T10 - Criminal Psychology	Biological explanations of criminality
		T10 - Criminal Psychology	Punishment on Recidivism
		T10 - Criminal Psychology	Treatments to rehabilitate
		T10 - Criminal Psychology	Studies - Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) Transmission of Aggression through Imitation of Aggressive Models.
		T6 - Research Methods	Experimental designs
		T6 - Research Methods	Validity & reliability

	Term 3	T6 - Research Methods	Ethical issues in research
		T6 - Research Methods	Data analysis
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Studies - Young (2007) Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Internet Addicts: Treatment Outcomes and Implications.
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Genetic explanation of unipolar depression
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Genetic explanation of addiction
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Learning theory as an explanation of addiction
		T3 - Psychological Problems	CBT as a treatment for addiction

		T3 - Psychological Problems	Drug therapy as a treatment for addiction
		T3 - Psychological Problems	Polymorphism of the 5-HTT gene as an explanation for depression

Key Vocabulary

Topic	Keywords
Topic 2 – Memory & information processing	Processing, input, storage, encoding, Acoustic encoding, visual encoding, semantic encoding, output & retrieval. Short-term memory, long-term memory, duration, capacity, rehearse, displacement & interference. Amnesia, Anterograde & Retrograde Active reconstruction, Schema, Omission, Transformation, Familiarisation, Rationalisation, Cognitive, Ecological validity & Subjective. Sensory register, Attention, Trigram, Iconic memory, Echoic memory & Modality free. Primacy & Recency, Serial & repeated reproduction Reliable, statistical analysis, standardised procedure, extraneous variables & mundane realism. Reductionism & Holism
Topic 1 – Child Development	Forebrain, midbrain, hindbrain, anterior, posterior, cerebellum, Medulla Oblongata, involuntary response & neural connections. Cognitive, operations & object permanence. Symbolic play, Egocentrism, Animism, Centration, Irreversibility, Morality & Schema.

	Adaptation, Assimilation, Accommodation & Equilibrium. Mindset, ability, fixed & growth mindset, rehearse & motor skills. Decentration, Self-regulation, Nature & Nurture Person praise, Process praise, Entity theory/motivational framework, Incremental theory/ motivational framework & Ecological validity. Heteronomous & Autonomous
Topic 4 – Neuropsychology & the Brain	Hemisphere, Cerebrum, Cortex, Spinal cord, Brainstem, reflexes, frontal lobe, temporal lobe, parietal lobe, occipital lobe & cerebellum. Lateralisation of function, asymmetrical, Corpus Callosum, Broca's Area & Spatial awareness. Peripheral, neurotransmitter, synaptic transmission, axon, vesicles & receptors. Visual agnosia, prosopagnosia, pre-frontal cortex & fusiform face area. EEG (Electroencephalograph), MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging) & PET (Positron emission tomography)
Topic 5 – Social Psychology	Obedience, authority, conformity, compliance, normative & informational social influence. Internalisation identification & deindividuation & Bystander effect. Diffusion of responsibility, pluralistic ignorance & confederate.

	Locus of control, blind obedience, anti-Semitic, momentum of compliance, authoritarian & F-Scale. Field experiment, covert observation, ecological validity, demand characteristics, generalisability, individualistic & collectivistic culture.
Topic 3 – Psychological Problems	Unipolar depression, Monozygotic twins, Genetic predisposition, Diathesis-stress model, Deterministic, Free will, Cognitive theory, Negative triad, Magnification, Cognitive behavioural therapy, Neurotransmitters, Noradrenaline, Reuptake, Placebo, reuptake, withdrawal, operant conditioning, classical conditioning, reinforcement & functional analysis.
Topic 6 – Criminal Psychology	Operant conditioning, Negative reinforcement, Primary / Secondary reinforcer, Modelling, Observational learning, Vicarious reinforcement, Identification, Temperament, Extraversion, Introversion, neuroticism, Psychoticism, Recidivism, Psychopath.
Topic 9 – Sleep & Dreaming	Sleep cycle, Sensory blockade, Movement inhibition, Circadian rhythms, Sleep–wake cycle, Ultradian rhythms, Endogenous, Melatonin, Pineal gland, Exogenous, Zeitgebers, Entrainment, Insomnia, Narcolepsy, Cataplexy, Id, Ego, Superego, Manifest / Latent content & dreamwork. Phallic stage, Oedipus complex
Topic 11 – Psychological Problems	Independent variable, Dependent variable, Operationalisation, Extraneous variable, Confounding variable, Situational variable, Order effects, Demand characteristics, Investigator effect, Participant variables, Standardised procedure, Counterbalancing, Randomisation, Null hypothesis, Generalisability, Sampling method, Stratified sampling, Correlation, Negative correlation, Covert observation & Inter-rater reliability.

Assessment Information

Formative & Summative assessments across the course

Homework
Homework will be set fortnightly and based on recent learning and how to stretch and challenge students to consolidate their learning.

Key Pieces of Work
At the end of each unit, students will undertake a Key Piece of Work designed to evaluate their understanding of the content covered. Teachers will mark these assessments and provide individual feedback to students. Following this, students will have dedicated Improvement Time, allowing them to revisit the assessment and attempt any previously incorrect questions, utilizing the feedback provided by their teacher. Extension work provided for those who have little or no improvement to make.

Informal Assessment
Throughout lessons, teachers will consistently monitor student comprehension through a range of assessment for learning strategies. These techniques will include, but are not limited to, the use of mini whiteboards, live marking, and diagnostic questioning.

Mock Exams
At the end of Year 10, students will sit a full exam paper under formal conditions in the exam hall. In Year 11, there will be two further mock exam windows—one in November and one in February (dates to be confirmed). Students will receive dedicated improvement time following each exam. Where necessary, and at the teacher's discretion, additional mock exams may be scheduled after further revision to address any remaining misconceptions.

Assessment Components

The assessment components consist of two written exam papers—one each for Set of topics: Child development, Memory, Psychological Problems, Neuropsychology & Social Psychology for Paper 1. Research Methods, Sleep & Dreaming & Criminal Psychology for Paper 2 — taken at Higher tier. These papers assess students against all three AOs and collectively account for 100% of the final grade, with no coursework or non-examined assessment.

PAPER	Assessment	What is it worth?
Paper 1 – How did you develop? How does your memory work? How would psychological problems affect you? How does your brain affect you? How do others affect you?	Written examination – 1 hour 45 minutes 55% of the qualification 98 marks	55%
Paper 2 – Two topics from: Why do people become criminals? How do you interpret the world around you? Why do you need to sleep & dream? How do you communicate with others?	Written examination – 1 hour 20 minutes 45% of the qualification 79 marks	45%