

# Psychology A Level



**Exam Board:** AQA

**Entry requirements:** Grade 6 in GCSE Maths and GCSE Science

## Intent

### Structure

The purpose of the Psychology A-level is to introduce students to the scientific study of the human mind and behaviour. If you are curious about how our brains work, or why we act in certain ways, or why people experience mental health difficulties, then this course is the one for you. By studying A-level Psychology, you will be given a broad overview of psychology and all of its many aspects. You will also develop your understanding of the scientific approach and how this relates to the study of psychology. The course is split into several topics. Although these are distinct from each other, they also overlap to give you a bigger picture of how psychology intersects with itself.

The topics studied are:

#### Year One

- **Social influence** – conformity, obedience, and how our behaviour is affected by other people
- **Memory** – explanations of the structure of memory, reasons for forgetting, eye witness recall
- **Attachment** – how our early relationship with our parents affects our future development
- **Psychopathology** – explanations and treatments of common mental health problems
- **Approaches** – the different viewpoints about how psychology is explained and investigated
- **Research methods** – experiments and other ways in which data is gathered in psychology

#### Year Two

- **Cognition and development** – how our mental processes change as we age
- **Schizophrenia** – explanations and treatments for this significant mental health problem
- **Addiction** – biological and psychological explanations for smoking and gambling addiction
- **Issues and debates** – nature or nurture? do we have free will? and other debates in psychology
- **Biopsychology** – how our physiology (hormones, brain structures etc) affects our behaviour

## Implementation

### Content & Sequencing

Lessons are taught by Mr Smith, and students will benefit from his years of experience as a teacher of psychology, and his expert knowledge of the subject having studied psychology at degree level.

For the most part topics are taught sequentially:

#### Year One

- Social influence
- Memory
- Attachment
- Psychopathology
- Research methods and Approaches are taught alongside these topics, and relevant links to the topics are made throughout

#### Year Two

- Cognition and development
- Schizophrenia
- Addiction
- Biopsychology
- Issues and debates are taught alongside these topics, and relevant links to the topics are made throughout

There are assessment points throughout the course, typically in the middle and at the end of each topic, plus an exam at the end of year 12. These are for monitoring purposes.

The official exam is at the end of year 13. This consists of three papers covering the entirety of the course. The course is 100% exam based, there is no coursework element.

### Assessment Methods

The final assessment is 100% exam based as follows:

Paper 1: Social Influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology

Paper 2: Approaches, Biopsychology, Research methods

Paper 3: Cognition and development, Schizophrenia, Addiction, Issues and debates

Each paper is equally weighted to carry 1/3 of the total marks. All papers are 120 minute written examinations.

Grades for A Level Psychology are A\*-E.

## Impact

### Onward Progression

For those intending to continue their studies at university, the most obvious next step is to enrol on either a pure Psychology degree, or a 'Psychology and ...' degree of which there are many variations. Further specialisation at post-graduate level is then an option.

Career-wise, people with psychology qualifications can move into mental health work, education and training, management, caring, counselling, or one of the many psychological professions such as educational psychology, sports psychology, clinical psychology, or forensic psychology

### Further information contact

Mr Mat Smith - Curriculum Lead for Psychology  
mat.smith@shoreham-academy.org