

BVGS A Level Psychology - AWARDING BODY: AQA (7182)

What will we study in Psychology?

As an A Level Psychology student you will learn about a number of psychological concepts, including the intricate nature of the brain and how behaviour stems from a number of varying factors within the human body. You will discover how we remember things, how to improve your memory for exams and what it means when we refer to mental health. You will acquire an understanding of how psychological research is important in the development of therapies to help treat individuals within society, and make direct links with economic implications.

Over the two-year course, students will cover the key approaches to psychology; from the biological discipline to the humanistic approach, from the outlook of the behaviourists, to the school of cognitive psychological thought. This knowledge underpins everything we study in psychology and become pivotal to your understanding of the realm of psychology as a discipline.

In Year 12 students will study the importance of the scientific process and develop skills to help assess, interpret and analyse statistical data when applying to prove/disprove a theory of behaviour. Mathematical concepts are studied allowing you as a student to apply rigorous statistical analysis of data sets which then enable you to generate thorough and effective evaluation when looking at a specific concept. We delve into highly relevant and interesting topics such as psychopathology (OCD, Depression and Phobias), ways in which minorities can convert a majority to a viewpoint, why attachments in early childhood are so important, and why police interviews are conducted in such a manner to help prevent faulty eyewitness testimony accounts.

In Year 13, students will take an in-depth look at specific behaviours whilst applying all knowledge acquired from the first year of the course. You will look into the symptoms and treatments of schizophrenia, as well as looking at aggression and questions such as how does evolution explain warfare? Why do some sports fans become obsessive and aggressive? And what sort of aggression can occur in prisons? How and why we acquire our gender identity? The explanations surrounding gender identity disorder (theory of Transsexualism) and the importance of key social influences in our lives that help determine who we grow up to be.

In addition, students will look at the fundamental psychological debates and issues surrounding the study of behaviour, and use this information to effectively evaluate all theories/explanations studied over the two-year course.

During both years of the qualification, students will continuously apply Research Methods, where they will scrutinise psychology as a science, and understand the process of completing psychological research.

The course will inspire students to seek to understand human behaviour; their own, that of others, and that of society as a whole. Psychology A Level will support further study in a variety of areas, including clinical psychology, medicine, law, sport and teaching. It combines well with all other A Level subjects.

Who will teach Psychology?

Psychology will be taught using up-to-date resources and textbooks written by chief examiners from AQA. The main textbook issued to student is the Hodder Education textbook written by Jean Marc Lawton. Students are expected to take notes from PowerPoints carefully planned by teaching staff, as well as extend their own knowledge through independent study surrounding the subject. Students are issued with a list of recommended textbooks/revision guides which as a department will help support students and their learning. Students will also be encouraged to attend a conference tailored to the AQA exam specification.

Assessment Process

All students will complete two assessments per topic studied, this is consistent across both years of teaching. The only exceptions of assessments are for the following:

Term 1 – Approaches, Biopsychology and Research Methods (Students will have an additional assessment of multiple choice to help with adjustment of studying a new subject)

Students receive rigorous feedback following each assessment, and have opportunity to develop skill set through the two-year course, with the implementation of exam technique practice embedded into topic content.

Mock examinations:

Year 12 – Early summer term with students sitting two internal exams (Paper 1 and Paper 2)

Year 13 – Early Spring term with students sitting two internal exams (Paper 1 and Paper 2)

Year 13 – Mid spring term (first half) – Students sit Paper 3

Examinations

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology (Social influence, Memory, Attachment, Psychopathology)

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 33.3% of A Level
- Mix of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Paper 2: Psychology in Context (Approaches in psychology, Biopsychology, Research Methods).

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 33.3% of A Level
- Mix of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology (Issues and Debates in psychology, Gender, Schizophrenia, and Aggression).

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 33.3% of A Level
- Mix of multiple choice, short answer and extended writing questions.