

Sixth Form Summer Transition Work

Welcome to Arnewood Sixth! You are about to embark on a busy and important two years of sixth form study.

Sixth form life is very different. You are going to feel much more independent, empowered and responsible for your own learning. The expectation is that this journey is down to you. You need to commit and relish in the challenge of sixth form life; ambition, belief and commitment are essential for your success.

Below is a transition activity designed for you to complete over the late spring into summer in preparation for your chosen course. By completing the task, you will be better prepared for the start of your course. Your A level teachers will check the work in September. Your commitment starts now!

Subject		
Key Question	What are research methods in Psychology and how can they be applied to studying behaviour?	
Resource List	OCR A Level Psychology Specification Simply Psychology Research Methods	https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/171732-specification-accredited-a-level-gce-psychology-h567.pdf https://www.simplypsychology.org/research-methods.html

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Your Task	<p>There are 3 parts to your Transition task:</p> <p>Task 1: Access and read the OCR A level specification using the link above.</p> <p>Task 2: Please also watch documentaries about human behaviour most of which are shown on BBC2, Channel 4, Discovery and Netflix. YouTube the 'Born to kill' series this will help understand the nature v nurture debate</p> <p>Task 2: You need to be confident with the different types of research methods and be able to identify and apply a research methods to a behaviour you want to study in more depth. The additional resources section at the end of this document will help you understand the different types of research methods.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Task to do once you have read the whole document.</p> <p>Think of a behaviour and design a way to research it. Describe a procedure that could be used to investigate this behaviour. What would the strengths and weaknesses of this investigation be? Use the key terms from the additional resources.</p> <p><i>Examples of behaviours, you can use ANY behaviour, below is just some ideas. Fear, Nervousness, Stress, Flirting, Intelligence, Empathy, Self esteem, Morality, Happiness, Aggression, Criminal behaviour.</i></p>
Additional resources	Please see below:

Summer Transition Work – Additional Resource

What is Psychology?

Psychology is the science of the mind and of behaviour. It uses scientific methods to research 'us'. Therefore, one of the key skills in psychology is having a good understanding of scientific methods and this booklet will go through these. Many people, however, don't see Psychology as a science. This is because human beings are 'variable' meaning that generalisations will be different. For example, whilst research may show that children copy behaviours from their role models, we don't know whether they would have still displayed these behaviours if they had been subjected to different role models, in a different environment. This is not testable for ethical reasons. Due to constraints of ethical guidelines, there is much that we can't test, therefore other research methods need to be used, and these lack the credibility of more stringent tests. This is why Psychology can be deemed more as a social science, rather than a science. This is still an on-going debate, however, and is an area we look in your psychological journey.

You may think that studying Psychology will mean that you can 'analyse others'. To a certain extent this is true, but isn't a skill that is taught in psychology at A level or even at degree level! What you will be learning about are pieces of influential research that have been conducted within Psychological fields and how they can be applied to making changes in society. For example, one study showed that our memories are unreliable and can be manipulated by leading questions. This was applied in real court cases, where eye witness testimonies are extremely important. If someone's memory is not reliable, than can credibility be given to one eye witness statement in a legal case, when there is no other evidence present? This is something that is raised in the cognitive section of this course. You will be learning about 7 different areas of Psychology – what they are, what the strengths and weaknesses of these are and pieces of research which fit into these areas.

The 5 areas of Psychology

- ❖ Individual Differences
- ❖ Social psychology
- ❖ Cognitive Psychology
- ❖ Biological Psychology
- ❖ Developmental Psychology
- ❖ Behaviourism
- ❖ Psychodynamic Psychology

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Core Studies you will learn in year 1

Individual Differences; This is all about things that make us unique and different. We look specifically at how we understand disorders.

Freud – A case study into a little boy experiencing the Oedipus Complex

Baron-Cohen – this examines a specific cognitive deficit associated with autism.

Social Psychology; This is all about how we are social beings and assumes that our behaviour is influenced by others.

Milgram – a controversial experiment as it showed people would blindly obey to the extreme.

Bocchiaro – an experiment looking into whistleblowing

Cognitive Psychology; This is all about our mental processes such as; perception, thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and language.

Loftus & Palmer – an experiment that examines the influence of leading questions on memory.

Grant – this study looks at how context dependant our memory is

Biological Psychology; This is all about how our biological make up determines all our behaviours.

Sperry – an experiment using patients of epilepsy, to examine the functioning of the separated brain hemispheres.

Casey – This study looks at Neural correlates of delay and gratification.

Developmental Psychology; This takes a 'lifespan' approach to Psychology and considers a range of changes that occur through our lives. You are different now to when you were at primary school and you will keep changing.

Bandura – an experiment to test whether children imitate an adult's aggressive behaviour by beating up a doll.

Chaney – This study looks at compliance in child suffering from asthma based on operant conditioning

Behaviourism; This perspective assumes that all behaviour is learnt, thus we are all a product of our upbringing. The key factors influencing our behaviour are the consequences of our actions including rewards and punishments.

This is a perspective which can be linked to some of the above studies, but you will also learn about a classic study in Psychology – Pavlov's dogs. This is where dogs were made to salivate at the sound of a bell. It can be linked to dog training methods (and human training too!)

Psychodynamic; This approach suggests that our behaviour derives from our subconscious thoughts. It is based on the work of Freud, an influential psychologist – in fact he is known as the forefather of psychology. He 'invented' many terms such as 'hysteria', 'neurosis', subconscious and is famous for 'Freudian slips' which is when what you say (an error) represents your hidden desires!

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Research Methods in Psychology

There are a number of ways that Psychologists use to gather data which they can then analyse to make conclusions. This is a fundamental part of Psychology; using research to make conclusions. All the key studies that you will learn about have been tested in various forms and have shown credibility in their results. However, there are problems with all sorts of research methods, and this is what lowers the studies' validity.

Observations;

This is when recordings are made of people using a tally chart. It can be in a natural or a controlled setting. An example of this is making notes of people's behaviour when stressed

Self reports

When people report on themselves, for example, a questionnaire or an interview. Closed and open questions are used. An example of this is to find out what type of personality you have

Correlations;

This looks at data for two variables to see if there is a relationship. Scattergraphs are used to display data but other statistical tests can be used. An example is to see the relationship between hours slept and words recalled

Experiments;

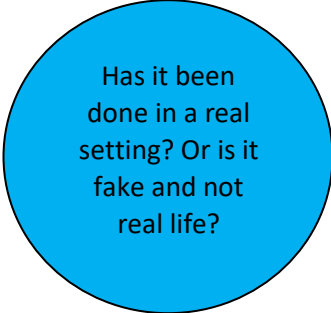
The most scientific approach. The experimenter manipulates the variables to test one thing. All other variables must be controlled to ensure a fair test. An example would be memory; by changing one word in a question, will this affect memory of an event?

Case Studies

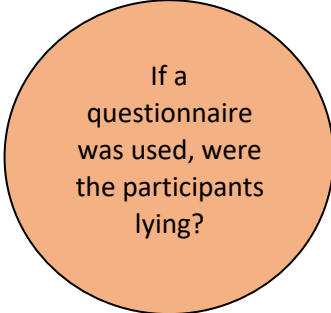
This is when one person (or one group of people) is examined closely using things like interviews to gain data. An example of this is investigating someone with a mental illness

Like I said before, all the above have their weaknesses. The core studies uses at least one of these methods and so a key skill in Psychology is that if you know the weaknesses of the research methods, you will be able to evaluate (strengths and weaknesses) ALL the studies, just by focussing on the research method it uses.

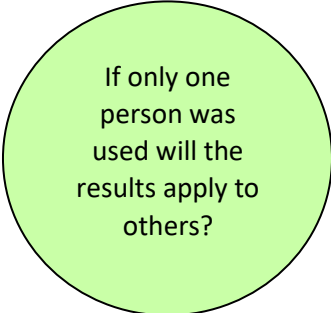
Here are some of the key factors to consider when evaluating research;



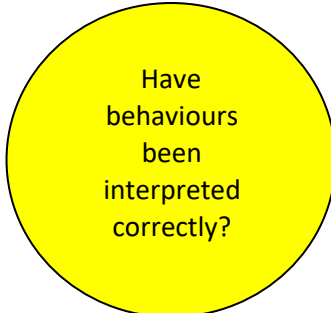
Has it been done in a real setting? Or is it fake and not real life?




If a questionnaire was used, were the participants lying?



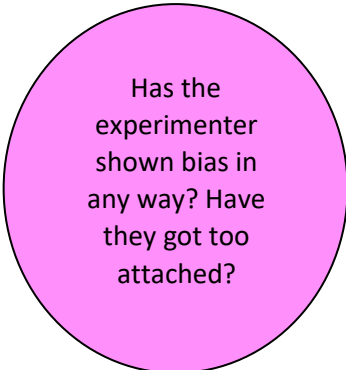
If only one person was used will the results apply to others?



Have behaviours been interpreted correctly?



Have the pieces of research hurt anyone for any reason or have they been deceived?



Has the experimenter shown bias in any way? Have they got too attached?



Have participants displayed unnatural behaviours?

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An evaluation of research methods

Research methods	Strengths	Weaknesses
Observation	Natural behaviour displayed	Can misinterpret behaviour
Correlation	Can show a relationship between 2 variables	One variable DOES NOT affect the other
Self reports	Lots of rich data	People could lie
Experiments	Very reliable	Low ecological validity

Key Definitions

Validity	Whether something is measuring what it is supposed to measure
Reliability	Whether something can be repeated, and the same results will occur – how consistent the data is
Quantitative Data	Numerical data that can be analysed easily
Qualitative Data	Expressed and detailed opinions, described in words
Ecological Validity	Whether a study can be applied to real life
Demand Characteristics	Whether the sample have changed their behaviour because they know they are being observed
Inter-rater reliability	When 2 or more experimenters compare their data and get the same results
Ethics	A code of guidelines on how to treat people in a psychological experiment.

Task

Please hand this in when you return to Arnewood.

Think of a behaviour and design a way to research it. Describe a procedure that could be used to investigate this behaviour. What would the strengths and weaknesses of this investigation be? Use the key terms above.

Examples of behaviours, you can use ANY behaviour, below is just some ideas.

Fear, Nervousness, Stress, Flirting, Intelligence, Empathy, Self esteem, Morality, Happiness, Aggression, Criminal behaviour.

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Outline of the A Level course

Learners must complete all components (01, 02 and 03) to be awarded the OCR A Level in Psychology.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<p>Planning, conducting, analysing and reporting psychological research across a range of experimental and non-experimental methodologies and techniques.</p> <p>Introduces some of the central areas of investigation in psychology organised in key themes. Each key theme is represented by a classic and a contemporary core study.</p> <p>Compulsory section on Issues in mental health.</p> <p>Learners will also study two out of the following applied options: Child psychology, Criminal psychology, Environmental psychology, Sports and exercise psychology.</p>	<p>Research methods (01)*</p> <p>90 marks</p> <p>written paper</p> <p>2 hours</p>	<p>30%</p> <p>of total</p> <p>A level</p>
	<p>Psychological themes through core studies (02)*</p> <p>105 marks</p> <p>written paper</p> <p>2 hours</p>	<p>35%</p> <p>of total</p> <p>A level</p>
	<p>Applied psychology (03)</p> <p>105 marks</p> <p>written paper</p> <p>2 hours</p>	<p>35%</p> <p>of total</p> <p>A level</p>

* Indicates synoptic assessment

Useful websites:

<https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/psychology-h167-h567-from-2015/>

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