

GCSE Psychology

Exam board: Pearson, Edexcel

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behavior; a unique subject that combines theoretical aspects of human behavior with biological research. Scientific methodologies and the analysis of data are used to study behavior, investigate its origins and consider how it can (or should) be altered.

The course has a strong focus on developing research skills and students will discover how researchers utilise and interpret data and learn how to apply these skills themselves. Research techniques will consider the manipulation of variables, hypothesis testing, sampling techniques, the reliability and validity of differing scientific procedures and the ethical issues involved in such research. Data analysis involves many aspects of the GCSE Mathematics course, including statistical graphs, charts and tables, relationships and correlations, fractions, percentages and ratios, significant figures, decimal places and standard form and measures of central tendency and dispersion.

There is a strong emphasis on the development of critical thinking, evaluation and application skills. Students will be required to analyse, make judgements and develop reasoned arguments, as well as to develop essay writing skills.

Assessment is via two written examinations at the end of Year 11. Paper 1 is 1 hour 45 minutes and Paper 2 is 1 hour 20 minutes. Both papers consist of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and several extended response essay questions.

Students will gain knowledge and understanding of key features of the following areas:

- Development - Brain & cognitive development, education & intelligence, morality
- Memory – Memory, forgetting & amnesia
- Psychological problems – Depression & addiction
- The brain and neuropsychology – Brain structure & function, lateralisation, neurons & synaptic functioning
- Social influence – Obedience, conformity, crowd behaviour, deindividuation & bystander effects
- Sleep and dreaming – Functions, features and theories of sleep & dreaming
- The self – What makes you who you are? Self, identity & personality
- Research methods – How to conduct psychological research

Students will also gain knowledge and understanding of the more philosophical debates in psychology, how psychological knowledge and ideas change over time, the contribution of psychology to an understanding of individual, social and cultural diversity and the interrelationships of the core areas of psychology.

A keen curiosity in human behaviour is required, coupled with an interest in applying both biological and mathematical concepts to study this behaviour

Additional course and assessment material can be found on the Pearson / Edexcel website, simply search for 'Edexcel GCSE Psychology'.

For more information, please contact Miss Betts - kjb@thomasadams.net

Please see overleaf for comments that the Yr11 class made last week; they were asked to describe Psychology to someone in your position, or to consider what they wish they had known in Yr9, when they were deciding on their GCSE Options...

Psychology is the science of mind and behaviour. It's a very challenging yet rewarding subject. You have to understand that the hard work begins from the start of Year 10. It's very interesting and I feel it has helped me become a better student and person!

Very mathematical – have to be good at maths. Quite a lot of science-y parts in it. Has some aspects of English – have to be able to generate long ended answers. Very difficult. A lot of things to remember and recall. Interesting, but draining. Not a lot about manipulation/deceit more brainy, science, maths, English based subject – if you do not enjoy any 2 or all 3 I wouldn't choose this subject. I as a Yr11 wouldn't choose it again. Very, very difficult.

A mathematical, challenging subject with a lot of different topics. Very interesting when learning about the psychological side of your own body which you wouldn't learn in any other subjects. If you can focus and are very willing to learn about psychology, this is a good choice, however, if you're picking this just because you think it's an easy subject you can chill in, DON'T.

Like maths and science. Hard. A lot of content to cover. Interesting. Understanding more about the world.

Eye-opening. Challenging. Interesting. Personally I found this subject challenging, however it has allowed me to have a better understanding of people and their behaviours. I think if you are dedicated to subjects from day one, psychology will be a very enjoyable topic.

Basic knowledge in science and maths. A good memory. A good work ethic. The lessons are interesting however it is challenging. Work well in stress.

I would describe Psychology as a subject that's confusing at first, but gives you an eye-opening outlook on certain characteristics, behaviours and how the mind works. If I knew that Psychology would be like this in Yr9, I would've 100% picked it. Involves science. Lots of work!!! Interesting studies. Need to be focused! Hard, challenging. If you're willing to put in work then you will grasp this subject (although I didn't revise as much in Yr10).

It's like science and maths put together. Can be easy to understand, but need to revise the topics.

I would describe psychology as...eye opening...challenging, in the best ways...exciting...shocking. If I was in Year 9 and had to choose it again I 100% would. Choosing psychology was one of the best decisions I made. Although I struggle sometimes, it is one of my favourite subjects. If you want to learn more about yourself and the world, then this is the subject for you.

Interesting. Maths, biology, English. Variety of subjects to cover. Challenging. Would choose again. More maths and essays than expected. Need to remember specifics. Good mix. Cool brain analysis / case studies.

Subjects it's similar to – maths, science, need English skills to answer essay questions. What's it like? It's interesting, but there's a lot of topics and things to remember like key studies, key words etc. (a lot of content).

It is a combination of maths and science, very, very difficult. Prepare to have to completely memorise many key studies and listen from the beginning because it is ALL on the exam. It is very interesting and informational, but very challenging. Read into it before you choose it. A lot of homework! Must have a high knowledge in maths and biology as it will be a lot more difficult.

Some parts can be hard to understand and more challenging. Involves a lot of thinking (evaluating studies). Remember a lot (studies).

A mix between science and maths, can be challenging.

Psychology is a very interesting subject and helps you learn a lot about the brain and body. It can be difficult to understand. In some ways it's similar to science. To try your best to understand, you need 100% focus. It can be boring sometimes, but it's more interesting than boring.

Some topics can be science, i.e. brain and neuropsychology, sleep and psychological problems. Challenging. Be prepared for maths! Psychology is the study of the mind, it could help you with any theories you have on yourself or others around you. Also different behaviours, how you grow - things you personally experience. Personally, I really enjoy it, even though it can sometimes be hard, and hard to grasp things.

Study of the brain. Includes a bit of maths. Requires a lot of detail and being specific. Overall I like it but it can be difficult. Includes a mixture of topics. Occasional essays. Would've liked to know the topics before taking it.

Interesting, fascinating. Content heavy. Similar to biology and maths.

Beware of the maths, it sneaks up on you. You will learn about all walks of life, biology, maths and English. DIFFICULT. You need to know everything. You need a good memory. Less based on actual people.

Stressful, but interesting mix between maths and biology that explores not just human minds and behaviours, but also why we have them. It's challenging, but I would choose it again as it is like science but more intriguing as it explains us more than I expected it to.

The study of the mind. It includes maths, science, English skills. Interesting to study, but a lot of content.

Interesting studies. Learn about the mind, self, etc. Challenging, stressful but very interesting and worthwhile to learn about. Similar to science, maths. Not what I thought it was going to be, quite mentally challenging.

It's a lot, since you learn about both physical and mental, but it is enjoyable and fulfilling. Can be overwhelming at times, but it makes it even better when I overcome the challenges. It can link with other subjects too. I don't regret choosing it.

Very content heavy. Interesting. Hard, because of how specific it is. Takes commitment and good memory. Maths, but not hard maths. A lot to remember.

Basic knowledge in maths and science. Challenging and difficult - interesting. Need a good memory - lots to learn. Combination of science and the basic elements of maths. Hard work.

Mix of English, maths and science. Content heavy. Fascinating. Hard.

Basic knowledge in science and maths. Good memory. It is interesting but can be hard to understand.

It has a lot of science and maths. It's a lot of information to remember for the exams.