

Taster Introduction: What is Psychology ?

Psychology is concerned with *trying to understand why people think and behave the way they do*. This is not easy, but psychologists try and study a wide range of people in many different situations to try and get an answer.

This means that to be a good psychologist, you need to be good at carrying out research, and this taster session will hopefully introduce you to some of the things that psychologists have to think about when carrying out their investigations (as well as answering questions).

The diagram on the right shows the different areas that are studied in Psychology.

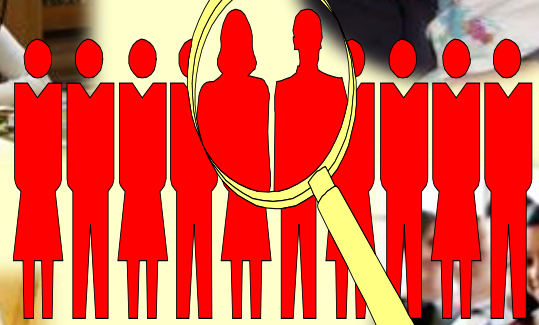
We hope you enjoy this taster session!



Taster Introduction: What is Psychology ?

*... the scientific study of how people think and why they act in the way they do.
It involves understanding behaviour in a range of situations.*

What is Psychology?



Taster: Research: Personality and Stress



Activity: Is there a link between personality and stress ?

Answer the questions below.

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Most problems will solve themselves if you don't mess with them. | Yes /No |
| 2. Some people are just born lucky. | Yes /No |
| 3. You are often blamed for things that aren't your fault. | Yes /No |
| 4. It doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out right anyway. | Yes /No |
| 5. If things start well in the morning, it's going to be a good day no matter what you do. | Yes /No |
| 6. Wishing can make good things happen. | Yes /No |
| 7. When you get punished, it seems for no good reason. | Yes /No |
| 8. Most of the time do you find it hard to change a friend's opinion. | Yes /No |
| 9. It is impossible to change your parents' minds about anything. | Yes /No |
| 10. When you do something wrong, there's very little you can do to make it right. | Yes /No |
| 11. Most people are just born good at sports. | Yes /No |
| 12. One of the best ways to handle problems is not to think about them. | Yes /No |

(Score 1 point for each 'yes' answer, and write down the total number of points)

Taster: Research: Personality and Stress: Instructions

Activity: Is there a link between personality and stress?

1. Complete the *questionnaire* (previous page)
2. Score *1 point* for each correct answer and find your total score
3. Write your gender / score, and estimate your stress level (1 [low] - 6 [high])
For example: Male; Questionnaire Score = 8; Stress Score = 5
4. These can be put in the *table* (next page) in two groups, depending upon the questionnaire score:
Low questionnaire scores (1 - 6) / high questionnaire scores (7 - 12)
5. Data has already been put in the table for you (see next page), but you could always add yours in the appropriate group (have you a low or high questionnaire score?)
6. Calculate the *mean* for the stress scores in each group.
7. Which group has the *higher mean average stress score* (who is more stressed?)
8. What does this *show about stress and personality*?
9. Write a *conclusion* for this investigation.

Group 1 (Low Questionnaire Scores 1 - 6)**Group 2 (High Questionnaire Scores 7 - 12)**

Part No.	Gender	Quest. Score (1-6)	Stress Score (1-6)	Part No.	Gender	Quest. Score (7- 12)	Stress Score (1-6)
1	Male	Quest. Score: 2	Stress Score: 2	1	Female	Quest. Score: 8	Stress Score: 4
2	Female	Quest. Score: 4	Stress Score: 5	2	Female	Quest. Score: 9	Stress Score: 5
3	Male	Quest. Score: 1	Stress Score: 2	3	Male	Quest. Score: 10	Stress Score: 5
4	Female	Quest. Score: 5	Stress Score: 3	4	Female	Quest. Score: 9	Stress Score: 6
5	Female	Quest. Score: 6	Stress Score: 5	5	Male	Quest. Score: 12	Stress Score: 5
6	Male	Quest. Score: 5	Stress Score: 2	6	Male	Quest. Score: 7	Stress Score: 4
7	Female	Quest. Score: 1	Stress Score: 3	7	Female	Quest. Score: 8	Stress Score: 4
8	Male	Quest. Score: 4	Stress Score: 2	8	Male	Quest. Score: 11	Stress Score: 6
9	Female	Quest. Score: 4	Stress Score: 1	9	Female	Quest. Score: 7	Stress Score: 3

Mean Stress Score $25 / 9 = 2.78$ **Mean Stress Score $42 / 9 = 4.67$**

Taster: Research: Personality and Stress: Conclusion

*The questionnaire we have just looked at measures what is called **Locus of Control**.*

What is Locus of Control?

*The extent to which you feel you can affect what happens in your life. If you have achieved a good mark in an examination because of the effort you have put into writing it, then you are said to have an **internal locus of control**; in other words your grade is the result of **your own efforts** (an **internal cause**).*

*However, if you have an **external locus of control**, then you are likely to think that the mark that you have achieved is the result of things **beyond your control** (e.g. whether the question was considered easy or hard, or the person who marked it). In other words, the cause is **external**.*

*In relation to the questionnaire, the higher the score, the more 'external' the **person's locus of control**. It should be added that it is rare that people have either an 'internal' or 'external' locus of control, since this may change depending upon the **situation**.*

*In relation to stress, generally speaking, **people with an internal locus of control tend to be less stressed** (because they feel more able to influence their response to what happens to them).*

Taster: Research: Personality and Stress: Improvements

Improving the Research

An important part of psychological research is thinking about it afterwards - how could it be done better next time?

With this in mind, what could we do to make our investigation better?

Three possible improvements could be listed below:

- Using a larger sample is more likely to produce more reliable results (more people could be used);*
- Using a range of participants (not just students) should produce reliable results (a wider range of people could be used)*
- Use equal numbers of males / females in each condition so a fair comparison could be made between the two conditions.*

Taster: Answering Examination Questions

Psychology is also concerned with applying ideas to different situations, which can often form the basis of an examination question.

*You have been learning about a personality characteristic called **locus of control**. A typical examination question about locus of control is shown below. How might this be answered? (see the next slide).*

1.

Daniel and Matthew are in the same class at school but have very different views on success. Daniel is convinced that success is due to hard work and determination, whilst Matthew believes that luck and fate determine success. The class is putting on a play and neither Daniel nor Matthew wants to participate. Their friends are trying to persuade them to take part.

Using your knowledge of locus of control, identify which boy is most likely to resist the social influence of his friends. Explain why. (4 marks)

2.

Another boy in the class, Tom, refuses to take part in the play. Explain how Tom's refusal to take part might affect Daniel's and Matthew's ability to resist social influence.

(2 marks)

Taster: Answering Examination Questions

1.

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Using your knowledge of locus of control, identify which boy is most likely to resist the social influence of his friends. Explain why. (4 marks)

Answer:

Daniel appears to show an internal locus of control, because he believes that success is the result of hard work and determination, in other words, things that he has control over (things that Daniel can do something about). Therefore he is more likely to see himself as responsible for his actions and as a result will be more likely to resist the influence of other people, and is less likely to be influenced by those in his class who are persuading him to take part in the classplay.

2.

Another boy in the class, Tom, refuses to take part in the play. Explain how Tom's refusal to take part might affect Daniel's and Matthew's ability to resist social influence. (2 marks)

Answer:

Tom's refusal will possibly strengthen both Daniel's and Matthew's resistance, making them less likely to participate in the play. This is because Tom represents a non-conforming role model which signals to Daniel and Matthew that non-conformity (doing something different to everyone else) is possible.

Taster Introduction: Final Thoughts



You have probably realised by now that Psychology requires you to be able to conduct research and be able to analyse data using statistics.

You will also need to be able to write answers in which you apply what you know to a given situation (as shown in the previous question, although some questions may require longer answers).

Below are some final thoughts to finish with (although there is further information after this slide).

Please Remember:

Psychology is:

Scientific and rigorous;

A broad subject with different explanations to understand;

A worthwhile basis which can be used for a wide range of careers.



Psychology is not:

'Just common sense';

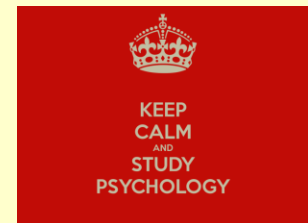
Unscientific;

A subject with simple, easy answers.



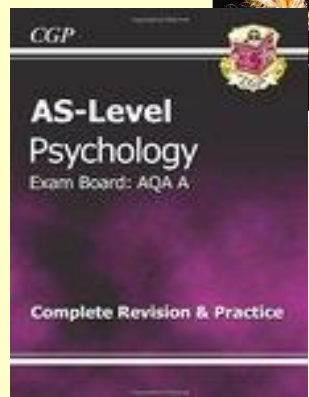
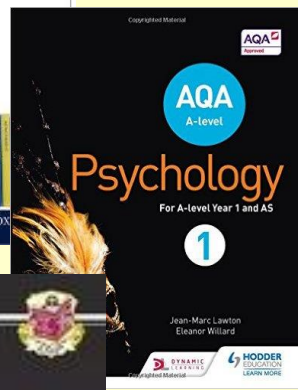
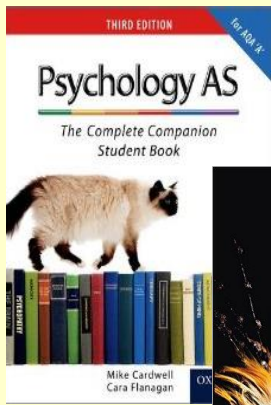
However, if you have the entry requirements and are willing to work hard and do your best, we look forward to you starting with us.

Taster Introduction: Further Information



Books:

(These are possible texts, but books will be provided as part of the course)



Websites:

- 1. British Psychological Society (BPS)
(Careers and information)*
- 2. AQA Psychology (New Specification: Number 7182)
(Information on A Level)*
- 3. Dudley Sixth
(Information about courses)*

Questions?

Please Contact:

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[\(steve.horan@dudleycol.ac.uk\)](mailto:steve.horan@dudleycol.ac.uk)

Jon Kille

[\(jonathon.kille@dudleycol.ac.uk\)](mailto:jonathon.kille@dudleycol.ac.uk)

Thanks for reading this... and we wish you every success in all your future studies

Good luck!

Psychology @ Dudley Sixth: Psychology Overview



First Year:

Paper 1: Introductory Topics:

Social Influence: How others affect how we behave

Memory: Why we remember [or forget!]

Attachment: What influences attachments

Paper 2: Psychology in Context:

Approaches: Ways of understanding behaviour

Psychopathology: Understanding abnormality

Research Methods: Methods used to study behaviour

Specific Entry Requirements:

Your GCSEs must include (at least):

Grade 6 or higher in any English GCSE;

Grade 6 or higher in a Science (e.g. Biology);

Grade 5 or higher in Humanities Subject;

Grade 5 or higher in Maths;

Grade 5 or higher in Another Subject

Second Year:

(Grade D required in first year assessments)

Paper 1: Introductory Topics:

Social; Memory; Attachment; Psychopathology

Paper 2: Psychology in Context:

Approach; Biopsychology; Research Methods

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

Issues/Debates; Sch.; Gender; Forensic

Three, 2 hour, written examinations

(May / June)

Questions ?

Please speak to either Steve Horan or Jon Kille

(direct line: 01384 363020)

Email: steve.horan@dudleycol.ac.uk / Jon.Kille@dudleycol.ac.uk

First Year

Course Assessment: Two, 1½ hour examinations (May / June)

Good Luck!