

A-Level Psychology

AQA 2018/2019

Student Handbook

AS Level Only:

Paper 1 – Introductory Topics in Psychology

Paper 2 – Psychology in Context

Full A Level Only:

Paper 1 – Introductory Topics in Psychology

Paper 2 – Psychology in Context

Paper 3 – Issues & Options in Psychology

Student Name:

Teachers Name:

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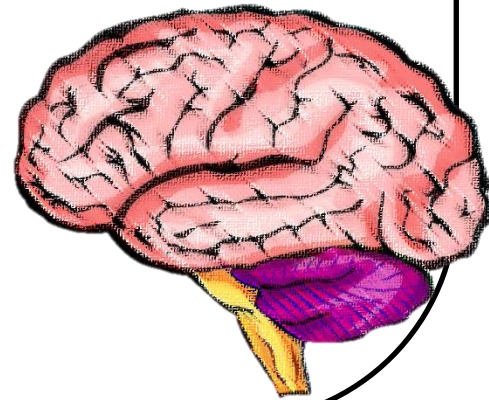
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“In order to succeed, people need a sense of self-efficacy, to struggle together with resilience to meet the inevitable obstacles and inequities of life.” Albert Bandura

Social Science – Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

The aim of this contract is to inform you of the sort of behaviour that the Social Sciences Department requires from you while you are studying with us. It will help you to understand the high standards of behaviour and attitude towards learning that we have come to expect from our students.

Whilst undertaking the study of Psychology I _____ agree to the following ~

- To be on time for all lessons.
- To come to class fully prepared (i.e. to bring a pen, folder, paper and any required text books).
- To ensure my subject folder is kept up-to-date and tidy. (These will be checked half termly)
- Switch off all mobile phones, MP3 players and any other electronic equipment before I arrive in the classroom.
- To show respect for all members in the class and allow them to learn.
- To listen to the teacher when he/she is giving instructions.
- To listen to other students and not shout out when partaking in discussions and debates.
- To take responsibility, and not to blame others for my behaviour during lessons.
- To keep noise levels at a suitable level when learning independently.
- To complete all work set to the best of my ability.
- To meet all deadlines set for homework projects.
- To leave the classroom tidy for other students.
- To understand that all sugar based sweets and drinks are not permitted in lesson (water is acceptable)

.Signed

Print Name

Today's Date

Introduction

First of all, welcome to A Level Psychology. This is always quite a hectic time for students & staff alike, so if you are feeling a bit lost, don't panic, Sixth Form life will settle down eventually (honest!).

Secondly, well done for selecting Psychology as an area of study. Whatever the reasons for your choice I hope that you enjoy this course and you gain much knowledge and pleasure from it.

Psychology is a popular choice among students, it is the science of the mind (Yes it is a Science and don't let anyone else tell you otherwise!). Most importantly Psychologists study behaviour and you will find that throughout the course it is your own behaviour which will be studied. You will be asked to take part in a number of experiments. Please be enthusiastic and say yes to all of these opportunities. By taking part you will be improving your own psychological understanding!

This document contains all the information that you need to know regarding your course. It contains (amongst other things) information on exam boards, syllabus areas, curriculum content, and a comprehensive reading list to support your lessons.

Please do keep this document safe, it will be a useful reference booklet in your progression through your course. If you have any questions regarding Psychology, the course or Sixth Form issues in general we can be contacted during class time or via email.

Staff Member	Email
Mrs Steele	sarah.steele@open-academy.org.uk

The Course



The exam board for your Psychology course this year is AQA. You can find out some more information about this in detail by visiting the AQA website.

How the course is broken down is dependent upon whether you are studying the AS level or the full A Level.

All students will be starting the AS level. We will review your progress throughout the year and together decide which is the best route for you. You may decide you would like to sit the AS exams at the end of year 1 and see how you get on. Depending on your results you might choose to continue to year 2 and set the three A Level exams at the end of this year.

We will support you in whatever choice you make. Please come and discuss this with us if you need to.

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology



This unit is designed to introduce you to some of the key and most influential topics in Psychology. The paper you sit will vary depending on if you are sitting the AS or A Level version of the exam.

AS Level (Exam sat at the end of year 1)

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 1–3 above

Topics:

Social Influence

Memory

Attachment

Assessed

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 72 marks in total
- 50% of AS

A Level (Exam sat at the end of year 2)

Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 1–4 above

Topics:

Social Influence

Memory

Attachment

Psychopathology

All studied in year 1

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Paper 2: Psychology in Context



This unit is designed to enable you to apply concepts we have learned so far to real life.

AS Level (Exam sat at the end of year 1)

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed

Compulsory content 4–6 above

Assessed

- written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes
- 72 marks in total
- 50% of AS

Topics:

Research Methods
Psychopathology
Approaches in Psychology
(including Bio Psychology)

A Level (Exam sat at the end of year 2)

Paper 2: Psychology in Context

What's assessed

Compulsory content 5–7 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Topics:

Research Methods (Studied in year 1)
Bio Psychology (Studied in year 1)
(with additional content,
studied in year 2)
Inferential Statistics (Studied in year 2)

Paper 3 – Issues and Options in Psychology

This Unit is the most advanced of all of the units and is only taught in **year 2 of the full A Level with the exam sat at the end of this year**. This paper requires advanced extended writing skills with 16 markers to answer on a range of optional topics. It also requires you to take a wider outlook on the topics studied by considering the different issues, debates and approaches .

Paper 3: Issues and Options in Psychology

What's assessed

Compulsory content 8 above

Optional content, one from option 1, 9–11, one from option 2, 12–14, one from option 3, 15–17 above

Assessed

- written exam: 2 hours
- 96 marks in total
- 33.3% of A-level

Three Option Topics (all studied in year 2):

e.g.

Relationships

Forensics

Eating Behaviour

Actual topics to be confirmed!

Issues and debates

Exam Questions and Assessment Objectives

You will be required to answer a range of exam questions both in lessons and for homework.

At AS Level exam questions include multiple choice, short answer and extended answer questions worth 12 marks.

At A Level exam questions include multiple choice, short answer and extended answer questions worth 16 marks. At this level you are expected to show greater insight of issues, debates and approaches in Psychology, as well as more developed evaluation.

How will I be assessed? What are the skills I will need?

You will be assessed using three key assessment objectives (AO's). These also detail the skills you will need to perfect whilst on the Psychology course.

AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding: You can do this in an exam by describing or outlining studies or theories in detail using key terms. By doing this you are showing you know and understand!

AO2 – Application: In an exam situation you might be given a scenario or stimulus to apply your psychological knowledge to. To do this you have to really interpret theories, concepts and studies and select the most appropriate ones to talk about, linking back to the scenario you are given.

AO3 – Analysis & Evaluation: In an exam this is the critical thinking assessment objective. To achieve this you need to discuss strengths and weaknesses of Psychological theories and studies. You may also make comparisons by considering which theories/studies are the best.

Some Additional Housekeeping

1) Textbooks

In class we will use hard copy of the recommended course text, as well as additional Psychology books we have in the department. If at any point you loan out a textbook, you should fill out and sign a loan agreement form. If you fail to return the book or return it in an unusable condition, you are giving your consent to replace the book or repay the cost of the book to the department.

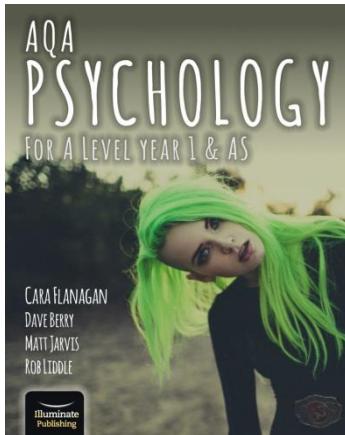
2) Folders

You are required to keep an organised set of notes. Due to the amount of notes and resources you will use during the year you are required to use a lever arch file and dividers to organise your studies. This should be brought to every Psychology lesson you have. Once per half term we will be performing spot checks on your folders. If they are not up to standard you will receive a sanction decided upon by your teacher. The list below is a suggested order for your folder, and a guide to what should be contained within it:

- 1) Student handbook
- 2) Folder monitoring form
- 3) Checklists at the front of each topic (ask your teacher for these)
Topic notes separated by dividers and notes in order.
- 4) Essays/assessments and feedback stored in a separate section along with your essay tracker.
- 5) Mentoring forms (in separate section if applicable)

Essential Resources

Textbooks



The AQA A Level Psychology **Green Haired Girl** book is your essential resource.

Remember we have access to a special online interactive version of this which has useful links, activities and resources attached.

Well worth using!

P.S. Don't forget to read the pages on exam skills at the back!



An alternative book you can use is the **Complete Companion** by Cara Flanagan. This isn't endorsed by AQA but is written especially for the new 2015 specification. Ensure you get the latest fourth edition!

How do you learn?

Studying at A level is considerably different than studying at GCSE level. There will be a lot more information and knowledge to deal with, more complex information to understand and more learning skills for you to master. Your success at A level is directly linked to the amount of Independent Learning (IL) you put into your studies.

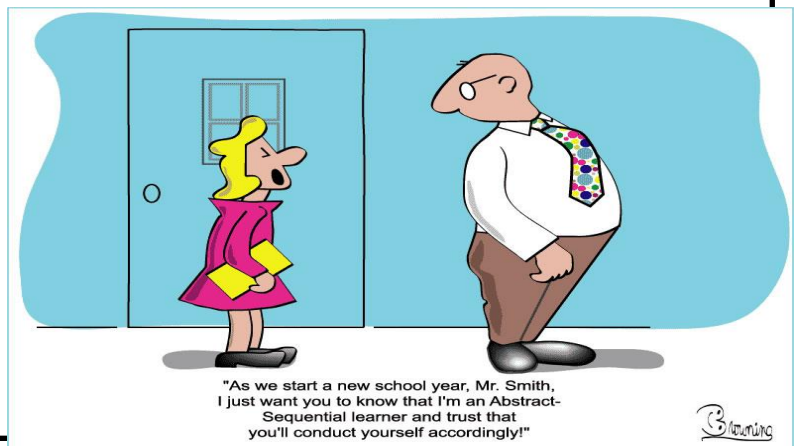
An important step in this process not only to understanding how you learn, (ie: what type of learner you are), but also to develop good learning strategies which will support your particular learning style(s).

In your own words define Independent Learning
(i.e. Explain what it means to you)

Can you identify three things that you have done from Yr 7 – Yr 11 that you would consider to be Independent Learning?

1:
2:
3:

Once you have written your definition and examples, turn over and complete the VAK questionnaire.

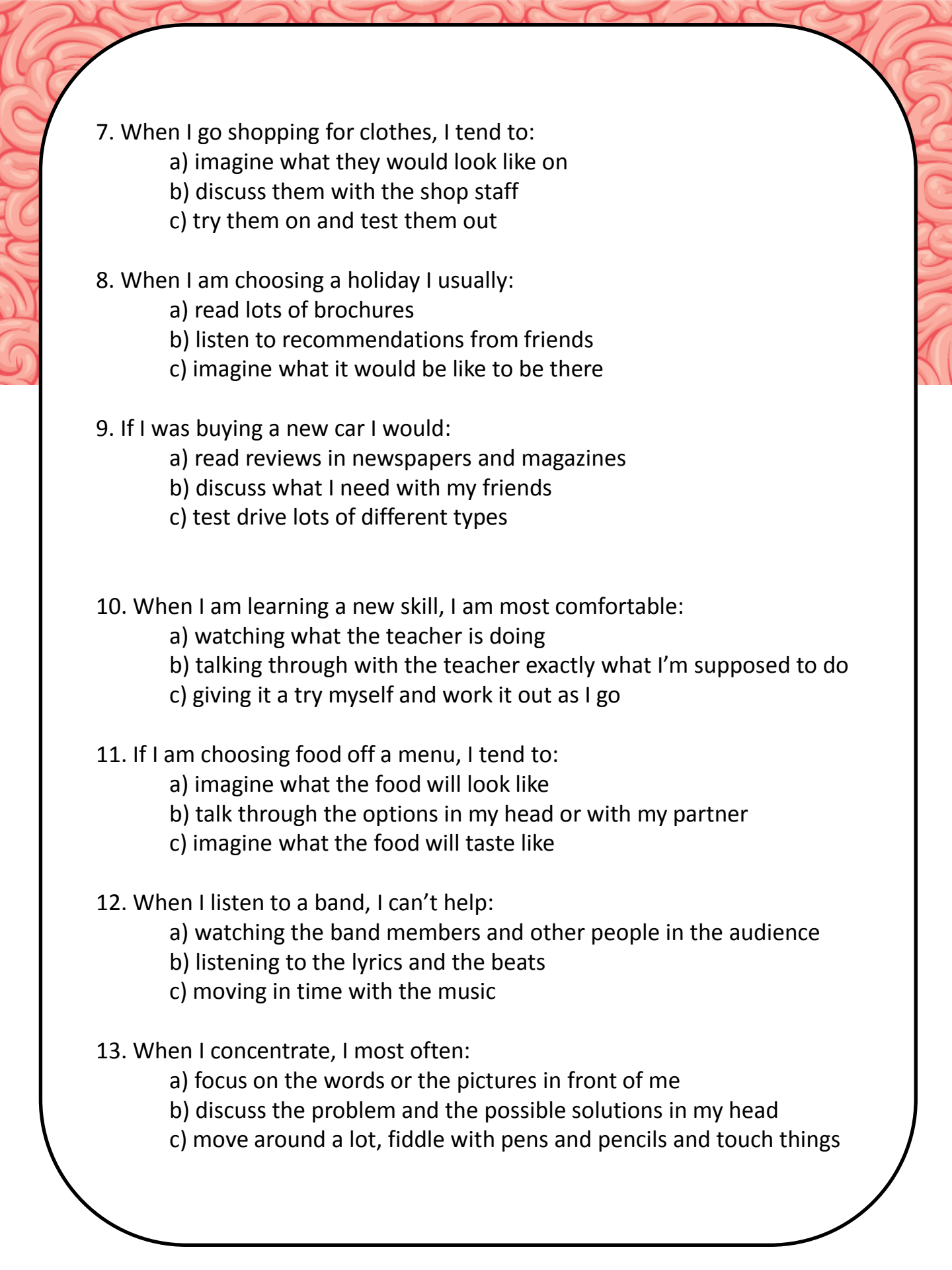


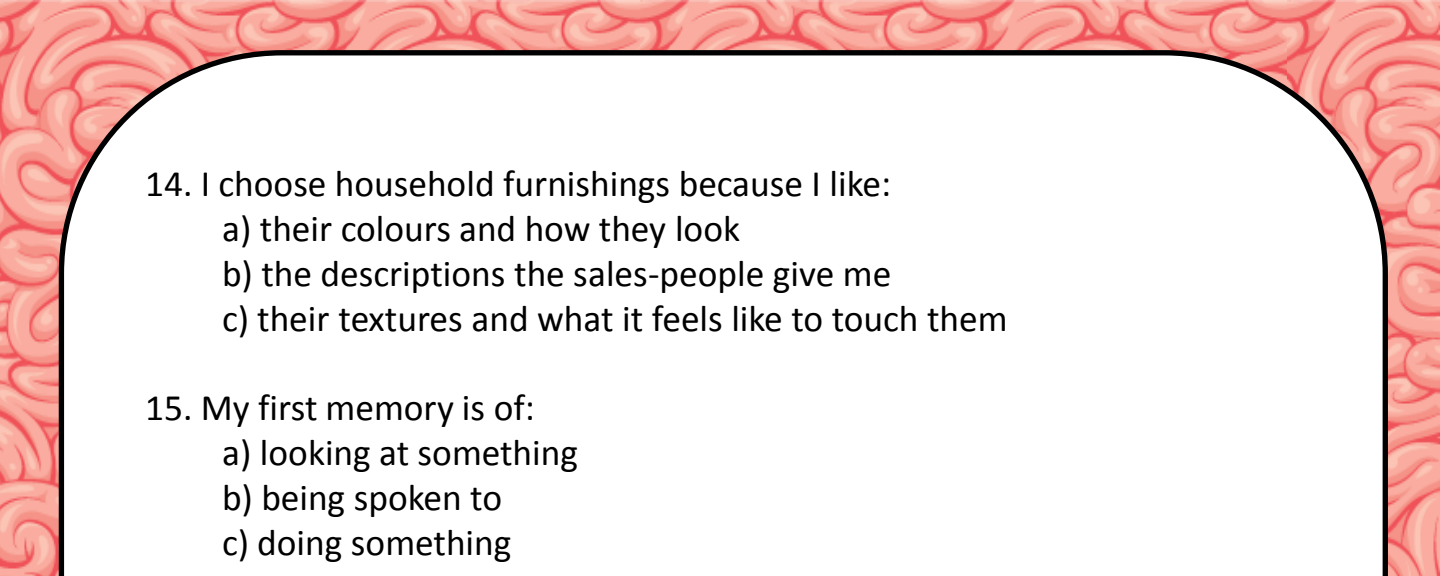
VAK Learning Style(s) Self-Assessment Questionnaire

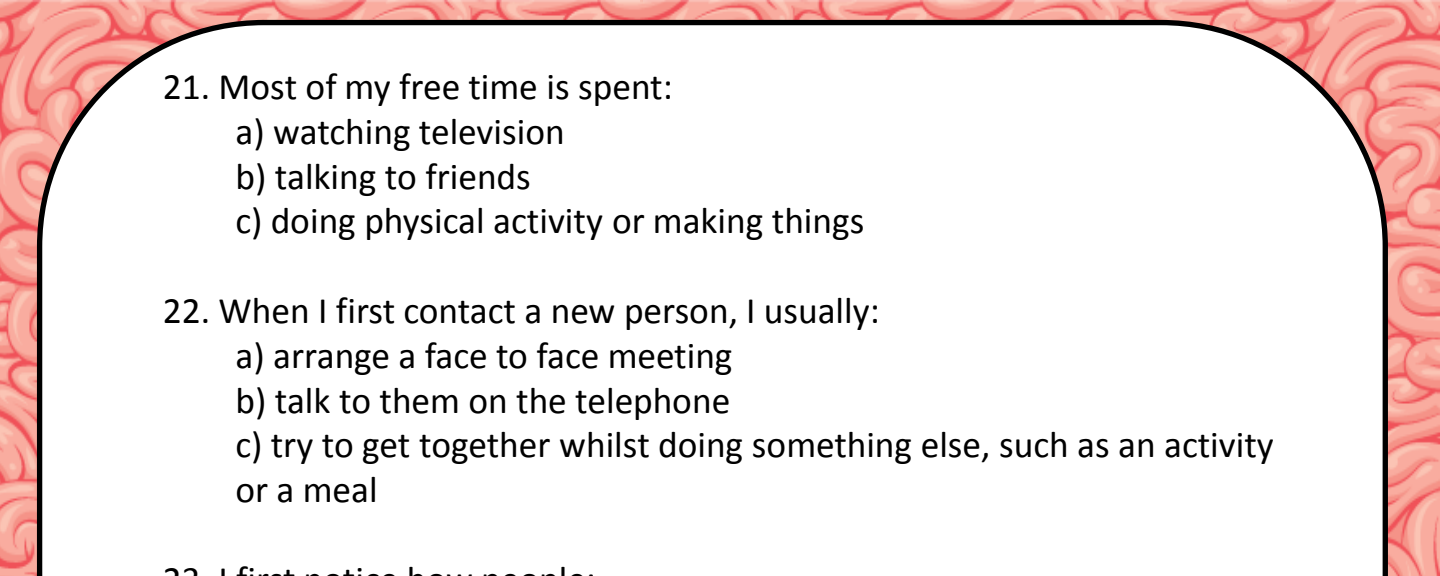
Tick the answer that most represents how you generally behave.

(It's best to complete the questionnaire before reading the accompanying explanation.)

1. When I operate new equipment I generally:
 - a) read the instructions first
 - b) listen to an explanation from someone who has used it before
 - c) go ahead and have a go, I can figure it out as I use it
2. When I need directions for travelling I usually:
 - a) look at a map
 - b) ask for spoken directions
 - c) follow my nose and maybe use a compass
3. When I cook a new dish, I like to:
 - a) follow a written recipe
 - b) call a friend for an explanation
 - c) follow my instincts, testing as I cook
4. If I am teaching someone something new, I tend to:
 - a) write instructions down for them
 - b) give them a verbal explanation
 - c) demonstrate first and then let them have a go
5. I tend to say:
 - a) watch how I do it
 - b) listen to me explain
 - c) you have a go
6. During my free time I most enjoy:
 - a) going to museums and galleries
 - b) listening to music and talking to my friends
 - c) playing sport or doing DIY

- 
7. When I go shopping for clothes, I tend to:
- a) imagine what they would look like on
 - b) discuss them with the shop staff
 - c) try them on and test them out
8. When I am choosing a holiday I usually:
- a) read lots of brochures
 - b) listen to recommendations from friends
 - c) imagine what it would be like to be there
9. If I was buying a new car I would:
- a) read reviews in newspapers and magazines
 - b) discuss what I need with my friends
 - c) test drive lots of different types
10. When I am learning a new skill, I am most comfortable:
- a) watching what the teacher is doing
 - b) talking through with the teacher exactly what I'm supposed to do
 - c) giving it a try myself and work it out as I go
11. If I am choosing food off a menu, I tend to:
- a) imagine what the food will look like
 - b) talk through the options in my head or with my partner
 - c) imagine what the food will taste like
12. When I listen to a band, I can't help:
- a) watching the band members and other people in the audience
 - b) listening to the lyrics and the beats
 - c) moving in time with the music
13. When I concentrate, I most often:
- a) focus on the words or the pictures in front of me
 - b) discuss the problem and the possible solutions in my head
 - c) move around a lot, fiddle with pens and pencils and touch things

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14. I choose household furnishings because I like:
- a) their colours and how they look
 - b) the descriptions the sales-people give me
 - c) their textures and what it feels like to touch them
15. My first memory is of:
- a) looking at something
 - b) being spoken to
 - c) doing something
16. When I am anxious, I:
- a) visualise the worst-case scenarios
 - b) talk over in my head what worries me most
 - c) can't sit still, fiddle and move around constantly
17. I feel especially connected to other people because of:
- a) how they look
 - b) what they say to me
 - c) how they make me feel
18. When I have to revise for an exam, I generally:
- a) write lots of revision notes and diagrams
 - b) talk over my notes, alone or with other people
 - c) imaging making the movement or creating the formula
19. If I am explaining to someone I tend to:
- a) show them what I mean
 - b) explain to them in different ways until they understand
 - c) encourage them to try and talk them through my idea as they do it
20. I really love:
- a) watching films, photography, looking at art or people watching
 - b) listening to music, the radio or talking to friends
 - c) taking part in sporting activities, eating fine foods and wines or dancing

- 
- A decorative graphic of a red brain with white gyri and sulci, positioned at the top of the page.
21. Most of my free time is spent:
- a) watching television
 - b) talking to friends
 - c) doing physical activity or making things
22. When I first contact a new person, I usually:
- a) arrange a face to face meeting
 - b) talk to them on the telephone
 - c) try to get together whilst doing something else, such as an activity or a meal
23. I first notice how people:
- a) look and dress
 - b) sound and speak
 - c) stand and move
24. If I am angry, I tend to:
- a) keep replaying in my mind what it is that has upset me
 - b) raise my voice and tell people how I feel
 - c) stamp about, slam doors and physically demonstrate my anger
25. I find it easiest to remember:
- a) faces
 - b) names
 - c) things I have done
26. I think that you can tell if someone is lying if:
- a) they avoid looking at you
 - b) their voices changes
 - c) they give me funny vibes
27. When I meet an old friend:
- a) I say "it's great to see you!"
 - b) I say "it's great to hear from you!"
 - c) I give them a hug or a handshake
28. I remember things best by:
- a) writing notes or keeping printed details
 - b) saying them aloud or repeating words and key points in my head
 - c) doing and practising the activity or imagining it being done

29. If I have to complain about faulty goods, I am most comfortable:
- a) writing a letter
 - b) complaining over the phone
 - c) taking the item back to the store or posting it to head office
30. I tend to say:
- a) I see what you mean
 - b) I hear what you are saying
 - c) I know how you feel

Now add up how many A's, B's and C's you selected

A's	B's	C's

If you chose mostly A's you have a VISUAL learning style.

If you chose mostly B's you have an AUDITORY learning style.

If you chose mostly C's you have a KINAESTHETIC learning style.

Some people find that their learning style may be a blend of two or three styles, in this case read about the styles that apply to you in the explanation below.

When you have identified your learning style(s), read the learning styles explanations and consider how this might help you to identify learning and development that best meets your preference(s).

Now see the VAK Learning Styles Explanation.

VAK Learning Styles Explanation - What's my learning style?

The VAK learning styles model suggests that most people can be divided into one of three preferred styles of learning. These three styles are as follows, (and there is no right or wrong learning style):

Someone with an **Auditory** learning style has a preference for the transfer of information through listening: to the spoken word, of self or others, of sounds and noises. These people will use phrases such as 'tell me', 'let's talk it over' and will be best able to perform a new task after listening to instructions from an expert. These are the people who are happy being given spoken instructions over the telephone, and can remember all the words to songs that they hear!

Someone with a **Visual** learning style has a preference for seen or observed things, including pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, hand outs, films, flip-chart, etc. These people will use phrases such as 'show me', 'let's have a look at that' and will be best able to perform a new task after reading the instructions or watching someone else do it first. These are the people who will work from lists and written directions and instructions.

Someone with a **Kinaesthetic** learning style has a preference for physical experience - touching, feeling, holding, doing, practical hands-on experiences. These people will use phrases such as 'let me try', 'how do you feel?' and will be best able to perform a new task by going ahead and trying it out, learning as they go. These are the people who like to experiment, hands-on, and never look at the instructions first!

People commonly have a main preferred learning style, but this will be part of a blend of all three. Some people have a very strong preference; other people have a more even mixture of two or less commonly, three styles.

When you know your preferred learning style(s) you understand the type of learning that best suits you. This enables you to choose the types of learning that work best for you.

There is no right or wrong learning style. The point is that there are types of learning that are right for your own preferred learning style.

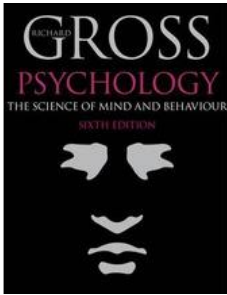
10 Golden Rules

How to improve my grade.

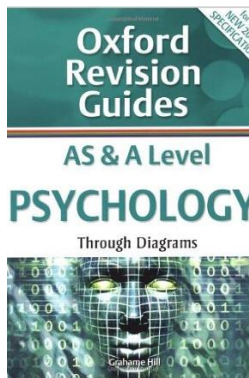
1. Start your course with an organised Psychology folder and keep it this way. You will be surprised just how important this organisation is. A level is as much about organisation as they are about hard work.
2. Produce a vocabulary book and always update this at the end of each week. Ask your teacher for definitions if you are not clear.
3. Do not just collect key words. Use them in homework and in class to make sure you understand them and can use them in the right context.
4. Make flash cards for key concepts, perspectives and research, keep them in your folder.
5. At the end of each topic spend some time making revision notes. This requires good discipline and organisation, but it will pay dividends when the course ends and you approach the final exams.
6. List evaluation points for each topic you study. Put these onto revision cards and learn them when you have completed the topic.
7. Put all your named examples for each topic onto separate revision cards. You should include what sociologists did, what they said and which perspective they follow.
8. For every theory you cover you should:
 - Make 10 bullet point statements about the perspective
 - Identify 10 key concepts the perspective would use
 - Name 3 studies related to the perspective?
 - Outline 3 criticisms of the perspective?
 - Be able to compare and contrast with other perspectives
9. For each study try and remember the theory it's related to and the method used.
10. Be able to evaluate theories by comparing and contrasting with other (often opposing) theories.



Additional Reading



Richard Gross:
Psychology: The Science of Mind and Behaviour



Grahame Hill:
AS and A Level Psychology Through Diagrams: Oxford Revision Guides.
For old specifications but really useful diagrams of the key content in Psychology.

Other useful books to read:

- **Working Memory, Thought and Action** – Alan Baddeley
- **The Lucifer Effect** – Phillip Zimbardo
- **Obedience to Authority** – Stanley Milgram
- **Fundamentals of Cognition** – Michael Eysenck
- **Psychology: The Science of the Mind and Behaviour** – Richard Gross

Useful websites

PsychCentral

From their about page: "Psych Central is the Internet's largest and oldest independent mental health social network. Since 1995, our award-winning website has been run by mental health professionals offering reliable, trusted information and over 250 support groups to consumers."

The NeuroSkeptic column

From their website: "Neuroskeptic is a British neuroscientist who takes a skeptical look at his own field, and beyond. His blog offers a look at the latest developments in neuroscience, psychiatry and psychology through a critical lens."

Psychology Today

From their about page: "*Psychology Today* is devoted exclusively to everybody's favorite subject: Ourselves. On this site, we have gathered a group of renowned psychologists, academics, psychiatrists and writers to contribute their thoughts and ideas on what makes us tick. We're a live stream of what's happening in 'psychology today'."

Scientific American Mind

From Wikipedia: "Scientific American Mind is a bimonthly American popular science magazine concentrating on psychology, neuroscience, and related fields. By analyzing and revealing new thinking in the cognitive sciences, the magazine tries to focus on the biggest breakthroughs in these fields."

Pacific Standard

From their Facebook page: "Pacific Standard is the award-winning magazine for affluent and influential readers interested in working toward forward-looking changes to private behavior and public policy. By combining research that matters with ambitious narrative and investigative reporting, Pacific Standard tells stories across print and digital platforms about society's biggest problems, both established and emerging, and the people attempting to solve them."

Science of Us

From their Facebook page: "Science of Us is a smart but playful window into the latest science on human behavior, with the goal of enlightening, entertaining and providing useful information that can be applied to everyday life. The site's daily mix of columns, news stories, and visual features will translate research from psychology, sociology, genetics, and other fields for a general audience."

Research Digest

From their about page: "We digest at least one new psychology study every weekday. Published by the British Psychological Society since 2005, this blog aims to demonstrate that psychological science is fascinating and useful while also casting a critical eye over its methods."

PsyBlog

From their about page: "This website is about scientific research into how the mind works. The studies I cover have been published in reputable academic journals in many different areas of psychology."

MindHacks

From Wikipedia: "Mind Hacks is an ongoing psychology and neuroscience blog that publishes daily news and commentary on mind and brain issues. It won a *Scientific American* Science and Technology Web Award in 2005 and was listed as a Top 30 science blog by *The Times* in 2010."

The National Institute of Mental Health news page

From their about page: "The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the lead federal agency for research on mental disorders. NIMH is one of the 27 Institutes and Centers that make up the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency. NIH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)."

The [Association for Psychological Science](#) news page

From their about page: "The Association for Psychological Science (previously the American Psychological Society) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of scientific psychology and its representation at the national and international level."

The Public Library of Science's Mind and Brain blog

From Wikipedia: "PLOS (for Public Library of Science) is a nonprofit open access scientific publishing project aimed at creating a library of open access journals and other scientific literature under an open content license."