

## Year 12

**IMPORTANT: There have been changes to the specification for Y12, the below information reflects these changes, but more information can be found:**

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/news/as-and-a-level-psychology-updates-first-teach-2025>

**Please note this involves removal of topics, or rewording, rather than assessment objective changes.**

Timing	Unit Title	Key Questions	Knowledge	Assessing Understanding
Runs alongside other units	Research methods in psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What research methods do psychologists use when investigating behaviour and cognition?</li> <li>What are their relative strengths and limitations?</li> <li>How are they used, and by whom?</li> </ul>	<p>Research methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experimental method. Types of experiment, laboratory and field experiments; natural and quasi-experiments.</li> <li>Observational techniques. Types of observation: naturalistic and controlled observation; covert and overt observation; participant and non-participant observation.</li> <li>Self-report techniques. Questionnaires; interviews, structured and unstructured.</li> <li>Correlations. Analysis of the relationship between co-variables.</li> </ul> <p>The difference between correlations and experiments.</p> <p>Scientific processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims: stating aims, the difference between aims and hypotheses.</li> <li>Hypotheses: directional and non-directional.</li> <li>Sampling: the difference between population and sample; sampling methods including: random, systematic, stratified, opportunity and volunteer; implications of sampling techniques, including bias and generalisation.</li> <li>Pilot studies and the aims of piloting.</li> <li>Experimental designs: repeated measures, independent groups, matched pairs.</li> <li>Observational design: behavioural categories; event sampling; time sampling.</li> <li>Questionnaire construction, including use of open and closed questions; design of interviews.</li> <li>Variables: manipulation and control of variables, including independent, dependent, extraneous, confounding; operationalisation of variables.</li> <li>Control: random allocation and counterbalancing, randomisation, standardisation and control groups.</li> <li>Demand characteristics and investigator effects.</li> <li>Ethics, including the role of the British Psychological Society's code of ethics; ethical issues in the design and conduct of psychological studies; dealing with ethical issues in research.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding to be assessed:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, application to the real world. research studies, research methods and ethical issues.</p> <p><b>Skills demonstrated:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding (A01) Application to real world and novel scenarios (A02) Evaluation (A03) Effective exam practice</p> <p><b>Assessment point:</b></p> <p>End of topic assessment</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The role of peer review in the scientific process.</li> <li>•The implications of psychological research for the economy.</li> <li>•Reliability across all methods of investigation. Ways of measuring reliability: test-retest and inter-observer; improving reliability.</li> </ul> <p>Data handling and analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Quantitative and qualitative data; the distinction between qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.</li> <li>•Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis.</li> <li>•Descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency – mean, median, mode; calculation of mean, median and mode; measures of dispersion; range and standard deviation; calculation of range; calculation of percentages; positive, negative and zero correlations.</li> <li>•Presentation and display of quantitative data: graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts, histograms.</li> <li>•Distributions: normal and skewed distributions; characteristics of normal and skewed distributions.</li> <li>•Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients.</li> <li>•Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval.</li> </ul> <p>Inferential testing</p> <p>Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of inferential testing and be familiar with the use of inferential tests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. When to use the sign test; calculation of the sign test.</li> <li>•Probability and significance: use of statistical tables and critical values in interpretation of significance; Type I and Type II errors.</li> </ul> <p>Factors affecting the choice of statistical test, including level of measurement and experimental design.</p>	
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Autumn 1	Social influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are we influenced by others?</li> <li>Why do we obey?</li> <li>How can minority groups bring about social change?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of conformity: internalisation and compliance.</li> <li>Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence, and variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.</li> <li>Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform.</li> <li>Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality.</li> <li>Explanations of resistance to social influence, including social support and locus of control.</li> <li>Minority influence including reference to consistency, commitment and flexibility.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding to be assessed:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, application to the real world, research methods and ethical issues.</p>
Autumn 2a	Approaches in Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do different approaches explain behaviour?</li> <li>Where do these approaches sit in terms of the 'nature-nurture' debate, and issues of free-will and determinism?</li> <li>How have these perspectives changed Psychology and/or how are they</li> </ul>	<p>Contributions of approaches to psychological knowledge and understanding</p> <p>The basic assumptions and evaluation of the following approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research;</li> <li>ii) social learning theory including imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The cognitive approach: the study of internal mental processes, the role of schema, the use of models to explain and make inferences about mental processes.</li> <li>The biological approach: the genetic basis of behaviour: genotype, phenotype and evolution. Influence of biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour. Cognitive neuroscience.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Skills demonstrated:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding (A01) Application to real world and novel scenarios (A02) Evaluation (A03) Effective exam practice</p> <p><b>Assessment point:</b> End of topic assessment</p>

		applied to understand human behaviour?		
Autumn 2b	Attachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we develop attachments with caregivers</li> <li>• How is attachment researched?</li> <li>• How is attachment categorised?</li> <li>• How do early attachment/disruption to attachments influence later relationships?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal studies of attachment: Lorenz and Harlow.</li> <li>• Explanations of attachment: learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory. The concepts of a critical period and an internal working model.</li> <li>• Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation.' Types of attachment: secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant. Cultural variations in attachment, including van Ijzendoorn.</li> <li>• Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Effects of institutionalisation, including the English and Romanian Adoptees project.</li> <li>• The influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the role of an internal working model.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding to be assessed:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, application to the real world, research methods and ethical issues.</p> <p><b>Skills demonstrated:</b></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding (A01)  Application to real world and novel scenarios (A02)  Evaluation (A03)  Effective exam practice</p> <p><b>Assessment point:</b></p> <p>End of topic assessment</p>

Spring 1a	Biopsychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the neuronal and endocrine mechanisms underlying behaviour?</li> <li>What is the fight or flight response?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic);</li> <li>The structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons. The process of synaptic transmission, including reference to neurotransmitters, excitation and inhibition;</li> <li>The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones.</li> <li>The fight or flight response, including the role of adrenaline.</li> </ul>	
Spring 1b	Clinical Psychology and Mental Health	How are disorders defined, explained and treated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitions in the field of mental health: deviation from ideal mental health, deviation from social/ cultural norms, failure to function adequately and statistical infrequency.</li> <li>The behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).</li> <li>The behavioural approach to explaining and treating phobias: the two-process model, including classical and operant conditioning; systematic desensitisation, including relaxation and use of hierarchy; flooding.</li> <li>The cognitive approach to explaining and treating depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model; cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including challenging irrational thoughts.</li> <li>The biological approach to explaining and treating OCD: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding to be assessed:</b> Knowledge and understanding of psychological concepts, theories, research studies, research methods and ethical issues in relation to the 'Attachment' content.</p> <p><b>Skills demonstrated:</b> Knowledge and understanding (A01) Application to real world and novel scenarios (A02) Evaluation (A03) Effective exam practice</p>
Summer 1	Finishing content and internal exams			<p><b>Assessment point:</b> End of topic assessment</p>

Summer 2a	Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does memory work?</li> <li>• How do we describe memory?</li> <li>• Why do we forget?</li> <li>• How can we use knowledge to improve EWT?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The multi-store model of memory: sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory. Features of each store: coding, capacity and duration;</li> <li>• Types of long-term memory: episodic, semantic, procedural.</li> <li>• The multi-store model of memory: sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory. Features of each store: coding, capacity and duration.</li> <li>• The working memory model: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. Features of the model: coding and capacity.</li> <li>• Explanations for forgetting proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues.</li> <li>• Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony: leading questions, post-event discussion; anxiety; the use of cognitive interview.</li> </ul>	
Summer 2b	Research project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students identify an area of interest;</li> <li>• Conduct a literature review to provide a rationale for research;</li> <li>• Formulate aims and hypotheses;</li> <li>• Design research;</li> <li>• Design informed consent form and ensure ethical considerations have been met;</li> <li>• Conduct research;</li> <li>• Analyse data and come to conclusions;</li> <li>• Complete a discussion of results in relation to literature review, practical and ethical constraints and future research ideas.</li> <li>• Present findings to the class</li> </ul>		