

Strategic Overview of GCSE Psychology

Years 10 & 11

Curriculum Intent

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and human behaviour. Psychologists use experiments to understand how and why people act and interact in the way they do. Psychologists can work in social care, mental health, education, business, research and sports. Psychology GCSE follows the AQA syllabus which offers an engaging and comprehensive introduction to Psychology. We cover a range of Psychological topics including:

- Memory
- Perception
- Development
- Research methods
- Social influence
- Language, thought and communication
- Brain and neuropsychology
- Psychological problems

The course covers a variety of disciplines within Psychology, and also complements the BTEC Post 16 Psychology course, although it is not necessary to take GCSE Psychology in order to study the subject in the sixth form. Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics.

Assessment is by two written examinations, taken at the end of Year 11

Exam Information

Exam 	Date	Time	Duration
Paper 1	Monday 10 May 2027	Afternoon	1 hr 45 min
Paper 2	Monday 17 May 2027	Afternoon	1 hr 45 min

Year 10 & 11 Psychology Roadmap

AQA GCSE PSYCHOLOGY

Year 10

1. Memory

How big is our memory? Why do we forget? How are memories formed? What factors affect your recall? How can someone sustain a serious brain injury and survive?

2. Perception and Sensation

What is the difference between sensation & perception? Why don't we fall or bump into things when we move around? How and why do visual illusions work? What are the theories of perception? What factors affect perception?

3. Development

How do attachments form and why are they needed? What happens if they break? Which parent is more important? What are the stages of development?

4. Research Methods

How do we design research? Can we study people safely? How can we measure things like feelings accurately? What do we do to prevent psychological research causing seriously harm?

Exam Paper 1: Cognition and behaviour

Topics: 1,2,3,4

How it is assessed: Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 100 marks, 50% of GCSE

Questions include: Multiple choice, short answer, and extended writing across 4 sections in the exam paper (sections A, B, C, and D)

Year 11

5. Social Influence

Why do people comply or obey? Are certain personalities more or less likely to obey? Why do some people help when others do not? What happens to people's behaviour when in a crowd?

6. Language, thought, and communication

How are language and thought connected? What is the difference between animal and human communication? What is the function and purpose of non-verbal communication?

7. Brain and Neuropsychology

What is the structure & function of the nervous system? What is the structure and function of neurons? Are there certain areas of the brain specialised for certain skills?

8. Psychological problems

Why do we become depressed? What are psychological conditions surrounding mental health? Why do some people become alcoholics, how do we treat them?

Exam Paper 2: Social context and behaviour

Topics: 5,6,7,8

How it is assessed: Written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes, 100 marks, 50% of GCSE

Questions include: Multiple choice, short answer, and extended writing across 4 sections in the exam paper (sections A, B, C, and D)

Year 10 & 11 Psychology Curriculum

Please see on following page for the subject intent, rationale, and termly overview of topics and homework for GCSE Psychology across the two years of study.

Subject Intent	Curriculum Intent Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and human behaviour. Psychologists use experiments to understand how and why people act and interact in the way they do. Psychologists can work in social care, mental health, education, business, research and sports. Psychology GCSE follows the AQA syllabus which offers an engaging and comprehensive introduction to Psychology. We cover a range of Psychological topics including Year 10 - Memory, Perception, Development, Research methods Year 11- Social influence, Language, thought and communication, Brain & neuropsychology, Psychological problems The course covers a variety of disciplines within Psychology, and also complements the BTEC Post 16 Psychology course, although it is not necessary to take GCSE Psychology in order to study the subject in the sixth form. Students will be expected to draw on knowledge and understanding of the entire course of study to show a deeper understanding of these topics. Assessment is by two written examinations, taken at the end of Year 11.
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Rationale	Why Study GCSE AQA Psychology? Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour and mental processes. It helps us understand why people think, feel and behave in certain ways. Throughout this course, you will investigate fascinating questions such as: • Why do people obey authority figures? • How does memory work, and why do we forget things? • Why do some people develop mental illnesses? • How does the brain influence our behaviour? • Are our behaviours caused by nature, nurture, or both? Studying GCSE Psychology develops important skills that are useful in many areas of life. You will learn to: • Think critically and question evidence. • Analyse and interpret research findings. • Evaluate different explanations for behaviour. • Conduct and understand scientific investigations. • Communicate ideas clearly and support your opinions with evidence. Psychology also helps you understand yourself and others. It can improve your awareness of relationships, mental health, decision-making and individual differences. The topics studied are relevant to everyday life and encourage curiosity about the world around us.
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Topics					
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 10: Memory	Year 10: Memory & Perception	Year 10: Perception & Development	Year 10: Development & Research methods	Year 10: Research methods and full topic recaps	Year 10: Experiments and Psychological problems
Year 11: Psychological problems	Year 11: Psychological problems & Language, thought and communication (LTC)	Year 11: (LTC) and Brain and Neuropsychology	Year 11: Brain and Neuropsychology & Social influence	Year 11: Social influence and full topic recap in preparation for final exams	Year 11: Exam revision

Assessment					
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Formative during class	End of topic tests/ PPE exams in November	End of topic tests/ Formative assessment	End of topic tests	Exam – May 2027	

Homework is given once per week, and is a mixture of addressing misconceptions during the lesson, research tasks, and project-based topics supporting key themes and experiments.

Psychology References

Key Stage 2 National Curriculum

While psychology is not taught as a standalone subject in the UK primary national curriculum, it directly underpins several statutory subjects for Key Stage 2 (KS2) pupils aged 7 to 11.

Psychological principles like cognitive processing, behavioural regulation, and emotional development are integrated into the daily curriculum through specific subjects.

PSHE & Health Education (The Strongest Link)

The statutory guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) relies heavily on developmental and clinical psychology. KS2 pupils explore:

- **Emotional Regulation (Affective Science):** Pupils learn that a normal range of emotions exists. They discover how to scale the intensity of feelings like anger, anxiety, and grief.
- **Cognitive Reframing (CBT Principles):** The PSHE Association curriculum includes teaching children how to manage setbacks and reframe unhelpful, negative thoughts.
- **Behavioural Psychology:** Pupils analyse how thoughts, physical sensations, and actions are interconnected. They use techniques like the "Traffic Light" system to master impulse control.
- **Social Psychology:** Modules focus on peer pressure, conformity, and how bullying impacts group dynamics and long-term mental wellbeing.

Science

The KS2 Science curriculum connects directly to neuroscience and biopsychology:

- **The Brain and Nervous System:** Pupils study how the brain acts as the control centre of the body. They look at how it processes sensory data and commands muscle movements.
- **Addiction and Psychopharmacology:** Upper KS2 pupils learn about the physical and psychological risks of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, exploring how chemical substances alter mind and behaviour.

English (Reading & Writing)

Literacy lessons tap heavily into cognitive and narrative psychology:

- **Theory of Mind (Empathy):** When analysing fiction, pupils must infer a character's motives, hidden thoughts, and inner feelings. This builds perspective-taking skills.
- **The Psychology of Persuasion:** Pupils study how advertising and writing manipulate emotions, introducing them to basic concepts of consumer psychology and rhetoric.

Computing

The digital literacy strand utilizes cyberpsychology:

- **Online Behaviour and Identity:** Pupils evaluate how anonymity affects online actions. They study the addictive nature of screen time and social media validation loops.

Key Stage 3 National Curriculum

Psychology is not formally taught as a standalone subject in the KS3 National Curriculum, but its core concepts are deeply embedded across subjects like **Science, PSHE, and Design & Technology**. Teachers use these links to build critical thinking and prepare students for GCSE Psychology.

Specific curriculum links include:

1. Science (Biology and Neuroscience)

- **The Nervous System:** Learning about the structure of the brain, neurons, and how the central nervous system controls human reactions.
- **Mental Health & Lifestyle:** Exploring the biological basis of mental health, the impact of diet and drugs, and strategies for managing stress.
- **Development:** Understanding puberty, brain plasticity, and adolescent neurological development.

2. PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic)

- **Social Influence & Relationships:** Examining peer pressure, conformity, and how groups influence individual behaviour.
- **Emotional Wellbeing:** Developing self-awareness, empathy, building emotional resilience, and managing mental health (often taught via PSHE and SEAL initiatives).
- **Identity and Diversity:** Understanding self-esteem, stereotyping, and tolerance towards others in society.

3. Design & Technology (D&T)

- **Aesthetics and Colour Psychology:** Exploring how different hues, lighting, and design choices influence human emotions, thoughts, and purchasing behaviours.
- **Ergonomics:** Studying human-centric design, accounting for human perception and physical limitations when creating products.

4. Computing and Maths (Research Methods)

- **Data and Statistics:** Handling data, calculating averages (mean, median, mode), and interpreting graphs, which aligns directly with the psychological requirement for data analysis.
- **Digital Wellbeing:** Discussing the psychological effects of screen time and online behaviour.

5. Citizenship and History

- **Social Identity:** Learning about prejudice, discrimination, and historical figures whose actions changed societies.
- **Perception and Memory:** Understanding the unreliability of eyewitness testimony or how memory works when learning history

KS4 – Psychology

Course Structure and Topics

The subject content is split across two main papers:

Paper 1: Cognition and Behaviour

- **Memory:** Processes of memory, theories of forgetting, and factors affecting the accuracy of memory.
- **Perception:** Visual illusions, perception versus sensation, and explanations of visual perception.
- **Development:** Early brain development, Piaget's stages, and the effects of learning on development.
- **Research Methods:** Planning and conducting research, data handling, and ethical considerations.

Paper 2: Social Context and Behaviour

- **Social Influence:** Conformity, obedience, prosocial behaviour, and crowd behaviour.
- **Language, Thought and Communication:** How humans communicate, differences between human and animal communication, and non-verbal communication.
- **Brain and Neuropsychology:** Structure of the nervous system, the brain, and how neuroimaging works.
- **Psychological Problems:** Characteristics, explanations, and treatments of mental health issues like depression and addiction.

Further reading and national bodies

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/gcse/psychology-8182/specification/specification-at-a-glance>

<https://learndojo.org/gcse/aqa-psychology/>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cz4pr2gdge5t>

<https://www.tutor2u.net/>

Strategic Overview of POST-16 Psychology

Years 12 & 13

Curriculum Intent

For students to receive a vigorous, inclusive, and challenging curriculum, based inside a warm and welcoming environment. For students to work alongside a committed Psychology educator who seeks to prepare them for their next stage of education, and personal wellbeing. For students to study Psychology across a two-year period, developing their abilities to reaching their full potential in the ever-changing world of psychology.

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behaviour. The Applied Psychology BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate offers you thorough understanding in applying the principles and theories of psychology. Psychology at Aylesford is for post-16 learners wanting to continue their education through applied learning, and who aim to progress to higher education and/or employment, possibly in psychology. Below is a breakdown of years 1 & 2 of Psychology.

By the end of the two-year course, students will have been introduced to a multitude of topics within psychology, preparing them for university and/or work. They will be able to create and deliver presentations, including presenting their own research, and they will be able to medically locate areas of the brain identifying areas of control over human movements and thought processes. They will explore the careers that psychology can lead them into, and they will meet many professionals who will deliver speeches about how psychology is a fundamental component within their line of work.

Exam Information

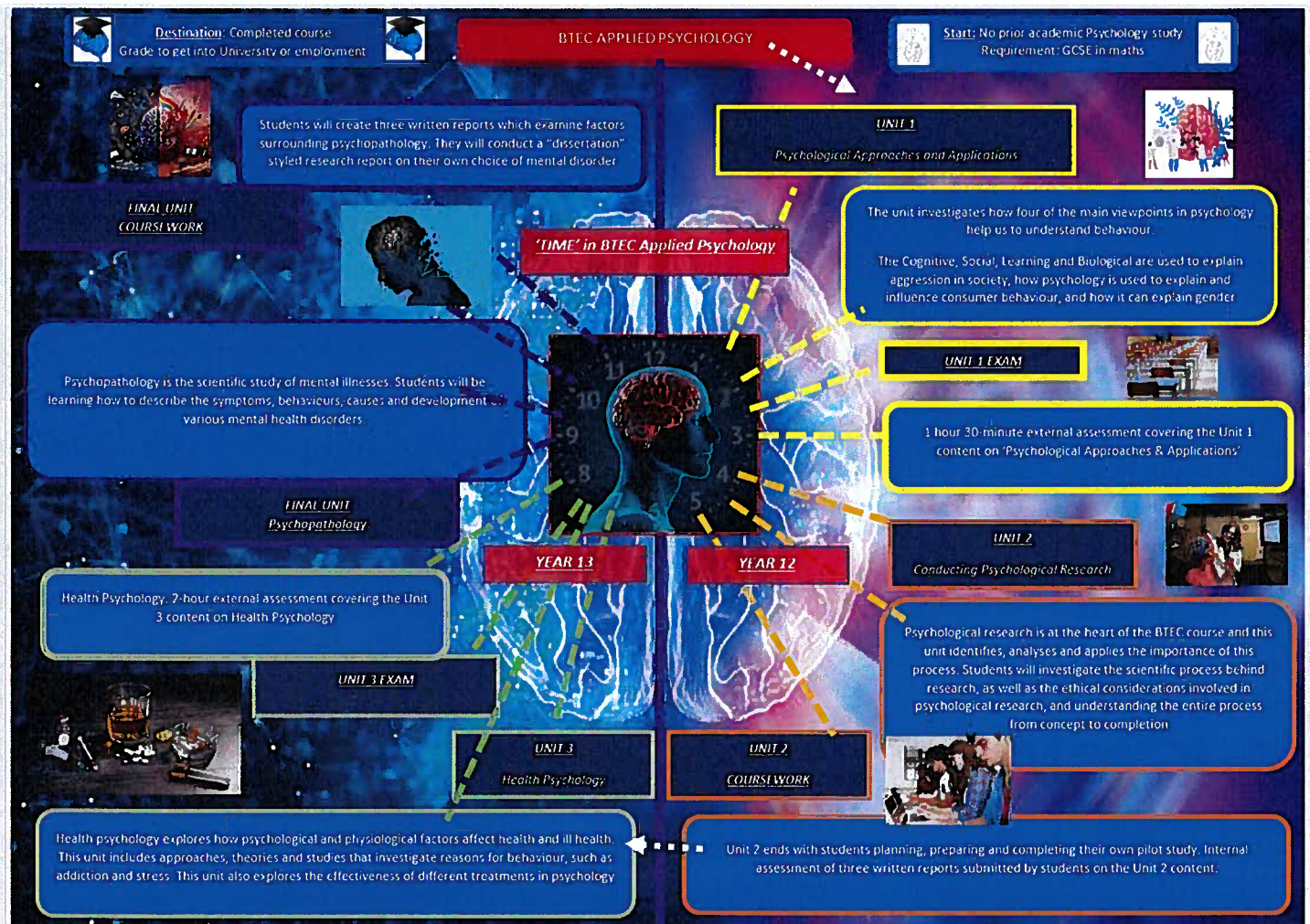
Year 12 - Paper 1 - Wednesday 6th January 2027 - Unit 1 Psychological approaches and applications

(Morning exam - 1.5 Hours)

Year 13 - Paper 2 - Thursday 14th January 2027 - Unit 3 Health Psychology

(Afternoon exam - 2 hours)

Year 12 & 13 Psychology Curriculum Clock



Year 12 & 13 Psychology Curriculum					
Subject Intent	Curriculum Intent For students to receive a vigorous, inclusive, and challenging curriculum, based inside a warm and welcoming environment. For students to work alongside a committed Psychology educator who seeks to prepare them for their next stage of education, and personal wellbeing. For students to study Psychology across a two-year period, developing their abilities to reaching their full potential in the ever-changing world of psychology. Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behaviour. The Applied Psychology BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate offers you thorough understanding in applying the principles and theories of psychology. Psychology at Aylesford is for post-16 learners wanting to continue their education through applied learning, and who aim to progress to higher education and/or employment, possibly in psychology. Below is a breakdown of years 1 & 2 of Psychology. By the end of the two-year course, students will have been introduced to a multitude of topics within psychology, preparing them for university and/or work. They will be able to create and deliver presentations, including presenting their own research, and they will be able to medically locate areas of the brain identifying areas of control over human movements and thought processes. They will explore the careers that psychology can lead them into, and they will meet many professionals who will deliver speeches about how psychology is a fundamental component within their line of work.				
	Rationale Taking Psychology during Post-16 education prepares students for the wider world, studying topics which are real life based such as the cognitive approach of schemas, memory. It allows students to understand the social approach of understanding psychology including conformity, groups, and obedience. Students will gain a deeper understanding of how learning takes place and they will learn the biological approach of psychology including the nervous system, brain structure and neurochemistry. Further they will design and carry out their own psychology experiment on a topic of their choosing, providing it passes the ethics panel check. Students will continue their psychology learning into examining how psychological factors affect our health and behaviour, following topics on stress, addiction and how to promote positive change to individuals. Finally, learners will have an introduction to psychopathology, where they will understand definitions of abnormality, symptoms of disorders (e.g depression, schizophrenia), and therapies for disorders.				
	Topics				
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 12: Cognitive approach and Social approach Year 13: Stress and Addictions	Year 12: Learning approach, and Biological approach Year 13: Addictions and behavioural change	Year 12: Understanding research methods and ethics Year 13: History of Psychopathology	Year 12: Designing research Year 13: Types and characteristics of mental disorders	Year 12: Data Analysis Year 13: Role of professionals	Year 12: Reviewing research methods and starting year 13 content Year 13: N/A
Assessment					
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Formative assessment during class & end of topic tests	Formative assessment during class & end of topic tests	External written exam	Internally marked coursework	Internally marked coursework	Internally marked coursework
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KS4 GCSE Science

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KS5 Psychology

Qualification Structure

Students typically study the **Extended Certificate** (360 Guided Learning Hours) over two years, which comprises four mandatory and optional units:

- **Unit 1: Psychological Approaches and Applications** (Mandatory, External Exam): Explores core approaches like cognitive, biological, and learning theories and applies them to everyday scenarios like aggression or consumer behaviour.
- **Unit 2: Conducting Psychological Research** (Mandatory, Internal Assessment): Focuses on research methods, ethics, and designing/conducting a practical psychological investigation.
- **Unit 3: Health Psychology** (Mandatory, External Exam): Investigates lifestyle choices, stress, and theories of behaviour change.
- **Unit 4: Psychopathology**: The understanding of mental illness, diagnosis and treatment of disorders

Further reading and national bodies

Course specification:

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extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/applied-psychology/2017/specification-and-sample-assessments/btec-l3-nat-ext-cert-in-applied-psych-spec.pdf

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/applied-psychology.html>

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cz4pr2gdge5t>

<https://www.tutor2u.net/>

<https://studyrocket.co.uk/revision/level-3-applied-psychology-btec>

<https://www.brainscape.com/subjects/btec-psychology>