

A-Level Psychology

Full Specification - Spec Cheat Sheet · Papers 1-3

AQA Psychology (7182)

Papers 1-3

184 spec points

Every specification point for **Full Specification**, in spec order - tick each one off as you revise. Codes match the official AQA specification. Nothing here is optional.

1. Social influence (4.1.1)

- 4.1.1 Types of conformity: internalisation, identification and compliance.
- 4.1.1 Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence.
- 4.1.1 Variables affecting conformity (group size, unanimity, task difficulty) as investigated by Asch.
- 4.1.1 Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo (Stanford Prison study).
- 4.1.1 Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority.
- 4.1.1 Situational variables affecting obedience (proximity, location, uniform) as investigated by Milgram.
- 4.1.1 Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality.
- 4.1.1 Resistance to social influence: social support and locus of control.
- 4.1.1 Minority influence, including consistency, commitment and flexibility.
- 4.1.1 The role of social influence processes in social change.

2. Memory (4.1.2)

- 4.1.2 Multi-store model: sensory register, short-term and long-term memory, with coding, capacity and duration of each store.
- 4.1.2 Types of long-term memory: episodic, semantic and procedural.
- 4.1.2 Working memory model: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer, with coding and capacity.
- 4.1.2 Explanations for forgetting: proactive and retroactive interference.
- 4.1.2 Explanation for forgetting: retrieval failure due to absence of cues.
- 4.1.2 Factors affecting accuracy of eyewitness testimony: misleading information (leading questions, post-event discussion).
- 4.1.2 Factors affecting accuracy of eyewitness testimony: anxiety.
- 4.1.2 Improving accuracy of eyewitness testimony using the cognitive interview.

3. Attachment (4.1.3)

- 4.1.3 Caregiver-infant interactions: reciprocity and interactional synchrony.
- 4.1.3 Schaffer's stages of attachment; multiple attachments and the role of the father.
- 4.1.3 Animal studies of attachment: Lorenz and Harlow.
- 4.1.3 Explanations of attachment: learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory.

- 4.1.3 Bowlby's concepts of a critical period and an internal working model.
- 4.1.3 Ainsworth's Strange Situation; attachment types: secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant.
- 4.1.3 Cultural variations in attachment, including van Ijzendoorn.
- 4.1.3 Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation.
- 4.1.3 Romanian orphan studies: effects of institutionalisation.
- 4.1.3 Influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the internal working model.

4. Psychopathology (4.1.4)

- 4.1.4 Definitions of abnormality: deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency, deviation from ideal mental health.
- 4.1.4 Behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and OCD.
- 4.1.4 Behavioural approach to explaining phobias: the two-process model (classical and operant conditioning).
- 4.1.4 Behavioural approach to treating phobias: systematic desensitisation (relaxation, hierarchy) and flooding.
- 4.1.4 Cognitive approach to explaining depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model.
- 4.1.4 Cognitive approach to treating depression: CBT, including challenging irrational thoughts.
- 4.1.4 Biological approach to explaining OCD: genetic and neural explanations.
- 4.1.4 Biological approach to treating OCD: drug therapy.

5. Approaches in Psychology (4.2.1)

- 4.2.1 Origins of Psychology: Wundt, introspection and the emergence of Psychology as a science.
- 4.2.1 Behaviourist approach: classical conditioning and Pavlov's research.
- 4.2.1 Behaviourist approach: operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research.
- 4.2.1 Social learning theory: imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, mediational processes and Bandura's research.
- 4.2.1 Cognitive approach: internal mental processes, the role of schema, theoretical and computer models.
- 4.2.1 Cognitive approach: the emergence of cognitive neuroscience.
- 4.2.1 Biological approach: influence of genes, biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour.
- 4.2.1 Biological approach: genotype and phenotype, genetic basis of behaviour, evolution and behaviour.
- 4.2.1 Psychodynamic approach: the unconscious, the structure of personality (Id, Ego, Superego).
- 4.2.1 Psychodynamic approach: defence mechanisms (repression, denial, displacement) and psychosexual stages.
- 4.2.1 Humanistic Psychology: free will, self-actualisation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- 4.2.1 Humanistic Psychology: focus on the self, congruence, conditions of worth and influence on counselling Psychology.
- 4.2.1 Comparison of approaches.

6. Biopsychology (4.2.2)

- 4.2.2 Divisions of the nervous system: central and peripheral (somatic and autonomic).
- 4.2.2 Structure and function of sensory, relay and motor neurons.
- 4.2.2 Synaptic transmission, including neurotransmitters, excitation and inhibition.
- 4.2.2 The function of the endocrine system: glands and hormones.

- 4.2.2 The fight or flight response, including the role of adrenaline.
- 4.2.2 Localisation of function and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres.
- 4.2.2 Broca's and Wernicke's areas; split-brain research.
- 4.2.2 Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma.
- 4.2.2 Ways of studying the brain: fMRI, EEGs, ERPs and post-mortem examinations.
- 4.2.2 Biological rhythms: circadian, infradian and ultradian, and the differences between them.
- 4.2.2 The effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle.

7. Research methods (4.2.3)

- 4.2.3 Experimental method; laboratory, field, natural and quasi-experiments.
- 4.2.3 Observational techniques: naturalistic and controlled; covert and overt; participant and non-participant.
- 4.2.3 Self-report techniques: questionnaires; structured and unstructured interviews.
- 4.2.3 Correlations: analysis of co-variables; difference between correlations and experiments.
- 4.2.3 Content analysis.
- 4.2.3 Case studies.
- 4.2.3.1 Aims: stating aims and the difference between aims and hypotheses.
- 4.2.3.1 Hypotheses: directional and non-directional.
- 4.2.3.1 Sampling: population vs sample; random, systematic, stratified, opportunity and volunteer techniques; bias and generalisation.
- 4.2.3.1 Pilot studies and the aims of piloting.
- 4.2.3.1 Experimental designs: repeated measures, independent groups, matched pairs.
- 4.2.3.1 Observational design: behavioural categories, event sampling, time sampling.
- 4.2.3.1 Questionnaire construction (open and closed questions); design of interviews.
- 4.2.3.1 Variables: independent, dependent, extraneous, confounding; operationalisation.
- 4.2.3.1 Control: random allocation, counterbalancing, randomisation and standardisation.
- 4.2.3.1 Demand characteristics and investigator effects.
- 4.2.3.1 Ethics: the BPS code of ethics; ethical issues and ways of dealing with them.
- 4.2.3.1 The role of peer review in the scientific process.
- 4.2.3.1 The implications of psychological research for the economy.
- 4.2.3.1 Reliability: test-retest and inter-observer; ways of improving reliability.
- 4.2.3.1 Validity: face, concurrent, ecological and temporal validity; assessing and improving validity.
- 4.2.3.1 Features of science: objectivity and empirical method; replicability and falsifiability; theory construction; paradigms and paradigm shifts.
- 4.2.3.1 Reporting investigations: abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion and referencing.
- 4.2.3.2 Quantitative and qualitative data, and their collection techniques.
- 4.2.3.2 Primary and secondary data, including meta-analysis.
- 4.2.3.2 Descriptive statistics: measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and their calculation.
- 4.2.3.2 Measures of dispersion: range and standard deviation; calculation of range and percentages.

- 4.2.3.2 Positive, negative and zero correlations.
- 4.2.3.2 Presentation of quantitative data: graphs, tables, scattergrams, bar charts and histograms.
- 4.2.3.2 Distributions: normal and skewed, and their characteristics.
- 4.2.3.2 Analysis and interpretation of correlation, including correlation coefficients.
- 4.2.3.2 Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal and interval.
- 4.2.3.2 Content analysis and coding; thematic analysis.
- 4.2.3.3 Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test - when to use it and how to calculate it.
- 4.2.3.3 Probability and significance: statistical tables, critical values; Type I and Type II errors.
- 4.2.3.3 Choosing a statistical test by level of measurement and design: Spearman's rho, Pearson's r, Wilcoxon, Mann-Whitney, related and unrelated t-tests, Chi-Squared.

8. Issues and debates in Psychology (4.3.1)

- 4.3.1 Gender and culture: universality and bias; gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias.
- 4.3.1 Cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- 4.3.1 Free will and determinism: hard and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism.
- 4.3.1 The scientific emphasis on causal explanations.
- 4.3.1 The nature-nurture debate: relative importance of heredity and environment; the interactionist approach.
- 4.3.1 Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation; biological and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism.
- 4.3.1 Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.
- 4.3.1 Ethical implications of research and theory, including social sensitivity.

Option 1 - Relationships (4.3.2)

- 4.3.2 Evolutionary explanations for partner preferences: sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour.
- 4.3.2 Factors affecting attraction: self-disclosure.
- 4.3.2 Factors affecting attraction: physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis.
- 4.3.2 Factors affecting attraction: filter theory (social demography, similarity in attitudes, complementarity).
- 4.3.2 Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory and equity theory.
- 4.3.2 Rusbult's investment model: commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment.
- 4.3.2 Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave-dressing phases.
- 4.3.2 Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure and the effects of absence of gating.
- 4.3.2 Parasocial relationships: levels, the absorption-addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.

Option 2 - Gender (4.3.3)

- 4.3.3 Sex and gender; sex-role stereotypes.
- 4.3.3 Androgyny and measuring androgyny, including the Bem Sex Role Inventory.
- 4.3.3 Role of chromosomes and hormones (testosterone, oestrogen, oxytocin) in sex and gender.
- 4.3.3 Atypical sex chromosome patterns: Klinefelter's and Turner's syndromes.
- 4.3.3 Cognitive explanations: Kohlberg's theory (gender identity, stability, constancy).
- 4.3.3 Cognitive explanation: gender schema theory.

- 4.3.3 Psychodynamic explanation: Freud's theory, Oedipus and Electra complexes, identification and internalisation.
- 4.3.3 Social learning theory applied to gender development.
- 4.3.3 The influence of culture and media on gender roles.
- 4.3.3 Atypical gender development: gender dysphoria; biological and social explanations.

Option 3 - Cognition and development (4.3.4)

- 4.3.4 Piaget's theory: schemas, assimilation, accommodation, equilibration and stages of intellectual development.
- 4.3.4 Characteristics of Piaget's stages: object permanence, conservation, egocentrism and class inclusion.
- 4.3.4 Vygotsky's theory: the zone of proximal development and scaffolding.
- 4.3.4 Baillargeon's explanation of early infant abilities: knowledge of the physical world; violation of expectation research.
- 4.3.4 Development of social cognition: Selman's levels of perspective-taking.
- 4.3.4 Theory of mind, including as an explanation for autism; the Sally-Anne study.
- 4.3.4 The role of the mirror neuron system in social cognition.

Option 4 - Schizophrenia (4.3.5)

- 4.3.5 Classification of schizophrenia; positive symptoms (hallucinations, delusions).
- 4.3.5 Negative symptoms of schizophrenia (speech poverty, avolition).
- 4.3.5 Reliability and validity in diagnosis: co-morbidity, culture and gender bias, symptom overlap.
- 4.3.5 Biological explanations: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis.
- 4.3.5 Psychological explanations: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations (dysfunctional thought processing).
- 4.3.5 Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics.
- 4.3.5 CBT and family therapy in the treatment of schizophrenia.
- 4.3.5 Token economies in the management of schizophrenia.
- 4.3.5 The interactionist approach: the diathesis-stress model in explaining and treating schizophrenia.

Option 5 - Eating behaviour (4.3.6)

- 4.3.6 Evolutionary explanation for food preferences, including neophobia and taste aversion.
- 4.3.6 Role of learning in food preference, including social and cultural influences.
- 4.3.6 Neural and hormonal mechanisms controlling eating: the hypothalamus, ghrelin and leptin.
- 4.3.6 Biological explanations for anorexia nervosa: genetic and neural explanations.
- 4.3.6 Psychological explanations for anorexia: family systems theory (enmeshment, autonomy, control).
- 4.3.6 Psychological explanations for anorexia: social learning theory (modelling, reinforcement, media) and cognitive theory (distortions, irrational beliefs).
- 4.3.6 Biological explanations for obesity: genetic and neural explanations.
- 4.3.6 Psychological explanations for obesity: restraint theory, disinhibition and the boundary model.
- 4.3.6 Explanations for the success and failure of dieting.

Option 6 - Stress (4.3.7)

- 4.3.7 Physiology of stress: general adaptation syndrome; hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system; sympathomedullary pathway; role of cortisol.

- 4.3.7** Role of stress in illness: immunosuppression and cardiovascular disorders.
- 4.3.7** Sources of stress: life changes and daily hassles.
- 4.3.7** Workplace stress, including the effects of workload and control.
- 4.3.7** Measuring stress: self-report scales (SRRS, Hassles and Uplifts Scale) and physiological measures (skin conductance response).
- 4.3.7** Individual differences in stress: personality types A, B and C and associated behaviours.
- 4.3.7** Hardiness, including commitment, challenge and control.
- 4.3.7** Managing stress: drug therapy (benzodiazepines, beta blockers), stress inoculation therapy and biofeedback.
- 4.3.7** Gender differences in coping with stress.
- 4.3.7** Social support in coping with stress: instrumental, emotional and esteem support.

Option 7 - Aggression (4.3.8)

- 4.3.8** Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression: the limbic system, serotonin and testosterone.
- 4.3.8** Genetic factors in aggression, including the MAOA gene.
- 4.3.8** Ethological explanation: innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns.
- 4.3.8** Evolutionary explanations of human aggression.
- 4.3.8** Social psychological explanations: the frustration-aggression hypothesis.
- 4.3.8** Social learning theory applied to human aggression; de-individuation.
- 4.3.8** Institutional aggression in prisons: dispositional and situational explanations.
- 4.3.8** Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer games.
- 4.3.8** The role of desensitisation, disinhibition and cognitive priming.

Option 8 - Forensic Psychology (4.3.9)

- 4.3.9** Offender profiling: the top-down approach, including organised and disorganised offender types.
- 4.3.9** Offender profiling: the bottom-up approach, including investigative Psychology and geographical profiling.
- 4.3.9** Biological explanations of offending: a historical approach (atavistic form).
- 4.3.9** Biological explanations of offending: genetic and neural explanations.
- 4.3.9** Psychological explanations: Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality.
- 4.3.9** Psychological explanations: cognitive explanations - level of moral reasoning and cognitive distortions (hostile attribution bias, minimisation).
- 4.3.9** Psychological explanations: differential association theory and psychodynamic explanations.
- 4.3.9** Dealing with offending: aims and psychological effects of custodial sentencing; recidivism.
- 4.3.9** Dealing with offending: behaviour modification in custody, anger management and restorative justice programmes.

Option 9 - Addiction (4.3.10)

- 4.3.10** Describing addiction: physical and psychological dependence, tolerance and withdrawal syndrome.
- 4.3.10** Risk factors in developing addiction: genetic vulnerability, stress, personality, family influences and peers.
- 4.3.10** Explanations for nicotine addiction: brain neurochemistry (role of dopamine) and learning theory (cue reactivity).
- 4.3.10** Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory (partial and variable reinforcement).

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| 4.3.10 | Explanations for gambling addiction: cognitive theory (cognitive bias). |
| 4.3.10 | Reducing addiction: drug therapy. |
| 4.3.10 | Reducing addiction: behavioural interventions (aversion therapy, covert sensitisation) and CBT. |
| 4.3.10 | Applying theories of behaviour change to addiction: the theory of planned behaviour and Prochaska's six-stage model. |