

A-Level Psychology

Criminological Psychology (Option) - Spec Cheat Sheet · Paper 2

Edexcel Psychology (9PS0)

Paper 2

23 spec points

Every specification point for **Criminological Psychology (Option)**, in spec order - tick each one off as you revise. Codes match the official Edexcel specification. Nothing here is optional.

6.1 Content

- 6.1.1** Biological explanations of crime and anti-social behaviour, including brain injury, the amygdala and aggression, XYY syndrome and personality (with consideration of gender differences).
- 6.1.2** Social explanations of crime and anti-social behaviour, including labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy (with consideration of gender differences).
- 6.1.3** Understanding the offender, offence analysis and case formulation: the cognitive interview and ethical interview techniques.
- 6.1.4** The use of psychological formulation to understand the function of offending behaviour in the individual.
- 6.1.5** One cognitive-behavioural treatment for offenders (e.g. CBT, social skills training, anger management, assertiveness training), including strengths, weaknesses and one study of its effectiveness.
- 6.1.6** One biological treatment for offenders (e.g. improved diet, hormone treatment), including strengths, weaknesses and one study of its effectiveness.
- 6.1.7** Factors influencing eye-witness testimony, including consideration of reliability (post-event information and weapon focus); studies here may also serve the methodology section.
- 6.1.8** Factors influencing jury decision-making, including characteristics of the defendant and pre-trial publicity, including studies in this area.
- 6.1.9** Individual differences: personality as a factor in criminal/anti-social behaviour; individual differences affecting whether a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs (e.g. in developing criminal or anti-social behaviour).
- 6.1.10** Developmental psychology: the self-fulfilling prophecy as an explanation for criminal/anti-social development; social learning theory as a developmental account of such behaviour; other causes (including biological) that can explain development.

6.2 Methods

- 6.2.1** Research methods used to assess eye-witness effectiveness, including laboratory experiments and field experiments, and case studies.
- 6.2.2** Sample selection and techniques: random, stratified, volunteer (and technique) and opportunity sampling.
- 6.2.3** Issues of reliability, validity, objectivity, credibility and ethics in research in criminological psychology.
- 6.2.4** Data analysis: quantitative analysis using measures of central tendency, frequency tables, measures of dispersion (range and standard deviation), correlations and meta-analysis; drawing conclusions using inferential testing (chi-squared, Spearman, Mann-Whitney U, Wilcoxon), statistical significance, levels of measurement, and critical and observed values; qualitative analysis using thematic analysis and grounded theory.
- 6.2.5** Ethical guidelines: the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009), including risk management in research, and HCPC principles for undertaking psychological formulation and intervention.

6.3 Studies

- 6.3.1** Classic study: Loftus and Palmer (1974) Reconstruction of automobile destruction - the interaction between language and memory.
- 6.3.2** One contemporary study (option): Bradbury and Williams (2013) Diversity and citizen participation - the effects of race on juror decision-making.
- 6.3.3** One contemporary study (option): Valentine and Mesout (2009) Eyewitness identification under stress in the London Dungeon.
- 6.3.4** One contemporary study (option): Howells et al. (2005) Brief anger management programs with offenders - outcomes and predictors of change.

6.4 Key questions

- 6.4.1** One key issue of relevance to today's society, discussed as a contemporary issue for society rather than as an academic argument.
- 6.4.2** Concepts, theories and/or research appropriate to the chosen key question, drawn from criminological psychology as given in this specification (e.g. is eye-witness testimony too unreliable to trust; should jury bias lead to the abolishment of juries).

6.5 Practical investigation

- 6.5.1** One practical research exercise gathering data relevant to criminological psychology, adhering to ethical principles: conduct a questionnaire, interview or experiment; gather data that includes quantitative data for analysis; apply inferential testing as appropriate (e.g. chi-squared, Mann–Whitney U, Wilcoxon, Spearman's rho); report a hypothesis, method, sampling, ethics, data-collection tools, analysis, results and discussion; and consider strengths, weaknesses and possible improvements.

6.6 Issues and debates

- 6.6** Issues and debates in criminological psychology: ethics; practical issues in the design and implementation of research; reductionism; comparisons between ways of explaining behaviour using different themes; psychology as a science; culture and gender; nature–nurture; how psychological understanding has developed over time; issues of social control; the use of psychological knowledge within society; and issues related to socially-sensitive research.