

A-Level Psychology

Learning Theories - Spec Cheat Sheet · Paper 1

Edexcel Psychology (9PS0)

Paper 1

20 spec points

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

Methods

- 4.1** The use of animals in laboratory experiments to study learning, including the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and the ethics of using non-human animals in research.
- 4.2** Observations: the use of observational research techniques in learning, including types of observation (covert, overt, participant, non-participant), tallying, event sampling and time sampling.
- 4.3** Questionnaires and interviews: their use to gather data on attitudes to learning, including the design of open and closed questions and the use of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.
- 4.4** Inter-observer reliability and how it is established, plus the use of test-retest reliability when assessing the reliability of a self-report.

Content: classical conditioning

- 4.5** Classical conditioning as learning through association, including the work of Pavlov, and the terms unconditioned stimulus (UCS), unconditioned response (UCR), neutral stimulus (NS), conditioned stimulus (CS) and conditioned response (CR).
- 4.6** The key processes in classical conditioning: timing, extinction, spontaneous recovery, stimulus generalisation and discrimination.

Content: operant conditioning

- 4.7** Operant conditioning as learning through consequences, including the work of Skinner and Thorndike's law of effect.
- 4.8** Types of reinforcement and punishment: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, primary and secondary reinforcement, positive punishment and negative punishment.
- 4.9** Schedules of reinforcement: continuous reinforcement, fixed ratio, variable ratio, fixed interval and variable interval, and their effects on the rate of response.
- 4.10** Behaviour shaping and the role of operant conditioning in the development and treatment of phobias, including token economy.

Content: social learning theory

- 4.11** Social learning theory as an explanation of learning, including the role of attention, retention, reproduction and motivation in observational learning.
- 4.12** The role of modelling, imitation, identification, vicarious reinforcement and the influence of role models in social learning, including the work of Bandura.

Application: phobias

- 4.13** The application of classical and operant conditioning to explaining the acquisition and maintenance of phobias, including the two-process model (Mowrer).
- 4.14** The use of social learning theory to explain the acquisition of phobias through observation and modelling.
- 4.15** Treatments of phobias derived from the behaviourist approach: systematic desensitisation, including relaxation and the anxiety hierarchy, and flooding.

Studies

- 4.16** Classic study: Watson and Rayner (1920) Conditioned emotional reactions (Little Albert) - aim, procedure, findings, conclusions and evaluation.
- 4.17** One contemporary study, for example Becker et al. (2002) Television, disordered eating and young women in Fiji, or Bastian et al. (2011) Cyber-dehumanisation - aim, procedure, findings, conclusions and evaluation.

Key question

- 4.18** How the learning approach can be used to explain a key question of relevance to today's society, for example the effectiveness of behaviour modification techniques such as token economy in institutions, or the role of media in influencing behaviour such as anorexia.

Practical investigation

- 4.19** Design and conduct a practical investigation using an observation or self-report technique relevant to the learning approach, including the choice of an appropriate sampling method, the gathering and analysis of data, and consideration of ethical issues.
- 4.20** Analysis of the data gathered, including the use of measures of central tendency and dispersion, the presentation of data, the use of an appropriate inferential statistical test (for example the chi-squared test or Spearman's rank) and the drawing of conclusions linked to the hypothesis.