



Psychology Subject Guide, First Examinations 2019 ANATOLIA COLLEGE, IBDP

Revised September 2023

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1. Nature of the subject

Psychology is the systematic study of behaviour and mental processes. Psychology has its roots in both the natural and social sciences, leading to a variety of research designs and applications, and providing a unique approach to understanding modern society. IB psychology examines the interaction of biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behaviour, thereby adopting an integrative and multidisciplinary approach. Understanding how psychological knowledge is generated, developed and applied enables students to achieve a greater understanding of themselves and appreciate the diversity of human behaviour. The ethical concerns raised by the methodology and application of psychological research are key considerations in IB psychology.

2. Aims and assessment objectives

Aims

The aims of the psychology course at SL and at HL are to:

- Develop an awareness of how psychological research can be applied for the benefit of human beings
- Ensure that ethical practices are upheld in psychological inquiry
- Develop an understanding of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural influences on human behavior
- Develop an understanding of alternative explanations of behavior
- Critically evaluate alternative explanations of behavior and apply them on specific behavior areas
- Appreciate cultural diversity and develop international - mindedness
- Understand and use diverse methods of psychological inquiry
- Understand methodological, cultural and gender considerations of psychological inquiry •

Ensure that ethical practices are upheld in all psychological inquiry and discussion •

Tolerate uncertainty.

Assessment Objectives

Having followed the psychology course at SL or at HL, students will be expected to demonstrate the following.

1. Knowledge and comprehension of specified content

- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of key terms and concepts in psychology •
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of research methods used in psychology •
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of a range of psychological theories and research studies
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural
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approaches to mental processes and behavior
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of one option at SL or two options at HL

2. Application and analysis

- Demonstrate an ability to use examples of psychological research and psychological concepts to formulate an argument in response to a specific question
- Demonstrate application and analysis of a range of psychological theories and research studies •
- Demonstrate application and analysis of the knowledge relevant to areas of applied psychology •
- At HL only, analyse qualitative and quantitative research in psychology.

3. Synthesis and evaluation

- Evaluate the contribution of psychological theories to understanding human psychology • Evaluate the contribution of research to understanding human psychology • Evaluate the contribution of the theories and research in areas of applied psychology • At HL only, evaluate research scenarios from a methodological and ethical perspective.

4. Selection and use of skills appropriate to psychology

- Demonstrate the acquisition of skills required for experimental design, data collection and presentation, data analysis and the evaluation of a simple experiment while demonstrating ethical practice
- Work in a group to design a method for a simple experimental investigation, organize the investigation and record the required data for a simple experiment
- Write a report of a simple experiment.

Distinction between SL and HL

SL students attend 4 hours of psychology per week, whereas HL students attend 6 hours per week.

Both SL and HL students are assessed on the syllabus core (levels of analysis) in paper 1. The

following extension to the core approaches are studied at HL only:

- The role of animal research in understanding human behavior
- Cognitive processing in the digital world
- The influence of globalization on individual attitudes, identities and behaviour.

In addition:

- SL students are assessed on one option in Paper 2, whereas HL students are assessed on two options;
- HL students are assessed on their knowledge and comprehension of qualitative and quantitative research methodology in Paper 3;

3. Subject outline

The Core:

a. The Biological level of analysis

It examines the physiological aspects of psychological phenomena. Our cognitions, emotions and behaviours are products of the anatomy and physiology of our nervous and endocrine systems. The emphasis is on the interrelation between biological and psychological factors in the formation of behaviour. For example, it studies the effect of neurotransmitters and hormones on behavior, the localization of function, genetic explanations of behavior, neuroplasticity etc.

b. The **Cognitive** level of analysis

It studies in depth various cognitive processes such as memory, thinking and decision making, cognitive dissonance, artificial intelligence, etc.

Cognitive psychology adopts the information processing model and applies it on human cognitive processes. It represents a vast array of research areas in psychology including cognitive psychology, cognitive science, cognitive neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience. Cognitive psychologists use traditional research methods (for example, experiments and verbal protocols) but there is an increasing focus on the use of modern technology. Examples of topics of investigation include schema processing, the extent to which memory or other cognitive processes are reliable, the interrelation between cognitive processes and emotion etc.

c. The **Sociocultural** level of analysis

At the third level of analysis, the biological and cognitive systems that make up the individual are embedded in an even larger system of interrelationships with other individuals. The sociocultural approach investigates the role of social and cultural influences in shaping human behavior. Some areas of investigation under Sociocultural psychology include social influence, that is, how the presence and behaviour of one or a few people affect the behaviour and attitudes of another individual, social identity theory, that is, how one understands himself/herself in relation to other groups, social cognitive theory, stereotypes etc. This level of analysis explores also how cultural norms and cultural dimensions affect human behavior. Social and cultural psychologists apply quantitative and qualitative research methods to investigate complex social behaviours.

There is a general consensus in the discipline of psychology that a synthesis of the biological, cognitive and sociocultural levels of analysis holds out the greatest promise of bringing us closer to the goal of more fully understanding the nature of the complex interacting systems that make up the human being.

The Options

There is also an in-depth study of one (for standard level) or two (for higher level) areas of the field of psychology. The options that are usually covered are:

a) Abnormal Psychology (SL & HL): Abnormal psychology focuses on diagnosing, explaining and supporting individuals experiencing psychological disorders. This option begins with a consideration of normal and abnormal behaviour. An understanding of issues related to diagnosis provides a framework for the subsequent study of disorders and therapeutic approaches.

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By studying one or more psychological disorders, students are encouraged to develop an awareness of the range of psychological disorders. This approach embraces the etiology, symptoms and prevalence of each disorder. As a consequence of this understanding, it is possible to administer effective treatments while at the same time having an appreciation of relevant cultural and gender variations. Different therapeutic approaches to treating disorders are discussed.

b) Developmental Psychology (HL): Developmental psychology is the study of how and why people

change over time in the way they behave, think, and relate to others. Developmental psychology focuses on influences on cognitive and social development, developing an identity and developing as a learner. It is important to gain an understanding of the extent to which early experiences may influence later development and if there are critical periods in development. Controversies related to developmental psychology include the extent of the impact of early experiences and why some children seem to be more resilient than others after stressful experiences in childhood.

OR

c) Health Psychology (HL): Health psychology is concerned with how different factors, such as lifestyle and social context, may influence health and illness. The health psychology option focuses on stress, substance abuse, addiction, obesity and health promotion. Health psychologists have investigated causes of health problems in order to find ways to counter their damaging consequences and prevent their occurrence. This helps in the development of prevention and treatment strategies, for example, in terms of understanding how people value their health. It also enables health promotion campaigns to be more efficiently designed. There are differences in attitudes towards health-related behaviour among different cultures, so it is important for health psychologists to take these factors into account.

Research Methodology (Examined only for the Higher Level)

Both Higher and Standard level students must have an understanding of quantitative (experimental) and qualitative (non-experimental) research methodology. All students are expected to critically evaluate and challenge researches. An understanding of the quantitative approach is also integral for the design, conduction and analysis of an experiment as part of the students' Internal Assessment. However, knowledge and understanding of qualitative and quantitative methods will be externally assessed in a separate exam paper, only for HL students.

Skills to be developed in this class include the ability to *critically analyze and evaluate, compare and contrast, debate* and *apply* the material.

It is important to stress that one of the most intriguing characteristics of psychology as a discipline is **how it relates directly to every one of us and our personal experiences and its connections to real life**. Through this class students will gain a better understanding of how their body, mind and social environment interact to influence their behavior.

A diverse set of teaching methods is incorporated for the purpose of accommodating different learning styles. Apart from lectures, this course relies heavily on *class discussions*. Students are expected to review the assigned readings before each class and come prepared to ask questions and to participate in class. The course is supported by an electronic teaching platform (*Moodle*) on which all relevant materials (i.e., PowerPoint presentations, handouts, links to useful websites, homework assignments, videos, suggested readings, and course-related fun jokes!) are posted and become available to student gradually, as the relevant material is covered in class. Further, teaching includes *frequent and systematic reviews of the material* offering students the opportunity to consolidate,

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combine new information with the previous, approach issues from different perspectives and clarify points. An emphasis is placed on *group work and group projects*. Students are assigned work to complete in collaboration with each other and present in class. They also practice *peer grading* by marking each other's work and providing each other with feedback in order to have a better understanding of how their work is assessed. The students are also introduced to, and become

familiar with *the school library and the process of conducting a literature research*; they are not only encouraged but expected to research information, mainly published research studies in peer reviewed scientific journals, on their own initiative and use them when completing homework.

Psychology is one of the social sciences and its study at this level would be useful for anybody who is interested in studying a social science, or later working in areas such as **business and marketing, philosophy, education, language and literature, or the health domain**. Moreover, its emphasis on **research methods and statistics** makes it an interesting subject for those who have an inclination in these areas.

4. Prior learning

There are no prior learning requirements for this course.

This course will build upon previous knowledge students may have gained in psychology, biology, or sociology courses.

5. Psychology and the IB Learner Profile



The IB learner profile is essential to the IBDP program and thus promoted through all IB subjects. In psychology, each of these attributes is developed in multiple ways and supplements each other.

Knowledgeable: Students will acquire a wide range of knowledge through a variety of teaching methods (see “Subject Outline”). Knowledge in psychology focuses on research methods and empirical evidence, in other words scientific knowledge on the subject. Students are assessed on knowledge and comprehension.

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Caring: Psychology is a human-centered science. It focuses on understanding and predicting human behavior. It is a discipline that cannot be taught, understood or practiced without human compassion. Further, students gain an understanding on various neurological and psychological disorders, what patients experience and how they can be treated.

Risk-takers: Students are encouraged to critically think about and evaluate the information provided

and come up with advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses, or evidence supporting and/or refuting theories, models and research studies. Through this process, they learn to volunteer their own opinion or combine the evidence to come up with conclusions of their own.

Balanced: By covering several approaches or levels of analysis in psychology, as well as different methods of therapy and treatment, students are provided with different ways to view humans and human behavior.

Thinkers, Inquirers & Reflective: In this class, students are not assessed exclusively on the knowledge they acquire; their performance heavily depends on their ability to develop skills such as reflecting on the relevant research: evaluating the research methodology, and comparing and contrasting research findings. Further, they learn to discuss theories and models, take initiative to find further research studies, develop questions (research hypotheses) and find answers/solutions through conducting their own research study. They are asked to critically think about the various approaches that are taught. Finally, they are required to analyze and apply the information and study results to real-life situations. One of the most important components of this class is to be able to present a debate with arguments for each side based on theories and research studies.

Open-minded: The class incorporates a cross-cultural component and a gender component. Students are required to critically evaluate the material while taking cultural and gender variations into consideration. We extensively discuss human diversity, and also factors contributing to prejudice and discrimination.

Principled: Ethics are a very important component of this class. Students are familiarized with the psychologists' code of ethics and ethical principles in research and clinical practice.

Communicators: Students are required to provide written responses in short answer and essay format. They practice communicating their ideas using appropriate language and terminology. In class, students are involved in class discussions and are also encouraged to present on material and engage in debates.

6. Psychology and Core Components

Psychology has a strong connection to the core components of the program, including CAS, TOK, and the EE.

Many of the opportunities for volunteer work that are provided through CAS are related to assisting individuals with various types of disability or illness. All levels of analysis in psychology are strongly linked to TOK; not only do we draw these links in class and there is mention of them in the course textbooks, but also TOK teachers regularly refer to psychology material when teaching TOK. Finally, students are given the opportunity to conduct an extended essay in psychology. The student, with guidance from the teacher, develops a research question and then independently conducts a literature

review in an effort to answer the question based on theories and research studies that have been published in scientific books or journals.

7. Course structure and planning

For the purpose of this course, students are assigned readings weekly. Readings are either from the class textbook, or handouts are given out either as hardcopies or electronically (posted on Moodle). Students should carefully review readings and be prepared to discuss the material in class, meaning be in a position to ask and answer questions. Further, students are given homework assignments weekly or biweekly on which they are graded. Students also take in-class quizzes (one school period) or review tests (two school periods). Students will always be given notice a week or more in advance when such quizzes/tests are scheduled. An effort is made to avoid assigning homework over the same week that students are preparing for an in-class quiz/test, however with HL students this may sometimes be difficult to avoid as assignments for their HL option may coincide with assignments in the core (HL/SL) class.

At the beginning of their IB1 year, students are initially introduced to the following concepts. Then, throughout this course, these approaches to psychology are discussed in relation to each of the core or optional components:

Debates in Psychology

- Functionalism versus structuralism
- Nature versus nurture
- Holism versus reductionism
- Free will versus determinism

Research Methods

- Experimental Methods:
- Non-experimental Methods

Ethical Considerations

Culture and Gender Considerations

Debates in psychology, research methods, and ethics are covered in detail in the beginning of the IB1 year, whereas culture and gender considerations are mentioned but discussed in more detail over the course of the two-year program.

The Core (HL & SL)

These approaches to behavior are compulsory for SL and HL students (expect for the HL extensions, which is for HL students only).

Biological Psychology

- The brain and behavior

- Hormones and behavior
- Genetics and behaviour
- The role of animal research in understanding human behavior (HL only)

This section is the first to be covered in the beginning of the IB1 year, after covering the general sections of debates, research methods, ethics and culture and gender considerations. Approximately 2-3 months are devoted to this section. We emphasize debates (issues of nature vs. nurture, determinism and reductionism are particularly relevant here), research methods (mainly case studies, correlational studies, and laboratory experiments, with extensive reference to animal research), ethical considerations in research, and gender considerations such as differences in male versus female brains, hormones, and genetics. It is important that students start developing the skill to critically evaluate the material they are being taught. Assessment emphasizes knowledge in the beginning, but students are gradually introduced to IB-type questions which require critical evaluation and debate. Such questions are initially practiced in-class and then tried in homework assignments. Student responses are further discussed and students are provided with extensive feedback in order to understand and develop skills for critical thinking (application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation), as well as organization of their essays.

Cognitive Psychology

- Cognitive processing
- Reliability of cognitive processes
- Emotion and cognition
- Cognitive processing in the digital world (HL only)

This is the second section to be covered over the duration of another 2-3 months. Again, we discuss debates, research methods (laboratory experiments, case studies), ethical considerations, and cover gender issues. Cultural considerations are particularly relevant here when discussing schema theory, emotion and memory. Students continue to shift their focus towards critical thinking of the material rather than rote learning. It is important to draw connections between this section the biological level of analysis previously covered in an effort to review, understand in more depth, and also gain a broader perception. Memory and the brain or use of neuroimaging to explore brain functioning and behavior are relevant to making these connections. Applications of the research in education, but also in the legal system are discussed.

Sociocultural Psychology

- The individual and the group
- Cultural origins of behavior and cognition
- Cultural influences on individual attitudes, identity and behaviors
- The influence of globalization on individual attitudes, identities and behavior (HL only)

This section is usually covered towards the end of the IB1 year and in the beginning of the IB2 year. The influence of the social environment on the individual raised the debate of determinism versus free will and nature versus nurture once again. Although some lab experiments are discussed, research methods shift to field and natural experiments, correlational studies and surveys. Ethical considerations are important here as many research studies involve deception of participants about the true aim of the study. There are many applications in real life in fields such as business and marketing, policy making and designing interventions to prevent prejudice and discrimination, monitoring violent television for children, and others. At this point in the program, students are expected to have developed their ability to critically evaluate the material to a significant degree.

The Options

Abnormal Psychology

- Factors influencing diagnosis
- Etiology of abnormal psychology
- Symptomatology and epidemiology of disorders
- Treatment of disorders
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Depressive disorders
 - Obsessive compulsive disorder
 - Trauma and stress related disorders
 - Eating disorders.

In the IB2 year, students will spend 2-3 months discussing abnormal psychology, meaning psychopathology, diagnostic issues, and treatment practices and interventions. This section lends itself to review of previous sections, as we discuss biological, cognitive and social explanations of psychopathology and treatments. Research methods include laboratory experiments (also animal research), case studies and cross-cultural studies. Ethical issues also address ethics in treatment and psychological clinical practice. Gender and cultural considerations are emphasized in relation to culture-bound syndromes, variation in epidemiology across cultures and different responses to treatment. Direct applications to real life clinical practice are made, also taking into consideration factors such as cost- and time-effectiveness of various treatments.

The following two options are covered with **HL students only**. Only **one** of the two options will be covered (either Health Psychology, or Developmental Psychology).

Health Psychology

- Determinants of health

- Health problems
- Promoting health

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- Stress
- Addiction
- Obesity
- Chronic pain
- Sexual health.

Over the course of one school year (usually IB1), students are introduced to the field of Health Psychology, which examines human behavior in relation to physical health. In the two hours per week that are devoted to the HL option, we discuss research that includes experiments, correlational studies and surveys. Factors that contribute to the presentation of stress, substance abuse and obesity, including biological, cognitive and sociocultural are discussed. Further, we discuss prevention and treatment, again from biological, cognitive and sociocultural perspectives. Practical applications to be used in schools or work environments for prevention and health promotion, developing policies and implementing effective interventions are extensively covered. Ethical considerations, gender and cultural considerations are addressed. As assessment of this option relies exclusively on writing an essay (Paper 2), we practice critical thinking and organization extensively. Further, students are provided with a hands-on experience as a teaching method that usually involves designing and participating in a prevention program for stress, substance abuse or obesity with younger students within the school.

Developmental Psychology

- Influences on cognitive and social development
- Developing an identity
 - Attachment
 - Gender identity and social roles
 - Development of empathy and theory of mind
- Developing as a learner
 - Cognitive development
 - Brain development

Alternatively, instead of Health Psychology, a second option for HL students is Developmental Psychology taught over the course of one school year (usually IB1). Developmental psychology studies the development of human beings from birth till death. Because of its vast field, specific issues related to three major areas of development are introduced by the IBO syllabus. Students become acquainted with major traditional and recent theories on the above fields and are encouraged to

understand differences in past and current developmental perspectives. Biological, Cognitive and f sociocultural factors that contribute to individual development are discussed. Potential effects of early to later development are extensively discussed along with their real life examples and strategies to prevent adverse effects. Practical implications and applications to be used in education and child assessment are also discussed. Ethical considerations, gender and cultural considerations are extensively

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addressed. The uniqueness of individuality and the appreciation and acceptance of individual differences are of central attention. As assessment of this option relies exclusively on writing an essay (Paper 2), analysis, evaluation and thought organization are extensively practiced.

Research Methodology

- Quantitative & qualitative research methods
- Analyzing and Interpreting data
- Evaluating research
- Drawing conclusions

The study of psychology is evidence based and has evolved through a variety of different research approaches, both qualitative and quantitative. As students are exposed to research it is important that they understand the advantages and limitations of different approaches in order to critically evaluate the contribution of research studies to the understanding of human behavior. Asking questions, challenging assumptions and critically assessing the methods used by researchers are integral skills in the study of psychology. These skills are assessed in paper 1 section B and paper 2, and they apply to both SL and HL students.

An understanding of approaches to research is important for the internal assessment task in order to design, conduct, analyze, draw conclusions and evaluate experiment. This applies to both SL and HL students.

Only HL students will be directly assessed on their understanding of approaches to research in paper 3. Over the course of one school year (IB1 or IB2), HL students develop an understanding of how to recognize, critically evaluate and apply qualitative and quantitative methods in psychological research. Students practice reading sections (unseen sample text) from qualitative and quantitative research studies and answering questions related to issues such as sampling techniques, data analysis, ethical considerations, credibility of the research study, reflection of the researcher, etc.

8. Assessment

Students are assigned term grades based on their oral performance in class (coming prepared to class, being in a position to answer or ask questions on the material assigned, class presentations, group projects) and their performance on written or other assignments (homework, quizzes, tests). Term grades are combined with midterm and final grades, as well as performance on the Internal Assessment for the final IB Diploma grade. It is important to note that in written/formal examinations, students' work is not grades only for knowledge and comprehension.

Essay questions are graded out of 22 marks: a maximum of 2 marks are assigned for focus on the question, a maximum of 6 marks are assigned for knowledge and understanding, a maximum of 6 marks are assigned for use of research to support answer, a maximum of 6 marks are assigned for critical thinking, and a maximum of 2 marks are assigned for clarity and organization of the essay.

Please see Appendix 2 for a complete outline of the formal IBO assessment.

The school-wide assessment policy can also be referenced for further information.

9. Academic Honesty

Emphasis is placed on academic honesty as any individual work must be **the original work of the student**. In the beginning of IB1 (year 1), class time is devoted to explaining the concept of academic honesty and what constitutes plagiarism in its various forms. This issue is revisited several times throughout the year. When provided with questions for homework, students are encouraged to use books, scientific journal articles and internet resources; however, their homework assignment **needs to be conducted independently, without the help or collaboration of others, and should be written entirely in their own words**. This also applies to their Internal Assessment and Extended Essay projects. Should the students have any questions regarding this issue they are encouraged to consult with their teacher, or academic honesty advisor, or their year advisor. The school-wide academic honesty policy includes information on relevant policies and procedures.

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
Core Biological approach to understanding behaviour Cognitive approach to understanding behaviour Sociocultural approach to understanding behaviour	90	120
Approaches to researching behaviour	20	60
Options Abnormal psychology Developmental psychology Health psychology Psychology of human relationships	20	40
Internal assessment Experimental study	20	20
Total teaching hours	150	240

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Appendix 2: Assessment details

SL Assessment:

Assessment component	Weighting
External assessment (3 hours) Paper 1 (2 hours) Section A: Three short-answer questions on the core approaches to psychology (27 marks) Section B: One essay from a choice of three on the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to behaviour (22 marks) (Total 49 marks)	75%
Paper 2 (1 hour) One question from a choice of three on one option (22 marks)	25%
Internal assessment (20 hours) This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Experimental study A report on an experimental study undertaken by the student (22 marks)	25%

HL Assessment:

Assessment component	Weighting
<p>External assessment (5 hours)</p> <p>Paper 1 (2 hours)</p> <p>Section A: Three short-answer questions on the core approaches to psychology (27 marks)</p> <p>Section B: One essay from a choice of three on the biological, cognitive and sociocultural approaches to behaviour. One, two or all of the essays will reference the additional HL topic (22 marks)</p> <p>(Total 49 marks)</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>40%</p>
<p>Paper 2 (2 hours)</p> <p>Two questions; one from a choice of three on each of two options</p> <p>(Total 44 marks)</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Paper 3 (1 hour)</p> <p>Three short-answer questions from a list of six static questions on approaches to research</p> <p>(24 marks)</p>	<p>20%</p>
<p>Internal assessment (20 hours)</p> <p>This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p> <p>Experimental study</p> <p>A report on an experimental study undertaken by the student</p> <p>(22 marks)</p>	<p>20%</p>