



Psychology

Nature of the Subject

Psychology is defined as “the scientific study of behavior and mental processes” and investigates various aspects of human life, like the way we develop and interact with others, the way we remember, think, solve problems, make decisions, feel, form relationships, develop identities, suffer, and many others. Psychologists try to explain the above from a variety of theoretical perspectives, with the main three being the **biological** (what happens in our bodies at a physiological level), the **cognitive** (how we process information in our minds) and the **sociocultural** (how we are influenced by our environment). In order to draw valid conclusions, psychologists use scientific methods and conduct empirical research, while placing a strong emphasis on the application of ethical principles in this process.

Distinction between Higher and Standard Level:

Both SL and HL students cover the Core Approaches to Understanding Behaviour (Biological, Cognitive, Sociocultural) as well as Research Methods and Research Ethics. HL students cover additional topics (“Extensions”) in each approach. SL students study one Option (usually Abnormal Psychology), while HL students study two Options (usually Abnormal and Developmental Psychology). Finally, both SL and HL students study Quantitative Research Methods and Research Ethics, but HL students study Qualitative methods too.

Syllabus outline

Students will study Research Methods including Qualitative and Quantitative approaches to Research. Additionally students will be taught core approaches to psychology and more specifically: the Biological, Cognitive and Sociocultural approach. Lastly the students will be taught one or two options (at HL). All students will be required to complete an Internal Assessment which comprises an adapted replication of an original study and construct a scientific report.

Prior Learning

No prior learning needed to study IB Psychology.

Assessment Objectives

Having followed the Diploma Programme course in Psychology, students will be expected to demonstrate: Knowledge and comprehension of specified content; Application and analysis skills; Synthesis and evaluation skills; Ability to select and use of skills appropriate to psychology

Teaching Approach

Underpinning all approaches to teaching and learning in Psychology is a focus on the development of critical thinking. This is achieved through inquiry-based and project-based learning, concept-based instruction, as well as collaborative and experiential learning.

Why students might choose this subject

Psychology would be useful for anybody interested in studying any social science, or working with people either in the business or the health domain. Its emphasis on research methods and statistics makes it an interesting subject for those with an inclination in these areas.

Course Assessment

Throughout the two years, Psychology students are assessed using formative and summative assessments which build the necessary skills for their final exams. Students are also assessed through individual and group projects and presentations.

The **final Diploma grade** in the subject is determined by 3 assessment components for SL students and 4 for HL students:

1. Internal assessment: Experimental study

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL are the same. Students will investigate a published study, theory or model relevant to their learning in psychology by conducting an experimental investigation and reporting the findings.

2. External assessment: Written examinations

Paper 1: Section A: three short-answer questions on the core approaches; Section B: one essay from a choice of three. **Paper 2:** one question from a choice of three on one option for SL, and two questions from two Options for HL. **Paper 3:** Three short-answer questions from a list of six static questions on approaches to research