

Psychology Department Curriculum Overview



Curriculum Overview

Psychology focuses on the study of the mind and workings of the brain when humans display different behaviours. Through the study of psychology, we attempt to find causal explanations for these behaviours and develop ways of reducing or preventing maladaptive behaviours. This subject is ideal for students who have an enquiring mind, enjoy activities requiring critical thinking and are interested in investigating the inner workings of how humans develop, socialise, and interact with each other. At Bentley Wood High School, students commence their GCSE Psychology journey in Year 9. This provides them with an excellent taster of the subject and lays the foundations for Years 10 and 11. Here at Bentley Wood, we study the Edexcel exam board at GCSE. We study this specification as it allows for choice of interesting topics such as Sleep and Dreaming and Criminal Psychology. Other topics covered are Social Influence, Memory, Research Methods, Development, Issues and Debates, The Brain and Neuroscience and Psychological Problems. The course materials provide content that is modern, interesting, and accessible for pupils of all abilities, providing fantastic opportunities for progression to further studies in Psychology.

It is intended that students undertaking the Psychology GCSE will:

- Acquire a holistic understanding of Psychology
- Develop the skills to apply psychological concepts and theories to a range of contexts
- Learn how to apply appropriate mathematical skills relevant to Psychology
- Develop a sound understanding of the research methods used by psychologists to understand behaviour
- Gain an understanding of the application of theory to real-world context.

A-Level Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and how it dictates and influences our behaviour. It involves gaining an understanding of what makes people tick, and also understanding how we can address any issues or problems faced by people and society as a whole. People seek the support of psychologists for a vast array of reasons, and psychologists will then employ their expertise to aid society. At Bentley Wood, we study the AQA exam board at A-Level. AQA are the most popular choice for AS and A-Level, enabling excellent opportunities for networking and collaboration across schools in the collegiate. This consequently allows our students to gain access to the highest quality resources and teaching. The curriculum aims to give students an opportunity to build a solid foundation to pursue a career in the field of psychology beyond their 6th Form experience. Topics covered in the curriculum are Social Influence, Attachment, Memory, Psychopathology, Issues and Debates, Eating Behaviour, Approaches in Psychology, Biopsychology, Relationships and Research Methods.

- It is intended that students undertaking the Psychology A-level will:
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- Develop essential knowledge and understanding of different areas of Psychology and how they relate to each other
- Master and showcase a deep appreciation of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific methods
- Gain competence and confidence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- Nurture their interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including developing an interest in further study and careers associated with the subject
- Understand how society makes decisions about scientific issues and how the sciences contribute to the success of the economy and society.

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| Year 9 | <p><u>Topic: Social Influence</u> Introducing students to Social Influence and the definition of Psychology and the study of human behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key terms used: obedience, conformity, deindividuation, bystander effect • Factors affecting bystander intervention: personal and situational • Conformity to majority influence • Factors affecting conformity to majority influence: personality and the situation • Obedience to authority • Factors affecting obedience to | <p><u>Topic: Social Influence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowd behaviour: pro and anti-social behaviour • Preventing blind obedience • Piliavin et al (1969) study: bystander behaviour • Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1973) study: conformity to social roles • Issues and Debates application to Social Influence <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hypotheses: null and experimental • Sampling: random and opportunity • Sampling: stratified and volunteer | <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental designs: independent groups, matched pairs, repeated measures • Non-experimental methods of investigation: Interviews, questionnaires, correlations, case studies, observations <p><u>Topic: Memory</u> This topic feeds into the cognitive approach in Psychology, allowing students to deepen their holistic understanding of the subject.</p> | <p><u>Topic: Memory</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968) • Bartlett (1932): War of the Ghosts study • Peterson and Peterson (1939): Duration of STM study • Issues and Debates: Reductionism vs. Holism • Exam Practice/Consolidation • Feedback on assessment | <p><u>Topic: Criminal Psychology</u> Criminal Psychology allows students to draw on the real-world and make links to the media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operant conditioning (Skinner, 1948) • Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) • Biological explanations of criminality (Eysenck, 1964) • Recidivism: effects of punishment | <p>Issues and Debates enables students to develop an understanding of the inter-relationships between the core areas of Psychology and the differing perspectives that exist within these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Debates • Exam Practice and Preparation (9 marker practice) |

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| | <p>authority: personality and the situation</p> <p>Research Methods is designed to interleave to support the evaluation of key studies in terms of methodology and ethics.</p> <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying independent, dependent and extraneous variables Ethical issues and dealing with them: informed consent, deception, right to withdraw, confidentiality, deception, protection of participants Experimental methods of investigation – Lab, Field and Natural Experiments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exam Practice/Consolidation Feedback on assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structure and process of memory and information processing Amnesia: retrograde and anterograde Theory of Reconstructive Memory (Bartlett, 1932) | | | |
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| Year 10 | <p><u>Topic: Criminal Psychology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treatments for crime: token economy and anger-management • Bandura, Ross and Ross study (1961): Imitation of aggressive role models • Charlton et al (2000): Effects of TV on playground behaviour • Revision and consolidation <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability and Validity • Data Analysis: arithmetic and numerical computation • Descriptive statistics • Representing and interpreting data | <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of data: qualitative and quantitative; primary and secondary • Issues and Debates: application of ethical issues to psychological research • Revision/consolidation • Research Methods project: conducting and presenting psychological research <p><u>Topic: Development</u></p> <p>This topic further develops students understanding of the role of brain structures in learning and development. It also provides students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge of Psychology to the field of education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Brain Development • Piaget's stages of cognitive development | <p><u>Topic: Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piaget and education • Piaget's theory of cognitive development • Piaget and Inhelder (1956) study: Three mountains task • Dweck's mindset theory • Willingham's learning theory • Gunderson et al (2013) study: parent praise | <p><u>Topic: Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Debates: theories of moral development • Revision/consolidation • Assessment and feedback <p><u>Topic: Brain and Neuropsychology</u></p> <p>This topic is designed to enable students to develop an understanding and appreciation of the scientific nature of Psychology, linking to topics such as Biology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and function of the brain • Lateralisation of function in the hemispheres • Central Nervous System: neurons and synapses • Neurological damage: visual agnosia and prosopagnosia | <p><u>Topic: Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damasio (1994) study: Phineas Gage • Sperry (1968) study: Split-brain research • Issues and Debates: Changes in Psychology over time • Revision/consolidation • Assessment and feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Debates • Exam Practice and Preparation (9 marker practice) |

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| | <p><u>Topic: Psychological Problems</u></p> <p>This topic enables students to appreciate the challenging nature of diagnosing and treating psychological problems and enables them to gain an understanding of the advancements made in the field of mental health and psychological research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unipolar depression: incidence, symptoms, and features • Cognitive explanations and treatments for depression • Biological explanations and treatments for depression • Addiction: incidence, symptoms, and features • Biological explanations for addiction • Learning theory as an explanation for addiction • Assessment one and feedback • Review of content | <p><u>Topic: Psychological Problems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive treatments for addiction: CBT • Biological treatments for addiction: Drug therapy • Caspi et al (2003) study: Life stress and depression • Young (2007): CBT with internet addicts • Issues and Debates: nature/nurture debate • Consolidation/recap • Revision/recap of Y9/Y10 content | <p><u>Topic: Sleep and Dreaming</u></p> <p>Sleep and Dreaming allows students to apply their knowledge of the sleep-wake cycle to their own circadian rhythms and further develops students abilities to critique contradictory theories and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features, functions and benefits of sleep • Internal and external influences on sleep: circadian and ultradian rhythms • Internal and external influences on sleep: pineal gland and melatonin • External influences on sleep – light as a zeitgeber • Symptoms and explanations of sleep disorders: insomnia and narcolepsy • Freud (1900) theory of dreaming | <p><u>Topic: Sleep and Dreaming</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobson and McCarley (1977): Activation Synthesis Theory • Freud (1909): Little Hans study • Siffre (1975): cave study • Assessment and feedback • Issues and Debates revision block | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and Debates revision block • Recap/consolidation of Y9/Y10/Y11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exams |

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| | <p><u>Topic: Approaches</u> This topic is taught at the beginning of Year 12 as it forms the foundations for the linear A-level. Students need to have an understanding of the differing perspectives within Psychology as this helps them develop their ability to evaluate studies/theories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins of Psychology • Wundt and Introspection: emergence of Psychology as a Science • Learning Approach: classical and operant conditioning • Learning Approach: Social Learning Theory • Cognitive Approach • Biological Approach <p><u>Topic: Approaches > Biopsychology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous System and Endocrine System • Neurons and synapses <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u> Research Methods is also taught at the beginning of Year 12 as it is</p> | <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observational designs: event and time sampling • Consolidation of Research Methods <p><u>Topic: Attachment</u> This topic enables students to draw upon several real-life examples and consequently nurtures their interest and passion for Psychology. It also provides students with their first insight into how behaviours such as attachment differ across species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant caregiver interactions: reciprocity and interactional synchrony • Schaffer's stages of Attachment: asocial, indiscriminate, discriminate, multiple • Role of the father in attachment • Animal studies: Lorenz and Harlow • Learning Theory of attachment • Bowlby's Theory of Attachment: critical | <p><u>Topic: Attachment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural variations in attachment: van Ijzendoorn and Kroonenberg • Bowlby's Theory of Maternal Deprivation • Romanian Orphan Studies: effects of institutionalisation • Influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the role of the internal working model <p><u>Topic: Psychopathology</u> This topic allows students to distinguish between behaviours that are typical vs atypical and offers students an opportunity to debate these ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of Abnormality: deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency and | <p><u>Topic: Memory</u> Memory provides students with an opportunity to link Psychology to the real world, such as the flaws within the criminal justice system. This helps develop students critical thinking skills, preparing them well for Year 13.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the accuracy of Eye-Witness Testimony: Cognitive Interview <p><u>Topic: Psychopathology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive approach to treating Depression: CBT • Biological approach to treating OCD: SSRIs • Behaviourist approach to treating phobias: systematic desensitisation and flooding. <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-report techniques: questionnaire and interviews | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam technique practice • Exam structure practice • How to plan a 12 mark question in the AS-Level exam • Exams | <p><u>Topic: Issues and Debates</u> This is the first topic on Paper 3 that students are introduced to. It is important that students learn this topic before the other Paper 3 topics as it provides them with essential evaluative skills that they will need when critiquing Year 13 content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender in Psychology: universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; • Culture in Psychology: cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. • Free Will and Determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis |

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| <p>essential students develop an understanding of the manner in which psychologists conduct their research. This topic is interleaved throughout Year 12 and Year 13 as it has a greater assessment weighting than the other topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental Methods: aims, hypotheses, IV and DV • Control of Variables • Experimental Designs: independent measures, repeated measures, matched pairs • Types of Experiments: lab, field, natural and quasi • Types of sampling: stratified, volunteer, systematic, opportunity, random • Ethical issues and dealing with them: informed consent, deception, right to withdraw, confidentiality, deception, protection of participants • Pilot Studies • Observational Techniques | <p>period and internal working model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ainsworth's Strange Situation research: types of attachment <p><u>Topic: Social Influence</u></p> <p>This topic is taught closely after research methods as students will cover different experimental methods within this topic – having this prior knowledge will enable them to evaluate these studies effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of conformity (internalisation, identification and compliance) and explanations of conformity (normative and informational social influence) • Asch's research and variables affecting conformity (group size, unanimity and task difficulty) • Zimbardo's research: conformity to social roles • Milgram's research on obedience • Situational variables affecting obedience: | <p>deviation from ideal mental health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) • Cognitive approach to explaining Depression: Beck and Ellis • Biological approach to explaining OCD: genes and neural structures • Behaviourist approach to explaining Phobias: two-process model <p><u>Topic: Social Influence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minority Influence: consistency, commitment and flexibility • Role of social influence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-report design • Correlations • Data analysis: Types of data • Data analysis: Descriptive statistics • Data analysis: Graphs • Mathematical content • Peer review • Implications of psychology for the economy | | <p>on causal explanations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature vs Nurture: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach. • Holism and Reductionism: levels of explanation in Psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism. • Idiographic and Nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation • Ethical Implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity. Students cover two sub-topics within this topic for the AS exam in Year 12, therefore this topic is then completed at the end of Year 12. This topic enables |

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| | <p>proximity and location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social psychological explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority • Dispositional explanations for obedience: Authoritarian Personality • Resistance to Social Influence: social support and locus of control | <p>processes in social change</p> <p><u>Topic: Memory</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding, capacity and duration of memory • Multi-Store model of memory: components and features of each store • Types of long-term memory: episodic, semantic and procedural • Working Memory Model: components and features of each store • Explanations for Forgetting: Proactive and Retroactive Interference • Explanations for Forgetting: Retrieval Failure • Eye-Witness Testimony: misleading information and anxiety | | | <p>students to appreciate and understand the scientific nature of Psychology and its overlap with other sciences, e.g. Biology.</p> <p><u>Topic: Biopsychology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localisation of function in the brain: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas • Lateralisation and split-brain research • Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma • Ways of investigating the brain: scanning techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI); electroencephalogram (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); post-mortem examinations. • Biological Rhythms: Circadian |

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| | | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biological Rhythms: Infradian and Ultradian Effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/wake cycle |
| Year 13 | <p>As students sit the AS exam, Research Methods is continued with in Year 13, whereby the remaining content is covered.</p> <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correlations Case Studies and Content Analysis Reliability Validity Choosing A Statistical Test Probability and Significance Reporting a Psychological Investigation <p><u>Topic: Eating Behaviour</u></p> <p>Eating Behaviour has links to Approaches that students cover in Year 12 (such as biological and psychological explanations); therefore they can draw upon this knowledge to evaluate</p> | <p><u>Topic: Research Methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features of Science Designing a Study <p><u>Topic: Eating Behaviour</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biological explanations for obesity, including genetic and neural explanations. Psychological explanations of obesity, including restraint theory, disinhibition and the boundary model Explanations for the success | <p><u>Topic: Relationships</u></p> <p>This topic links more to social psychology, therefore it is taught in the middle of two 'biological' topics – eating behaviour and aggression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolutionary explanations for partner preferences: sexual selection Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure | <p><u>Topic: Aggression</u></p> <p>Aggression provides students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge of Issues and Debates to different theories/research. It also links to the Approaches covered in Year 12, therefore provides an opportunity for revision of this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evolutionary explanations of human aggression Social psychological explanations of human aggression: frustration-aggression hypothesis Social psychological explanations of human aggression: social learning theory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues and Debates revision AS Content Revision Exam Preparation and Technique Exams | |

| Autumn 1 | | Autumn 2 | Spring 1 | Spring 2 | Summer 1 | Summer 2 |
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| <p>theories/research studies within this topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolutionary explanation of food preference: neophobia and taste aversion • The role of learning in food preference, including social and cultural influences. • Neural and hormonal mechanisms involved in the control of eating behaviour, including the role of the hypothalamus, ghrelin and leptin. • Biological explanations for anorexia nervosa, including genetic and neural explanations. • Psychological explanations for anorexia nervosa: family systems theory, including enmeshment, autonomy and control • Psychological explanations for anorexia nervosa: social learning theory, including modelling, reinforcement and media • Psychological explanations for anorexia nervosa: | | <p>and failure of dieting</p> <p>Topic: Approaches</p> <p>These approaches are covered in Year 13 as they are part of the A-level content. This also provides students with an opportunity to consolidate their understanding of the other approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychodynamic Approach: Freud • Humanistic Approach: Rogers and Maslow • Comparison of Approaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity. • Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory • Theories of romantic relationships: equity theory • Theories of romantic relationships: Rusbult's investment model • Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases. • Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships • Parasocial relationships: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social psychological explanations of human aggression: de-individuation • Institutional aggression in the context of prisons: dispositional and situational explanations • Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer games • The role of desensitisation, disinhibition and cognitive priming | | |

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| | cognitive theory, including distortions and irrational beliefs. | | <p>levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation</p> <p><u>Topic: Aggression</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression: limbic system, serotonin and testosterone. • Genetic factors in aggression: MAOA gene. • The ethological explanation of aggression: innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns. | | | |
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