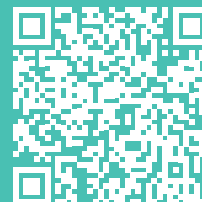


# A Level Psychology AQA

Find out more



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## Why study Psychology?

Psychology looks at the ways people think, act, react, and interact. It is the study of human (and animal) behaviour, and the thoughts and emotions that influence behaviour in all walks of life. Psychology cuts to the heart of key processes underpinning human behaviour and mental processes, and offers students the chance to develop a deeper understanding of the human condition. Students studying A Level Psychology will take a scientific and academically rigorous approach to the subject. However, we also acknowledge the very human side to this subject, and aim to foster a safe environment where students can freely discuss and learn about issues which will inevitably affect them in some capacity at some point in their lives. Taking AQA A Level Psychology at NT offers students an engaging and effective introduction to the subject, which many choose to continue at degree level. You will learn the fundamentals of Psychology and develop skills valued by Higher Education (HE) and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research. Students will become familiar with the approaches and methods related to the core knowledge areas of Psychology, and explanations from different approaches (e.g. cognitive, social, biological, developmental, and research methods).

## About the course

AQA Psychology A Level offers an engaging and effective introduction to Psychology which will appeal to a cross-section of students. We still currently offer an AS exam at the end of the first year, and students will be required to pass the AS to enable them to continue on to the second year and gain the full A Level. AS Psychology is an academically rigorous subject, students will be required to have gained the entry level criteria stated below. Over the 2 year course students will investigate the impact that Psychological research has had on many areas, such as Education, Mental Health and Society, gaining a deeper understanding of the way in which people interact and look at explanations for any deviance from societal norms.

## Year 12

### Paper 1: Introductory Topics in Psychology

**Social influence** looks at explanations for conformity and obedience, and reasons why some people resist authority. We look at the reasons for the behaviour exhibited in research such as Zimbardo's Prison Study and Milgram's electric shock experiment.

**Memory** looks at how the memory works and models of memory whilst exploring the different types of memory. Students will also look at factors affecting eyewitness testimony and the accuracy of them. **Attachment** looks at caregiver-infant interactions and explanations of attachment, including cultural variations within them. Students will also learn what happens if those caregiver-infant interactions don't happen or are disrupted. **Psychopathology** looks at definitions of abnormality and the characteristics, explanations and treatments for phobias, depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

### Paper 2: Psychology in Context

**Approaches in Psychology** looks at Learning, Biological, Cognitive, Psychodynamic and Humanistic approaches to explaining behaviour. It will also look at comparisons of each approach.

**Biopsychology** looks at the divisions of the nervous system, the structure and function of neurons and the endocrine system and the fight or flight response. It also looks at localisation of functions of the brain and ways of studying the brain. Functional recovery after brain trauma and plasticity allows us to see how the brain can work to 'repair' itself. We also look at the ways in which different biological rhythms interact with the environment to keep the body in synch with the outside world.

**Research Methods** focuses on the scientific processes underpinning psychological research and the techniques used for data handling and analysis. It's taught at the start of Year 12 as a standalone topic, but is embedded throughout all the other topics. Please be aware that overall, a minimum of 10% of the marks in assessments for Psychology will require the use of mathematical skills. In Year 13 you will develop the knowledge and skills already learnt in Year 12 and look closer at the scientific processes and statistical analysis.

## Year 13

### Paper 3: 'Issues and Options in Psychology'

**Issues and debates in Psychology is a compulsory unit** that looks at issues such as gender bias, free will and determinism, nature/nurture, and ethical issues.

**All of the other questions in Paper 3 are chosen from 3 options per section:**

**Option 1 – Relationships:** In this topic we look at topics such as evolutionary explanations for partner preference, factors affecting romantic relationships, stages of relationships and breakdown and virtual and parasocial relationships.

**Option 2 – Eating behaviour:** In this topic we look at a variety of explanations for food preferences, biological and psychological explanations for anorexia and obesity and explanations for the success and failure of dieting.

**Option 3 – Addiction:** In this topic we look at risk factors associated with addiction, biological and psychological explanations for nicotine and gambling addictions, ways to reduce addiction and how to application of these theories to change behaviour.

## Assessment

All assessments are in the form of written examinations, with a variety of shorter and extended 16-mark responses required.

**At the end of Year 13** there will be 3 exams, which are 2 hours each and are a total of 96 marks per paper.

## Entry criteria

English and Science (or Biology if it's triple Science) at a 6 or above. Maths at 5 or above.

## Outside the classroom

There will be an opportunity to attend student conferences in places such as Bristol and/or London. These will be presented by Senior Psychology lecturers and examiners who contribute towards writing the text books and examinations, offering students the opportunity to ask questions and gain insight into what's required in the examinations to reinforce and enhance revision strategies. There may also be the opportunity to visit London to visit places such as The Freud Museum and London Zoo.