

# GCSE Psychology 2018-2020

**Examining Board: Edexcel**

## **Is this the right subject for me?**

If you enjoy:

- Understanding why people behave the way they do
- Developing your ability to think scientifically
- Learning about the treatments and therapies used to help people
- Finding out what work psychologists perform

Then the GCSE Psychology course is the subject for you.

## **What do I need to know, or be able to do, before taking this course?**

You need to be in the top or second set in Maths and Sciences in order to benefit from studying Psychology. If you are in the lower sets for these subjects, Psychology is unlikely to be a suitable choice for you.

Psychology is the study of mind and behaviour and, through your own experiences, you will already have an understanding of how individuals and groups function.

Psychology is a **scientific** subject. You will develop valuable skills such as how to evaluate theories and important pieces of research, and evaluate them for their usefulness. You should be able to write coherently, be organised in your study skills, and not be afraid of reading textbooks and scientific articles. Students in top and second sets in Maths and Sciences will be most likely to enjoy and understand the complex nature of this subject. If you are uncertain as to whether the subject is for you, please speak to the Psychology staff in the Tutorial 1 classroom **BEFORE** you fill in your Options Form.

The good news is that this will be a new subject for you so you will not have to have any prior study of psychology. You will, however, be expected to have engaged in some independent reading so that you have an idea about the topics. Read on to see what you should look at.

## **What will I learn?**

You will be studying five compulsory topics:

**Memory** – How does your memory work?

**Development** – How did you develop?

**Psychological Problems** – How would psychological problems affect a person?

**Social Influence** – How do people affect each other's' behaviour?

**The Brain and Neuropsychology** – How does your brain affect your behaviour?

You will also study two topics from the following five optional topics:

***Language, Communication and Thought*** – How do people learn to communicate with others?

***Criminal Psychology*** – Why do some people become criminals?

***Perception*** – How do people interpret the world around them?

***The Self*** – What makes you who you are?

***Sleep and Dreaming*** – Why do you need to sleep and dream?

There is also a compulsory element on Research methods:

How do you carry out psychological research?

It can draw on material from the compulsory topics (above) and can include calculations. You will study the practical and ethical issues of carrying out scientific research with human participants.

## **How will I be assessed?**

Assessment is by examination only (no coursework).

There are two exams which include some calculations, multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions and some extended writing.

Research methods content must make up 20% of the qualification.

Maths skills make up 10% of the qualification (50% of the research method content).

Psychology requires the use of mathematical skills for handling data in investigations.

## **What can I do after I have completed the course?**

You can go on to study A-Level Psychology. The content of this course is as such that it is classified as a Science A-Level. The skills you learn, such as how to evaluate theories and research, how to see problems in data gathering and how to interpret graphs and data, will be very useful in further study in many areas. Psychology goes well with subjects such as Biology, Maths, History, and Philosophy; and much less well with subjects like Art or Textiles.

You can find out more about the GCSE in Psychology by:

- Reading about the subject to make sure you know what you are choosing to study
- accessing the BBC Bitesize website at **[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize)**