AS PSYCHOLOGY 7181/1

Paper1 Introductorytopics in psychology

Mark scheme

June 2026

Version: 1.0 Final

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Nostudent should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

Aconsistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright information
AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2026 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assignedalevelyouneedtodecideonthe mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help withthis.Theexemplarmaterialsusedduring standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardisingmaterialswhichwillcorrespond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have beenawardedamarkbytheLeadExaminer. You can compare the student's answer with the example todetermineifitisthesamestandard,better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocateamarkfortheanswerbasedontheLead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well needtoreadbackthroughtheanswerasyou apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself thatthelevelandthemarkareappropriate.

Indicative content inthemarkschemeisprovidedasaguide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and youmustcreditothervalidpoints.Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicativecontenttoreachthehighestlevel of the mark scheme.

An answer which containsnothingofrelevancetothequestion must be awarded no marks.

Section A

Social Influence

0 1 . 1 Explain **one** type of conformity shown by Harry.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 2

2 marks foraclearandcoherentexplanation of the type of conformity shown by Harry.
1 mark foramuddled/limitedexplanation.

Possible explanation:
- Harry only agrees publicly but disagrees privately (compliance)
- Harry's behaviour shows a superficial level of conformity/this is temporary/short-lived
- Harry does not complete any extra study suggesting he may not actually agree.

Credit other relevant information.

No credit for just naming compliance without application/explanation.

0 1 . 2 Explain **one** type of conformity shown by Aisha.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 2

2 marks foraclearandcoherentexplanation of the type of conformity shown by Aisha.
1 mark foramuddled/limitedexplanation.

Possible explanation:
- Aishaagreesboth publicly andprivately (internalisation)
- Aisha's behaviour shows a deeper level of conformity (conversion of views/beliefs/permanent level of conformity)
- Aisha has changed her views/behaviour on studying and created a study area in the common room.

Credit other relevant information.

No credit for just naming internalisation without application/explanation.

0 2 Explain **one** strength **or** limitation of Asch's research into conformity.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 3

3 marks foraclear,coherentanddetailedstrengthorlimitation,usingappropriateterminology.
2 marks for a strength or limitation which lacks some detail.
1 mark for a very limited/muddled strength or limitation.

Possible content:

- Asch's researchinvolvedlaboratoryexperimentssohadhighcontroloverextraneousvariables (eg environmental distractions) therefore the experiment has high internal validity
- Asch's researchhasbeenreplicatedasitisacontrolledlaboratoryproceduresotheresults can be considered to be reliable
- Asch's findingsmaynotberelevanttoday(childofitstime/McCarthyism/lackstemporalvalidity) as the results maybeinfluencedbyattitudesofthe1950swherepost-warattitudesmeantpeople were generally moreconformist
- Asch's studylackedmundanerealism,itusedanartificialtaskjudginglinelengths,therefore not an ecologicallyvalidmeasureofreal-lifeconformitysotheresultsdonotrepresentconformity in real life
- Asch's researchlackspopulationvalidityasitwasalimitedsampleofparticipantsasAsch only used males (genderbias)thereforeitmaynotrepresentfemalebehaviour
- Asch's researchlackspopulationvalidityasitwasalimitedsampleofparticipantsasAsch only used American students(culturebias)thereforeitmaynotrepresentbehaviourofothercultures
- Asch's researchmaybeunethicalashedeceivedhisparticipants(believedtheyweretaking part in a test of perception/participantswereunawareoftheconfederates),sohefailedtoobtaininformed consent/andfailedtoprotectthemfromharm(theywereputinastressfulandembarrassing situation).

Credit other relevantcontentincludingreferencetootherresearchsupport.

Note: If studentsgivemorethanonestrengthorlimitationcreditthebestresponse.

0 3 Outline the agentic state as an explanation for obedience.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3

3 marks foraclear,coherentanddetailed outline of the agentic state as an explanation for obedience, using appropriate terminology.
2 marks foralessdetailedoutlineof the agentic state as an explanation for obedience.
1 mark foramuddledorlimitedoutline of the agentic state as an explanation for obedience.

Possible content:

- whena personactsonbehalf of an authority figure/person of higher status
- the actor feelsnopersonal responsibility/does not feel guilty for their actions
- the opposite ofanautonomous state in which people act according to their own principles
- reference to bindingfactors/moral strain
- credit examplesofanagentic state as an explanation of obedience.

Credit other relevantcontenteg reference to the agentic shift.

0 4 Using your knowledge of resistance to social influence, explain why Johnny **and** Sunta refused to go along with the protest group.

[6 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
3	5–6	Application of knowledge of resistance to social influence to explain Johnny's **and** Sunta's behaviour is clear and effective. The answer is generally coherent with appropriate use of terminology.
2	3–4	There is some appropriate application of knowledge of resistance to social influence to explain Johnny's **and** Sunta's behaviour. The answer lacks clarity in places. Terminology is used appropriately on occasion. **OR** either Johnny or Sunta at Level 3.
1	1–2	There is limited application of knowledge of resistance to social influence to explain Johnny's **and** Sunta's behaviour. The answer, as a whole, lacks clarity and has inaccuracies. Terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. **OR** either Johnny or Sunta at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- Johnny resists the pressure to conform with the protest group and refuses to throw paint because he has an internal locus of control. Johnny is more likely to resist conformity because he feels responsible for his actions rather than following the protest group. He has self-confidence to make his own decisions
- Sunta resists the pressure to conform with the protest group and refuses to throw paint because she has social support. She heard Johnny refuse to get involved to throw the paint, so he acted as a role model who resisted pressure from the protest group, and this gave her the confidence to also refuse.

Credit other relevant content.

0 5 Discuss research studies into the effects of **one or more** situational variable(s) on obedience.

[8 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 4, AO3 = 4

Level	Marks	Description
4	7–8	Knowledge of the studiesoftheeffectsofoneormoresituationalvariablesis accurate and generallywelldetailed.Discussioniseffective.Minordetail and/or expansion is sometimeslacking.Theanswerisclearandcoherent. Specialist terminologyisusedeffectively.
3	5–6	Knowledge of the studiesoftheeffectsofoneormoresituationalvariablesis evident but there are occasionalinaccuracies/omissions.Thereissome effective discussion. Theanswerismostlyclearandorganised.Specialist terminology is mostly usedappropriately.
2	3–4	Knowledge of the studie(s)oftheeffectsofoneormoresituationalvariables is present. Focus is mainlyondescription.Anydiscussionisoflimited effectiveness. The answerlacksclarity,accuracyandorganisationinplaces. Specialist terminology isusedinappropriatelyonoccasions. **OR** one study at Level 3.
1	1–2	Knowledge of the studiesoftheeffectsofoneormoresituationalvariablesis very limited. Discussionislimited,poorlyfocusedorabsent.Theansweras a whole lacks clarity, hasmanyinaccuraciesandispoorlyorganised. Specialist terminology iseitherabsentorinappropriatelyused. **OR** one study at Level 2.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- proximity – Milgram – teacher and the learner were in the same room, obedience decreased; touch proximity condition; absent experimenter (leaves the room/order given over the phone), obedience decreased: Hofling and Rank and Jacobson – orders given over the phone
- location – Milgram – run-down office block vs Yale; Hofling hospital location/Rank and Jacobson hospital location
- uniform – Bickman – more likely to obey a man dressed as a guard. In Milgram's experiment the experimenter wore a grey lab coat/was replaced by a member of the public
- other relevant situational variables, eg presence of dissenting peers.

Possible discussion:

- methodological discussion of studies of situational variables and obedience, eg demand characteristics, external validity may be more a feature of some variations than others
- discussion of ethical issues of studies of situational variables and obedience
- discussion of factors and what the studies tell us about why people obey, eg uniform as a visible sign of authority, location/setting makes authority seem more/less genuine (legitimacy of authority)
- use of evidence/real-life examples to support or contradict the studies into the effect of variables, eg
- Mandel (1998) – mass killing of Jewish people was undertaken in close proximity of the victims without protest; Slater's (2006) study in a virtual environment included a condition where the participant had to shock the leaner via text from a mobile phone.

Credit other relevant content.

Accept different situational variables investigated by eg Milgram, as different studies.

Note: Discussion of one situational variable is enough for full marks.

Section B

Memory

0 6 Identify the dependent variable in the psychologist's research.

[1 mark]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 1

1 mark foridentificationofthedependent variable: number/amount of words recalled correctly (from wordlistA and/orwordlistB); correct words recalled.

0 marks forincorrectanswer,orreference to the IV.

0 7 Calculate the mean number of correct words recalled in **Condition A**.

Give your answer to **one** significant figure.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 3

3 marks for thecorrectanswergiven to one significant figure: 10 (even if no correct workings are shown).

2 marks for correct answerbutnotrounded to one significant figure, eg 9.888, 9.89, 9.

1 mark if incorrect answerisprovided but all workings are correct.

Correct workings:

(12 + 10 + 13 + 6 + 7 + 9 + 9 + 11 + 12)/9 or 89/9

Correct answer to one significant figure = 10

0 8 . 1 Identify which measure of central tendency is represented by **(i)** in **Graph 1**.

[1 mark]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 1

A– Mean

0 8 . 2 Identify which measure of central tendency is represented by **(ii)** in **Graph 1**.

[1 mark]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 1

C– Mode

0 9 Suggest **two** different ways the experiment could be modified to deal with these problems.

[4 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 4

For each way award:
2 marks foraclearandcoherentexplanation of an appropriate way that the psychologist could modify the study todeal with this problem
1 mark foramuddled/limitedexplanation.

Possible content:
- changethesample size **plus** elaboration of how to do this **or** why it solves the problem
- changethesamplingmethod from volunteer sampling to a named alternative sampling method **plus** elaborationofhow todothis **or** why it solves the problem

Credit other relevant content.

Note: 2 different sampling methods can be credited as two different ways.

1 0 Using your knowledge of the working memory model, explain why Olivia can perform the first two tasks at the same time but cannot perform the second two tasks at the same time.

[4 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 4

Level	Marks	Description
2	3–4	The explanation of why Olivia can complete the first two tasks at the same time but not the second two tasks, using knowledge of the working memory, is clear with some accurate detail. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of appropriate terminology.
1	1–2	The explanation of why Olivia can complete the first two tasks at the same time but not the second two tasks is partial or has limited detail. The answer lacks coherence and use of appropriate terminology.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:
Olivia can complete the first two tasks (sing her favourite song and look at pictures on her phone)
- because they usedifferent components of working memory
singing her favourite song uses the phonological loop/articulatory loop and looking at the pictures on
- her phone uses the visuo-spatial sketch pad
Olivia cannot complete the second two tasks successfully because they both require the use of same
- component (phonological loop)
this is because the phonological loop has limited capacity
- two tasks that use the same component cannot be completed successfully together because it places too many demands on working memory/because of the limited capacity of the stores.
-

Credit other relevant content.

Note: For full marks there must be some explanation of Olivia's performance on both sets of tasks.

1 1 Briefly explain what is meant by proactive interference.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2

1 mark forproactiveinterferenceiswhere an older memory disrupts a newer memory (accept alternative wording)

Plus 1furthermark for elaboration

Possible content
•more likely ifthe two sets of material are similar
•proactive interference is one way of explaining forgetting
•use of examples of proactive interference.

Credit other relevant content.

1 2 Outline and evaluate retrieval failure as an explanation for forgetting.

[8 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 4, AO3 = 4

Level	Marks	Description
4	7–8	Knowledgeofretrievalfailureasanexplanation of forgetting is accurate with somedetail.Evaluationiseffective.Minor detail and/or expansion sometimeslacking.Theanswerisclearand coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	5–6	Knowledgeoftheretrievalfailureasanexplanation of forgetting is evident but thereareoccasionalinaccuracies/omissions. There is some effective evaluation.Theanswerismostlyclearand organised. Specialist terminology mostly usedappropriately.
2	3–4	Knowledgeofretrievalfailureasanexplanation of forgetting is present. Focusismainlyondescription.Anyevaluation is of limited effectiveness. Theanswerlacksclarity,accuracyandorganisation in places. Specialist terminologyusedinappropriatelyonoccasions.
1	1–2	Knowledgeofretrievalfailureasanexplanation of forgetting is very limited. Evaluationislimited,poorlyfocusedorabsent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity,hasmanyinaccuraciesandispoorly organised. Specialist terminology either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevantcontent.

Possible content:

forgettingisduetotheabsenceofcues/tip-of-the-tongueforgetting
- the absenceofexternalcontextcues(contextdependentforgetting) – where environment for learning
- and recallisdifferent(egdifferentroom)
  the absenceofinternalstatecues(statedependentforgetting) – where physical state (emotional or
- biological) for learning and recall isdifferent (egmood)
  the encodingspecificityprinciple
- descriptionofrelevantevidence,egGoddenandBaddeley(1975)/Tulving and Pearlstone
- (1966)/Carter and Cassidy (1998).

Possible evaluation:

useof evidencetosupportorcontradict,egGoddenandBaddeley suggests that retrieval failure/absence of cuesis a valid explanation offorgetting
nature of supportingevidence,egGoddenandBaddeleyisbased on the recall of trivial material which reduced thevalidityoftheexplanation
applicationofexplanation,egimprovingmemoryusingmnemonics, category headings
- the influenceofcontextcuesmaybeoverstatedsotheexplanation has difficulty accounting for successful recall in different contexts
- contradictoryfindings–thecontexteffectdisappearswhenparticipants are tested using recognition rather thanfreerecalltasks
- reasonedcomparisonwithalternativeexplanation,eginterference.

Credit otherrelevantcontent.

Section C

Attachment

1 3 Identify and explain the type of attachment shown by Marik.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 2

Possible answer:
1 mark for correctattachment type

- Marik's attachment type is Insecure-resistant/anxious-resistant/insecure-ambivalent/resistant/ambivalent/Type C.

Plus

1 mark for explanation
- when his mother leaves him at his grandmother's house, he experiences extreme separation anxiety
- when his grandmother's neighbour visits Marik experiences extreme stranger anxiety as he cries
- when his mother returns he does not calm down easily/quickly on reunion.

Credit other relevant content.

Note: if the attachment type is missing or named incorrectly a mark can still be awarded for the explanation.

1 4 Evaluate animal studies of attachment.

[4 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 4

Level	Marks	Description
2	3–4	Evaluation is clear and has some detail. The answer is generally coherent with effective use of terminology.
1	1–2	Evaluation lacks clarity and/or detail. Terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible evaluation:

- problems of generalising findings from animal studies to humans – Harlow's study (mammalian species) may be more relevant to human experience/what applies to non-human species may not apply to humans/the bond in humans may be more complex than in animals/human mothers show more emotional attachment to young
- methodological evaluation of animal studies of attachment, eg control
- ethical issues of animal studies of attachment, eg harm
- argument that the critical period may be more of a 'sensitive period' in humans as studies have demonstrated how children have been able to recover from early deprivation
- practical value of research, eg for social work, identifying risk factors in vulnerable children
- implications for theories of attachment, eg Harlow's suggestion that contact comfort/sensitive responsiveness is more important than food contradicts learning theory
- support from human studies, eg Schaffer and Emerson Glasgow study supports the idea that responsiveness may be more important than food.

Credit other relevant content.

Note: no marks for simply describing animal studies.
Note: full marks can be awarded if evaluation is only focused on one study.

1 5 Outline Bowlby's concept of a critical period in human attachment.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3

Award 1 mark for each ofthefollowing:

Possible content:

'windowof opportunity'(time)during which an attachment must be formed with the caregiver/mother

- the critical period is approximately up to three years in humans according to Bowlby (with risk up to five years)
- if an attachment does not form in the critical period this leads to consequences such as low IQ, delinquency, affectionless psychopathy etc
-

1 6 Outline Bowlby's concept of an internal working model in human attachment.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3

Award 1 mark for each ofthefollowing:

Possible content:

atemplate/schema ofrelationships based on the first attachment

- acts a blueprintthat (unconsciously) repeats itself throughout life/ in future relationships (continuity hypothesis)
- detail of consequences eg if our first attachment is secure then we should have more successful relationships with others in the future/ if not then there will be consequences such as we might struggle throughout life in our social and interpersonal relationships.

1 7 Describe and evaluate research into cultural variations in attachment.

[12 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO3 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
4	10–12	Knowledge of research into cultural variations in attachment is accurate and generally well detailed. Evaluation is effective. Minor detail and/or expansion is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear and coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	7–9	Knowledge of research into cultural variations in attachment is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. There is some effective evaluation. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology is mostly used appropriately.
2	4–6	Limited knowledge of research into cultural variations in attachment is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any evaluation is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1–3	Knowledge of research into cultural variations in attachment is very limited. Evaluation is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology iseither absent or inappropriately used.
	0	Norelevant content.

Possible content:

- Van IjzendoornandKroonenberg's (1988) meta-analysis found secure attachment was the most common.Thelowestpercent of secure attachment was shown in China (50%), and the highest in Great Britain(75%).Avoidant attachment was more common in West Germany (35%) but rare in Israel andJapan
- Takahashi(1990)whofound high levels of resistant attachment in Japanese infants (32%) where mothersrarelyleaveinfants
- GrossmanandGrossman (1991) found that German infants tended to be classified as insecurely ratherthansecurelyattached as independence is fostered
- Tronicketal(1992)studied the Efe tribe who live in extended family groups showed one primary attachmentdespitebeing looked after by several people
- infantsraisedonIsraeliKibbutzim are classified as insecure resistant rather than avoidant variationwithincultureswas1.5 times greater than the variation between cultures.
-

Credit otherrelevantcontent.

Possible evaluation:

- the VanIjzendoornandKroonenberg's meta-analysis can be criticised because of the limited number of studiesinsomecountries, eg one study in China
- the studiesusedinthemeta-analysis came from a wide range of sources with varying research integrity.Thiscouldlead to inconsistencies and affect the generalisability of the findings
- the strangesituationmay not be a valid measure of attachment so any cultural differences suggested by VanIjzendoornmaynot be reliable
- infantswhohaveexperienced daycare may appear to be avoidant because they are used to being separatedfromtheirmother
- temperamentmayexplain behaviour exhibited by infants in the strange situation rather than attachment type
- the strangesituationmay be unethical because it may cause the infant stress in some cultures more than others
- the strangesituationisculturally biased as it was developed in America so this may cause problems when studyingattachment using this procedure in other cultures especially where child rearing practicesaredifferent.This imposed etic may mean the behaviour displayed by the infants in the strangesituationmaynot reflect their attachment type.

Credit otherrelevantcontent.