



A-level PSYCHOLOGY 7182/1

Paper1

Introductory topics 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.

No student 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.

A consistent 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

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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 assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

Social influence

0 1

What is meant by minority influence?

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2

2 marks for a clear and coherent definition of minority influence.

1 mark for a limited/muddled definition.

Possible content:

- when a small group/single individual influences/changes the beliefs/behaviour of a larger group/society.

Credit other relevant material.

0 2

Outline the legitimacy of authority explanation for obedience.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 3

3 marks for a clear, coherent and elaborated outline.

2 marks for a clear outline with some detail.

1 mark for a limited/muddled outline.

Possible content:

- refer to how genuine/believable the authority figure's status is
- expectation that we obey those of higher status, eg police, teachers
- influenced by factors such as uniform, context, etc
- credit reference to legitimacy of order/system/setting
- we are taught to recognise our place in a hierarchical system
- a situational, rather than dispositional, explanation of obedience.

Credit other relevant material.

0	3
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Outline **one** strength of the legitimacy of authority explanation for obedience.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 3

3 marks for a clear, coherent and elaborated outline of **one** strength.

2 marks for a clear outline with some detail.

1 mark for a limited/muddled outline.

Possible strengths:

- use of evidence in support, eg Milgram variations to illustrate importance of legitimacy - lab coat vs ordinary clothes, Yale University building; Bickman – passers-by more likely to obey orders from guard dressed in legitimate uniform
- explanatory power, eg use of real-life examples – My Lai massacre
- comparison with alternatives, eg dispositional explanations of obedience.

Credit other relevant strengths.

0 4

Discuss **two** explanations of resistance to social influence. Refer to the comments of Ali and of Brad in your answer.

[16 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO2 = 4, AO3 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
4	13–16	Knowledge of explanations is accurate and generally well detailed. Application is clear and effective. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	9–12	Knowledge of explanations is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Application/discussion is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	5–8	Limited knowledge of explanation(s) is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion/application is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. OR one explanation only at Level 3/4.
1	1–4	Knowledge of explanation(s) is very limited. Discussion/application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one explanation only at Level 2/1.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

Locus of Control

- LOC on a continuum from high internal to external
- individuals with an internal locus of control more likely to resist pressure to conform/less likely to obey than 'externals'
- people with an internal locus of control believe they control own circumstances; less concerned with social approval
- more achievement orientated/confident so more likely to resist influence of others
- credit measurement of locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

Social Support

- non-conformity/disobedience more likely if others are seen to resist influence
- seeing others resist conformity/disobey gives observer confidence to do so/reduces risk of humiliation/fear of being punished
- credit description of forms of social support – having an ally (conformity); disobedient role models (obedience).

Possible application:

- Ali is likely to have an internal locus of control
- she believes she controls her own circumstances/has free will – ‘I always feel like I’m free to make my own decisions.’
- her non-conformity is typical (‘I’ve never been one for following the crowd’) which suggests a dispositional explanation
- Brad has resisted conformity due to social support
- the presence of a non-conforming ally (Ali) gives Brad ‘the confidence’ to resist pressure from the group
- his non-conformity is not typical (‘I’m usually a bit of a follower’) which suggests a situational explanation in this case.
-

Possible discussion points:

- use of evidence to support/illustrate the influence of the explanations chosen, eg specific studies of non-conformity/defiance—Gamson et al (1982), Schurz (1985), Feldman and Scheibe (1972)
- variations of Asch’s and/or Milgram’s basic experiments that demonstrated increased resistance
- use of real-world examples to illustrate explanations
- explanation of why these produce resistance, eg breaks unanimity of group in conformity situations/reduced normative pressure; challenges legitimacy of authority figure/diffusion of responsibility
- comparison/analysis of the relative power of the explanations.
-
- Only credit evaluation of the methodology used in studies when made relevant to discussion of the explanations.

Credit other relevant material including other acceptable explanations of non-conformity and defiance/disobedience, eg (reduced) group size; previous experience; gender; culture.

Section B

Memory

0 5

Give **two** types of misleading information that have been shown to decrease the accuracy of eyewitness testimony.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2

1 mark each for

- leading questions
- post-event discussion.

Note - Credit the first two answers that are given however they are presented

0 6

Use your knowledge of explanations for forgetting to explain Amy's and Parveen's comments. Use a different explanation for **each** person.

[6 marks]**Marks for this question: AO2 = 6**

Level	Marks	Description
3	5–6	Application is clear, accurate and detailed. Answer is organised and coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
2	3–4	Application is mostly clear but lacks detail/understanding in places. There is some appropriate use of specialist terminology. OR one explanation/football fan at Level 3
1	1–2	Application is limited/muddled showing limited understanding. The answer lacks clarity and accuracy. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one explanation/football fan at Level 2/1
	0	No relevant content.

Possible application:

- Amy may be forgetting details of her team's matches due to interference – she has seen many matches which has resulted in 'confusion'
- the interference may be proactive – older matches/results interfering with more recent results – or retroactive – more recent results interfering with the recall of earlier matches
- this may be because a lot of the memories are similar, for example, several games involving victories against Rovers
- Parveen may be forgetting scores/matches due to retrieval failure/absence of cues
the facts she is not in the same context – 'the stadium' – means the same cues present at learning are not available (encoding specificity principle)
- similarly, she is not in the same emotional/physical state as when the memories were made – 'the feeling of excitement'.

Credit other relevant application points.

0 7

Describe and evaluate the multi-store model of memory.

[16 marks]**Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO3 = 10**

Level	Marks	Description
4	13–16	Knowledge of the multi-store model is accurate and generally well detailed. Evaluation is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	9–12	Knowledge of the multi-store model is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Evaluation is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	5–8	Limited knowledge of the multi-store model 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	1–4	Knowledge of the multi-store model 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 is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- capacity, duration and coding of the separate stores – sensory register, short-term memory (STM), long-term memory (LTM)
- transfer processes between stores – attention and rehearsal
- rehearsal loop – maintenance in STM
- how information is lost from each store, eg decay/displacement
- information processing model – linear made up of unitary stores.

Credit an accurately annotated diagram.

Possible evaluation points:

- useful starting point for memory research, first model to incorporate three different stores
- evidence that supports the coding, capacity, duration of the three stores, eg Baddeley, Jacobs, Sperling, Bahrick et al
- evidence that supports the functional separation of the stores, eg Glanzer and Cunitz
- rehearsal is not the only method of transfer from STM to LTM/ distinction between maintenance and elaborative rehearsal
- evidence supporting the model is mostly drawn from artificial lab studies which questions the validity of the model
- comparison with alternatives, eg working memory.

Only credit methodological evaluation of studies if this is used to discuss the strengths/limitations of the model.

Credit other relevant material.

Section C

Attachment

0 8

Identify **two** features of insecure-resistant attachments.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2

1 mark each for two of the following:

- ambivalent behaviour on reunion/seeking but resisting affection
- extreme separation anxiety
- extreme stranger anxiety
- low willingness to explore
- high level of proximity seeking/clinginess.

Accept alternative wording.

Note - Credit the first two answers that are given however they are presented

0 9 1

Explain **one** way in which the researcher could have assessed the reliability of the questionnaire.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 3

Award **one** mark for each of the following points (up to 3 marks):

Possible content:

- use the test-retest method
- participants complete the questionnaire, then the same participants are retested using the same questionnaire
- compare the results of the two separate analyses
- look to see if the results are similar/exceeding a coefficient of 0.8 for reliability.

OR

- use the inter-observer / inter-rater method
- where a second researcher could independently/separately score the same questionnaire
- compare the results of the two separate analyses
- look to see if the results are similar/exceeding a coefficient of 0.8 for reliability

Credit alternatives, eg split-half method.

Note – Marks can only be awarded for this question where the focus is on a way of assessing reliability

0 9 2

Explain **one** way in which the researcher could have assessed the validity of the questionnaire.

[3 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 3

Award **one** mark for each of the following points (up to 3 marks):

- use concurrent validity
- participants complete the questionnaire and an established measure/questionnaire with the same/similar aims
- compare the results of the two separate measures
- results for both measures should be similar/exceed coefficient of 0.8 for high validity

OR

- use face validity
- the questionnaire should be scrutinised/eyeballed/read through to check it measures what it is supposed to measure
- this should be done by either the researcher themselves or an expert
- if they consider it measures what it is supposed to measure, the questionnaire is classified as valid

Credit alternatives, eg predictive validity.

Note -Marks can only be awarded for this question where the focus is on a way of assessing validity

1 0

Discuss Bowlby's monotropic theory of attachment. Refer to Viv's grandmother's comments in your answer.

[16 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO2 = 4, AO3 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
4	13–16	Knowledge of monotropic theory is generally well detailed. Application is effective. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	9–12	Knowledge of monotropic theory is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Application and/or discussion is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	5–8	Limited knowledge of monotropic theory is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any application/discussion is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1–4	Knowledge of monotropic theory is very limited. Application/discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- importance of primary attachment figure – bond with mother figure is unique
- internal working model – first attachment is a blueprint for future relationships; child forms
- mental representation
- importance of critical period 2–3 years after birth
- the role of social releasers
- attachment (to mother) is innate/adaptive
- the more time spent with the mother figure, the better – law of continuity; law of
- accumulated separation.

Possible application:

- Grandmother suggests that the child forms a unique relationship/primary attachment with its mother –
- ‘babies should be with their mothers’
- importance of critical period/continuity of care – they need that special attention, especially for the first few years’
- importance of establishing an internal working model – ‘if you’re not there...it affects them in future’
- suggestion that attachment is innate/adaptive – ‘it’s natural’
- importance of reciprocal behaviours/social releasers – ‘special attention’.

Possible discussion:

- use of evidence to support or refute the idea of monotropy, eg Schaffer and Emerson – multiple and not monotropic attachments are the norm
- the concept of monotropy is socially sensitive/feminist critique – places pressure on mothers and underestimates the role of the father (the grandmother’s views may be old-fashioned/outdated)
- use of evidence to support or refute the internal working model, eg Bailey et al – mothers’ relationships with own children reflected their childhood experience; effect carries over to adult relationships, eg Hazan and Shaver
- IWM is a hypothetical construct and difficult to measure/establish cause
- use of evidence to support or refute the critical period, eg Lorenz
- studies of deprivation/institutionalisation suggest that critical period is more of a sensitive period.

Credit other relevant content.

Only credit evaluation of the methodology used in studies when made relevant to discussion of the explanation.

Section D

Psychopathology

1 1

Which type of characteristic is a 'difficulty focusing on simple tasks at work'?

[1 mark]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 1

Answer key: B – Cognitive

1 2

Which statistical test would be most appropriate to analyse the data in this study?

With reference to this study, explain **three** reasons for your choice of test.

[7 marks]

Marks for this question: AO2 = 7

1 mark for sign test

PLUS

For **each** of the following bullet points award:

2 marks for a clear and coherent reason linked to the study.

1 mark for a limited/muddled reason.

- the study is analysing the difference/change in focus at work before and after CBT therefore is a test of difference
- each person was asked to reflect on their focus at work before and after six weeks of therapy therefore this is related/repeated measures design
- data is allocated to one of three categories: improved, got worse, stayed the same, and therefore is nominal/categorical level.

Note -

- appropriate reason can be credited even if an incorrect test is named or no test is given.
- if multiple answers are given for each reason, accept the first answer only.

1 3

Describe systematic desensitisation as a treatment for phobias.

[6 marks]**Marks for this question: AO1 = 6**

Level	Marks	Description
3	5–6	Knowledge of systematic desensitisation is clear, accurate and detailed. Answer is organised and coherent. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
2	3–4	Knowledge of systematic desensitisation is mostly accurate but lacks clarity in places. There is some appropriate use of specialist terminology.
1	1–2	Knowledge of systematic desensitisation is limited. The answer lacks clarity and accuracy. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- a method of treating phobias based on classical conditioning/counterconditioning
- phobia is 'unlearned' by replacing fear response (CR) with a response of relaxation
- based on the principle that these two emotions cannot co-exist (reciprocal inhibition)
- relaxation training
- formation of anxiety hierarchy (credit examples based on this)
- gradual exposure/stepped approach
- if anxiety becomes too high, return to earlier level in hierarchy
- eventual extinction.
-

Credit any/all of the above information embedded within an example.

Credit other relevant content.

1	4
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Briefly outline **one** strength of systematic desensitisation as a treatment for phobias.

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO3 = 2

2 marks for a clear and coherent outline.

1 mark for a limited/muddled outline.

Possible strengths:

- use of evidence to support effectiveness, eg McGrath et al (1990), Gilroy et al (2002)
- works at patient's own pace with support from a therapist
- more acceptable to a wider variety of patients, eg children, those with learning difficulties
- effective with specific phobias where there is a clear end goal
- low attrition rates/high completion rates because of the gradual process of the therapy which allows respite
- flexible – can be performed in vivo or in vitro
- comparison with alternatives, eg SD is less distressing for patients than flooding, so it is more likely to be completed

Note – ethical strengths need explanation for credit eg 'more ethical' on its own gains no credit as patients have consented.

Credit other relevant strengths.

1 5

Discuss the deviation from social norms definition of abnormality.

[8 marks]**Marks for this question: AO1 = 3, AO3 = 5**

Level	Marks	Description
4	7–8	Knowledge of deviation from social norms is accurate with some detail. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	5–6	Knowledge of deviation from social norms is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Discussion is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	3–4	Knowledge of deviation from social norms is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions.
1	1–2	Knowledge of deviation from social norms is very limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- all societies make collective judgments about what counts as 'normal' / usual / typical behaviour
- any behaviour that does not conform to these standards is judged as abnormal
- norms vary from culture to culture
- examples of norms and deviations from norms.
- .

Possible discussion:

- not all behaviour that deviates from social norms is a sign of illness, e.g. speeding
- norms are culturally relative so difficult to determine universal signs of illness
- social norms definition could be used / abused as an instrument of social control
- social norms change over time (lack of temporal validity)
- no definition is satisfactory on its own – comparison with alternatives, e.g. failure to function, deviation from ideal mental health and examples of when these may be more appropriate.
- .
- Credit discussion embedded in examples.
- .
- Credit other relevant material.