

Psychology

Why study Psychology?

A-level Psychology is an ideal subject for you if you are interested in people: the way they develop, think and behave. You will be taught psychological theories, concepts and research methods in order to build up an understanding of human beings, and will also consider what happens when things go wrong.

What does the course cover and what is expected of you?

We have been teaching the AQA course for a few years now since the changes to the specification; this course is based, in part, on the course we have taught at Mary Hare previously.

The main difference is that the AS and A-level qualifications are 'stand-alone': this means that any marks obtained for the AS **do not** count towards the A-level. The work covered for AS is tested again when you sit the A-level examinations.

The course structure is as follows:

AS in Year 12

The content is divided into 2 sections:

Introductory topics in Psychology, which covers **Social Influence**, **Memory** and **Attachment**.

Psychology in context, which covers **Approaches**, **Psychopathology** and **Research Methods**.

The AS course is examined in 2 written papers, both of 1 hour 30 minutes duration.

A-level in Year 13

The content extends the work covered in Approaches (with greater emphasis on **Biopsychology**) and Research Methods (with a section on statistical testing).

In addition, there is a new section on **Issues and Debates in Psychology**.

There are also 3 optional units and we offer the following topics:

- **Cognition and development;**
- **Schizophrenia;**
- **Addiction.**

The A-level course is examined in 3 written papers, each of 2 hours duration. [Note: as mentioned, the AS work is retested as part of the A-level.]

A variety of styles are used by the teachers of this course. They include lecture-style lessons, responding to written or video source material, discussions, group presentations and individual research work. We also try to recreate or adapt some of the classic studies.

In A-level study you should expect to spend 5-8 hours a week on work outside the classroom. This will include assignments set by teachers, background reading and preparing for and writing essays.

Where can it take you?

Psychology is set within a Science framework and is an excellent background for study in areas where there is a high human context, eg, Sociology, Social Work, Healthcare, Business, Economics, Human Resources, etc.

Entry requirements

You should have high grades (preferably B or better) in GCSEs demanding a good command of English, e.g. English itself or History. There is much reading in the course and the ability to absorb new vocabulary rapidly is important. Good GCSE grades in Science and Mathematics are also an advantage and there is greater testing of mathematical skills.

Course assessment

Students taking the AS course will sit their examinations after one year, and those on the A-level course will sit their exams at the end of the second year.

Exam Board

AQA

Student View

“This is a really interesting course, but you need to do a lot of reading and there is lots to remember.”

Teachers Tip

You are expected to learn about many different studies – not just what happened but also how they are evaluated. You need to have a useful way of making revision notes you can access in a way that helps you, such as making revision cards.

We also provide copies of the Psychological Review in the Library which we recommend to our students.