

# AQA AQA A-level Psychology

## Course Handbook



Name:

Target Grade:

What you want to achieve:

### What you will find in here:

1. Expectations for A-Level Psychology study
2. Course overview and breakdown
3. Exam technique mat
4. Evaluative phrases to support essay writing
5. Command words for the exams
6. How to reach for the A\*'s - stretch and challenge tips
7. Linear learning and revision tips in Psychology
8. Book recommendations
9. How to prepare for Psychology exams tips
10. Example essay feedback form
11. Independent learning checklist
12. Year 12 and 13 mock exam progress trackers
13. Other assessments tracking form

## Expectations for A Level Study

**At A Level in Psychology your teacher has the following expectations:**

1. You will arrive to every lesson with your daily file, correct equipment and fully prepared for the lesson.
2. Correct topic and resources need to be on the desk in all lessons.
3. You must have 3 unit folders by the end of the course.
4. You will complete all essay plans in your topic booklet or equivalent.
5. You will complete all homework set on time and with adequate levels of effort. If you are unable to meet a deadline you must contact your teacher before the deadline by e-mail or in person and request an extension. Any extension is at the discretion of the teacher.
6. If you miss any lessons, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to catch up by reading the textbook, listening to the recorded lessons and completing all class notes. Ideally this should be done before the next lesson. You must email sixth form and your teacher to inform them of your absence.
7. You will keep the checklists in this handbook up-to-date.
8. All assessments need to be reflected on in green pen - this is essential to knowing where your knowledge is at and will aid your success.
9. All emails sent to staff need to be in a professional manner. They need a formal greeting and signing off.

Signed by student\_\_\_\_\_

Year 12	Sep-Oct	Oct-Dec	Jan-Feb	Feb-Apr	April-May	May-June	June-July
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Unit 2:</b> Research Methods <i>What research methods are used to study behaviour in Psychology?</i>	<b>Unit 2:</b> Approaches <i>What are the different schools of thoughts in Psychology and how will they explain behaviour?</i>	<b>Unit 2:</b> Biopsychology <i>How does our biology influence our behaviour?</i>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Memory <i>How is our memory structured and how can we learn through memory research, in the real world?</i>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Psychopathology <i>What are the definitions of abnormality and how might different schools of thought explain and treat mental health disorders?</i>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Attachment <i>What is attachment behaviour in humans and the consequences of our attachment experiences?</i>	<b>Unit 1:</b> Social Influence <i>How is our behaviour influenced by others and what are the consequences of this?</i>
<b>Key skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designing and conduct research</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>
<b>Key concepts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> <li>Therapies and treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> <li>Therapies and treatment</li> <li>*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	U2: RM only /48	U2: RM & App /72	U2: All /96	U1: Memory only /24	U1: Mem, PP /48	U1: Mem & Att & PP /72	U2 all /96 (mock week)

Sep-Oct	Oct-Dec	Jan-Feb	Feb-Apr
<b>Unit 3:</b> Issues & Debates <i>What are the key issues and debates that underpin all research in Psychology?</i>	<b>Unit 3:</b> Gender <i>What are the explanations for how our gender develops?</i>	<b>Unit 3:</b> Schizophrenia <i>What are the explanations for explaining and treating Schizophrenia?</i>	<b>Unit 3:</b> Aggression <i>What are the explanations for why we are aggressive?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>research</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>research</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe, apply, evaluate each concept</li> <li>Analysing and interpreting data</li> <li>Short answer questions</li> <li>Essay writing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> <li>Therapies and treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> <li>Therapies and treatment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychological concepts</li> <li>Theories</li> <li>Research studies</li> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Ethical issues</li> </ul>
U1 all /96  U3: I & D only /24	U3: I & D, Gender /48	U3: I & D, Gen, Sz /72	U3 all /96 U3 all /96

### Assessment breakdown

All students are expected to sit the full qualification and so no student will be taking an AS level exam at the end of year 12.

Unit 1 is worth 33.33% of your grade.

Unit 2 is worth 33.33% of your grade.

Unit 3 is worth 33.33% of your grade.

All A-level papers are out of 96.

All As-level papers (you will sit for mocks) are out of 72.

### Course Outline: A-level qualification

Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memory</li> <li>Attachment</li> <li>Social Influence</li> <li>Psychopathology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research methods</li> <li>Approaches</li> <li>Bio-Psychology</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue and debates</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Schizophrenia</li> <li>Aggression</li> </ol>

# Exam technique tips

## A01

Complete	Finish a task by adding to given information.	Identify using a recognised technical term.
Describe	Give an account of	Set out main characteristics.
Distinguish	Explain ways in which 2 things differ. Provide detail about a characteristic that enable a person to know the difference between...	Choose or pick out from alternatives.
Identify	Name or otherwise characterise.	Explain in clear terms.
Give	Produce an answer from recall or given information.	Select from alternatives.
Label	Provide appropriate names on a diagram.	Give a definition.

### General tips

- When asked to discuss research, this can be theory or evidence based but has to focus more on evidence.
- When asked to describe a study, pick a key study to ensure you have enough to talk about.
- Always read a couple of questions ahead in case they are linked - especially in choice questions
- Highlight and annotate any scenarios and the question wording to help you identify the command words.
- Always use spare time at the end to go back and check answers.
- Write clearly so we can read it!
- If it's a number based question, write the numbers clearly
- A difference question must include the word whereas
- Structure your answer according to the question
- Answer the question how it has been asked - not in the opposite way.

### Maths questions

- Always show workings out.
- Have a calculator for all exam papers.
- Make sure you have double checked your answer.
- Make sure you are rounding to 2 decimal places if appropriate.
- Make sure you have read the question carefully.
- Circle your final answer to make it clear

## A02

Calculate	Work out the value of something	Explain how	Give a detailed account of a process or a way of doing things.
Comment	Present an informed opinion	Explain why	Give a detailed account of reasons in relation to a particular situation.
Consider	Review and respond to given information.	Suggest	Present a possible case or solution.
Design	Set out how something will be done.	Draw	Produce a diagram.
		Explain	Set out purposes or reasons.



## Psychology Exam Tips

### Scenario based questions

- Always use phrases from the stem/scenario.
- Always refer to people from the scenario by name.
- Look at how many marks are available and make sure you have enough detail to access all marks.
- If there are tables/graphs - quote directly from them using specific figures.
- Always go back and check you have used it correctly.

### Drawing tables/graphs

- Always have an informative title that allow you to identify the IV and the DV.
- Label the axis correctly - Y is vertical, X is horizontal
- Make sure you have checked the information provided to sketch it accurately.
- Make sure you have selected an appropriate method for the data you have.

## A03

Analyse	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.	Evaluate	Judge from available evidence.
Compare	Identify similarities, and/or differences.	Explain	Set out purposes or reasons.
Consider	Review and respond to given information.	Explain how	Give a detailed account of a process or a way of doing things.
Discuss	Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.	Explain why	Give a detailed account of reasons in relation to a particular situation.
		Justify	Provide reasons, reasoned arguments to support, possibly provide evidence.

### Essay based questions

- Outline is A01 and evaluate is A03
- Discuss means to outline and evaluate so it's the same structure.
- If there is a scenario attached, make sure you are embedding it within as many paragraphs as you can.
- Quote directly from the scenarios.
- Always do a plan - you may get marks for it if you run out of time.
- Don't be adding bits in after through asterisks as it will lack organisation and will stop you from accessing the top mark band.
- 12 marks means approximately 3 A01's and 3 A03's
- 16 marks means detailed 3 A01's and 3 A03's
- If you run out of time, leave gaps where A01's would have gone, and write a few A03's in there so you can still access higher bands.
- If you have a choice between detail in points and range of points - try and get more detail in to have fuller paragraphs
- Don't forget the P in the PEEL must always refer back to the question to access the top marks for being focussed.
- The E's in the PEEL can be elaborate, explain, evidence.
- The L in the PEEL can just tie off the paragraph, link to the question or the next paragraph.
- Separate paragraphs

## Evaluative phrases for A03 paragraphs

- Contradictory to this...
- In support of this
- Contrastingly/ a contrasting point
- This therefore disproves...
- Conflicting research shows...
- Reinforcing this...
- This is contradicted by...
- This challenges
- Implications
- One criticism...
- Research supports/criticises
- This suggests
- However
- To evaluate/In evaluation
- Alternatively (another explanation to consider..)
- Furthermore
- Critics argue...
- Evidence has suggested
- A limitation of...
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Suggests...
- Criticism
- Therefore
- Continuously
- Arguably
- As a result
- In conclusion
- The effectiveness of this is...
- Likewise
- Another example of this
- It is questioned or questionable
- Unlike
- Contrarily
- Furthermore
- For example

## Command words

<b>A01</b>		<b>A02</b>		<b>A03</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Select from a range of alternatives	<b>Calculate</b>	Work out the value of something	<b>Analyse</b>	Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.
<b>Complete</b>	Finish a task by adding to given information.	<b>Comment</b>	Present an informed opinion	<b>Compare</b>	Identify similarities, and/or differences.
<b>Describe</b>	Give an account of	<b>Consider</b>	Review and respond to given information.	<b>Consider</b>	Review and respond to given information.
<b>Distinguish</b>	Explain ways in which 2 things differ. Provide detail about a characteristic that enable a person to know the difference between...	<b>Design</b>	Set out how something will be done.	<b>Discuss</b>	Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.
<b>Identify</b>	Name or otherwise characterise.	<b>Draw</b>	Produce a diagram.	<b>Evaluate</b>	Judge from available evidence.
<b>Give</b>	Produce an answer from recall or given information.	<b>Explain</b>	Set out purposes or reasons.	<b>Explain</b>	Set out purposes or reasons.
<b>Label</b>	Provide appropriate names on a diagram.	<b>Explain how</b>	Give a detailed account of a process or a way of doing things.	<b>Explain how</b>	Give a detailed account of a process or a way of doing things.
<b>Name</b>	Identify using a recognised technical term.	<b>Explain why</b>	Give a detailed account of reasons in relation to a particular situation.	<b>Explain why</b>	Give a detailed account of reasons in relation to a particular situation.
<b>Outline</b>	Set out main characteristics.	<b>Suggest</b>	Present a possible case or solution.	<b>Justify</b>	Provide reasons, reasoned arguments to support, possibly provide evidence.
<b>Select</b>	Choose or pick out from alternatives.				
<b>State</b>	Explain in clear terms.				
<b>Which is...</b>	Select from alternatives.				
<b>What is meant by...</b>	Give a definition.				



# 5 hours in... Psychology

Research shows that the most successful students (i.e. those that make the most progress and get the highest grades) are doing between 20 and 25 hours of independent study per week by the end of Year 13. That may seem a lot, but it's something that you would build up to over the course of your A-Levels. In Year 12, we're talking something more like 15 hours per week. This equates to roughly 5 hours of independent study per A-Level per subject.

Remember that your independent study is divided into three types – Consolidation, Reactive and Proactive. These are all set out in a table in your handout for each Psychology topic. For each lesson, it specifies what your consolidation work, proactive and reactive work should be for that lesson. Use this as a checklist to ensure you are completing all work that is required to compliment your lessons.

## Consolidation

The evening following a Psychology lesson, you should spend 12-15 minutes (24-30 minutes for a double) doing the following:

- Re-read your notes and ensure you fully understand them – make a note of any questions you may have on what you don't understand so that you can ask your teacher.
- Ensure you have completed the short answer consolidation questions that are in your [topic handouts](#).
- Completing any revision tools to help you learn the lesson content.

## Reactive

This is your 'homework'. Usually in Psychology, this will involve:

- Completing any outstanding notes from the lesson.
- Completing an essay in full or PEEL chain essay plan.
- Making notes for the next lesson

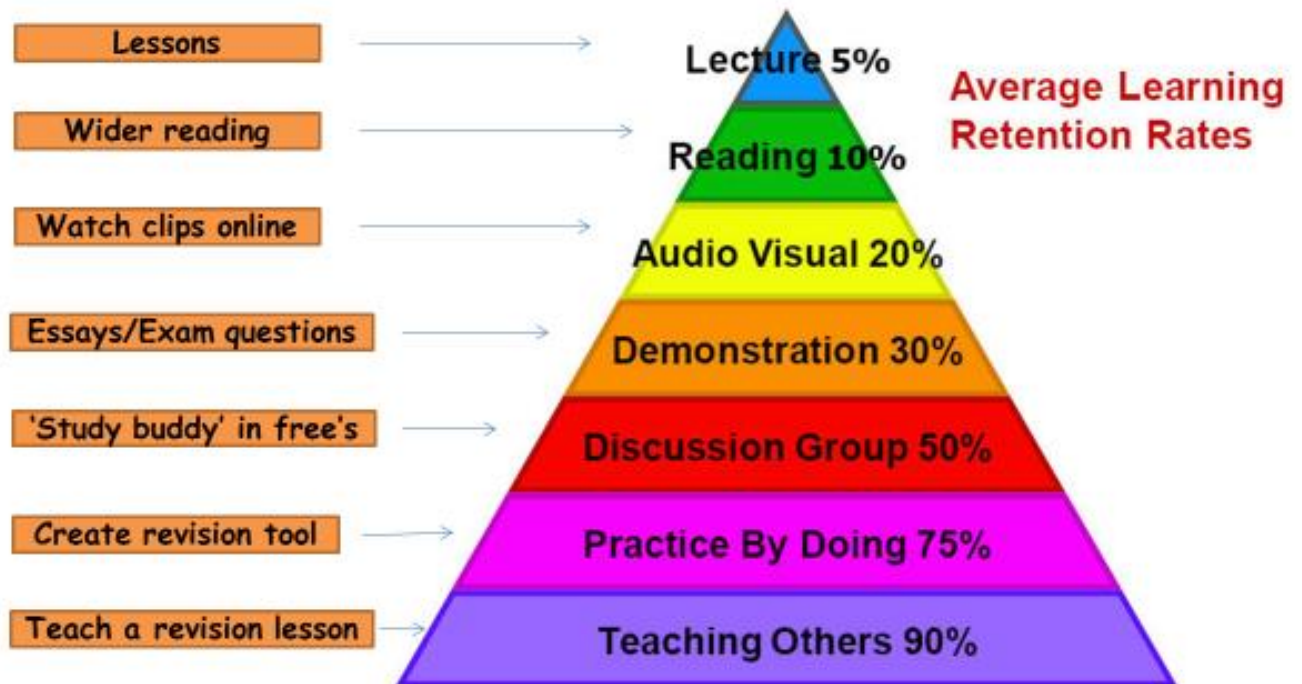
*If you find you finish your reactive work quickly, spend more time on your proactive work.*

## Proactive

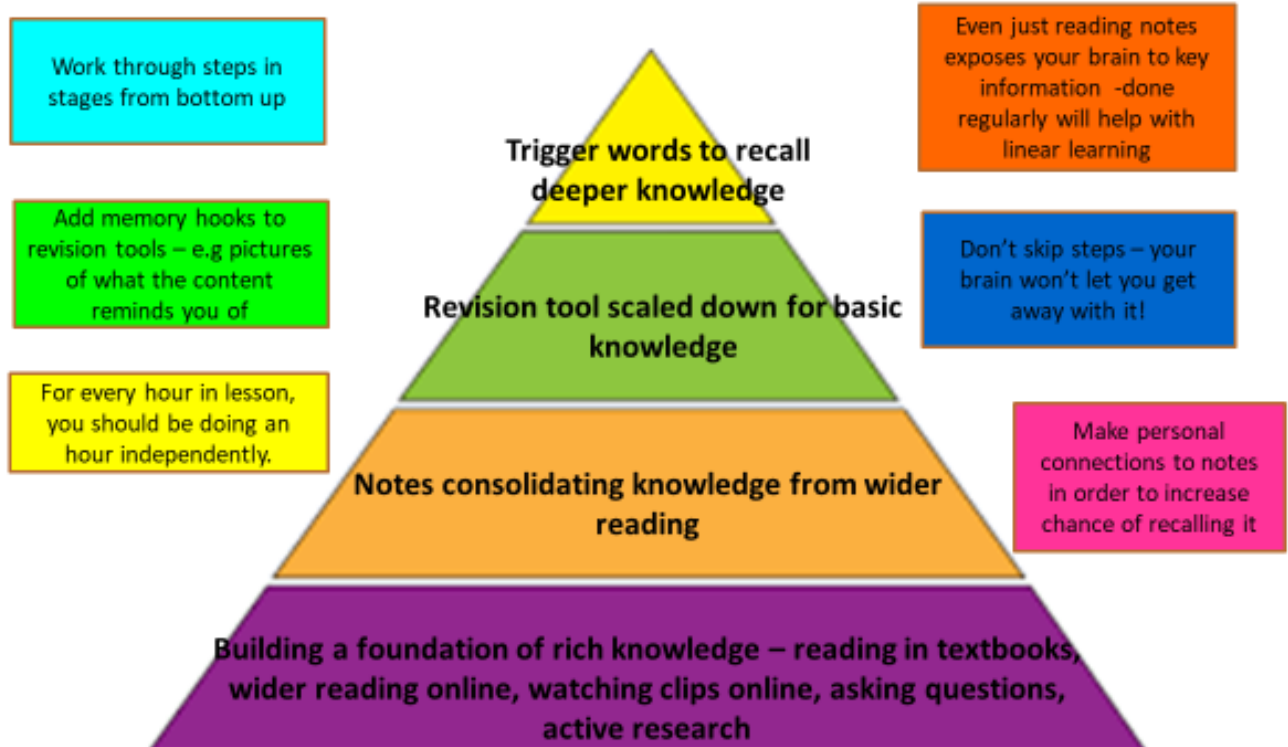
This is the section that will broaden and deepen your overall understanding of Psychology. It will not necessarily involve work that has been set by your teacher, but instead it is about you doing the extra practice questions, reading articles, watching videos, etc which may contain some of the following:

Suggestion	Useful links
Complete a set of practice past paper questions – <b>use AS only papers</b> that are available on the AQA website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Past papers practice</a></li> </ul>
Use websites to complete and add to class notes ( <b>30 minutes</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.tutor2u.net/">https://www.tutor2u.net/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://simplypsychology.org/">http://simplypsychology.org/</a></li> </ul>
Use the topic reflection grids to RAG rate your understanding ( <b>10 mins</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Reflection grids</a></li> </ul>
"Read, Cover, Write and Check" sections of Knowledge organisers ( <b>30 mins</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Knowledge organisers</a></li> </ul>
Practice writing timed essays ( <b>30 minutes</b> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Essays in handouts</a></li> </ul>
Psych review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Psychology Review magazine</a></li> </ul>
Practice retrieval quizzes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Retrieval quizzes</a></li> </ul>
Conduct wider reading research to see the latest studies in the topic area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Google scholar</a></li> </ul>

## Tips on succeeding in linear qualifications

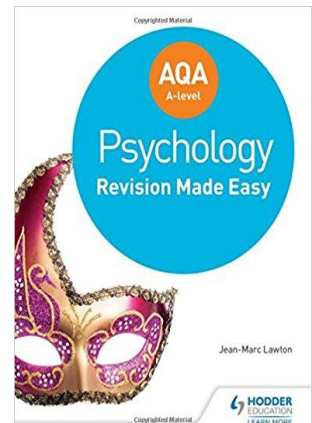
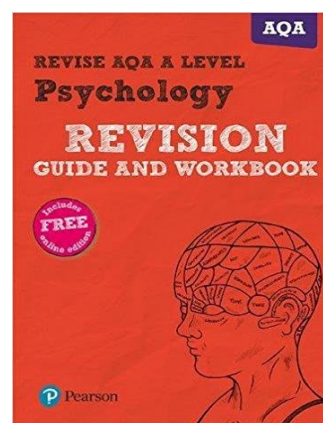
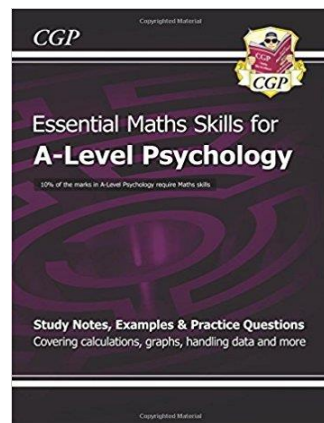
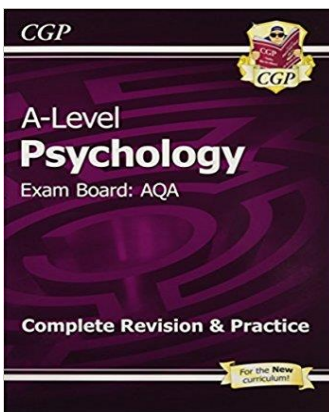
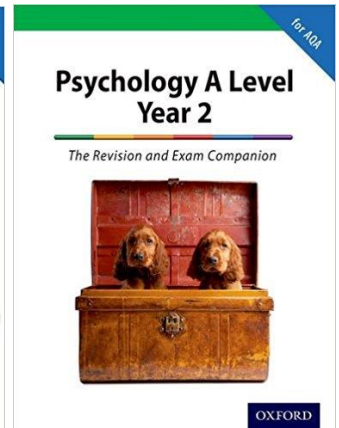
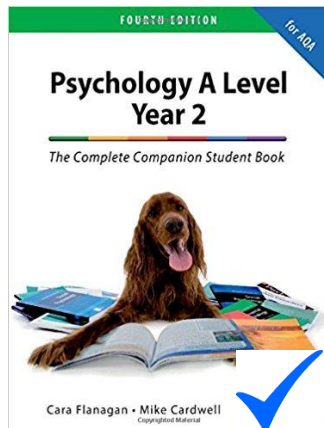
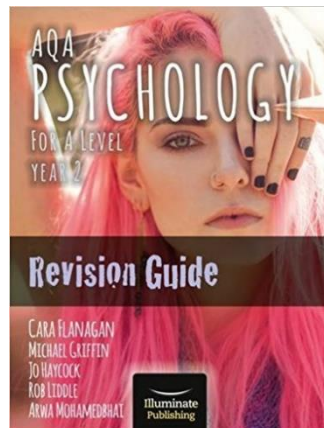
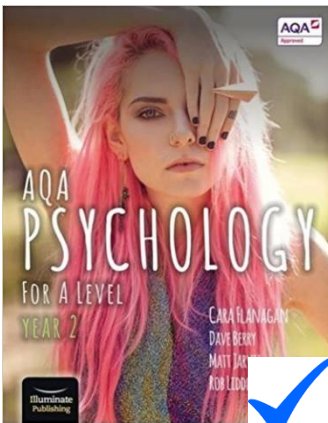
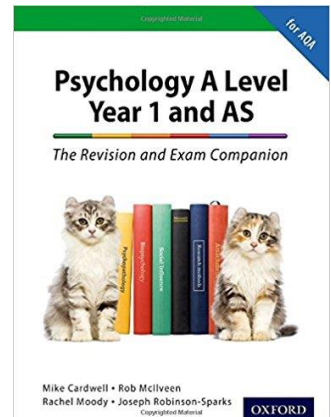
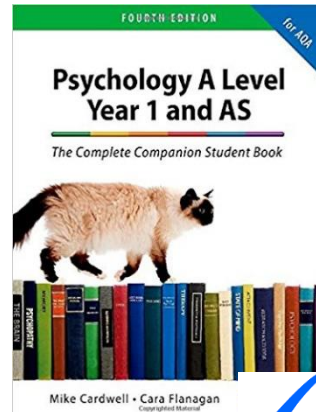
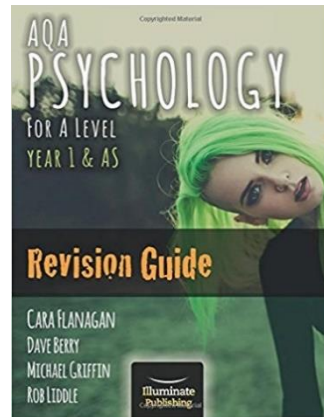
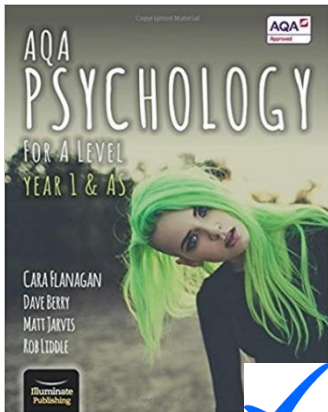


### Steps to revise and maximise recall





## Reading List



### Useful websites

#### **Beckfoot Psychology site**

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>

#### Simply psychology

Tutor 2 u

<http://getrevising.co.uk/pages/lin>

### How can I prepare for my Psychology Exams?

- ☐ Complete all lesson notes
- ☐ Have a flashcard/mind map etc set up for every lesson
- ☐ Complete a revision tool for key researchers
- ☐ Have a keywords glossary set up for each topic
- ☐ Practice essays in timed conditions
- ☐ Complete all essay plans (and application essays)
- ☐ Complete practice exam papers
- ☐ Use mark schemes and green penned assessments
- ☐ Go back over old exam papers
- ☐ Have a timetable for revision in place
- ☐ Complete all assessment booklet questions
- ☐ Revise with other psychology students
- ☐ Attend additional Psychology lessons
- ☐ Use all revision material on 365
- ☐ Have APFC flashcards set up for each key study
- ☐ Practice maths skills
- ☐ Have a go at all questions in the textbook
- ☐ Build revision packs
- ☐ Revise from day 1 and regularly
- ☐ Have a revision timetable

## Essay Feedback form

Unit & Essay Title:

ALPS Target:

### Pre-assessment reflection



Previous target you tried to improve and done well this time?



Something you struggled with

Teacher mark and grade:



Level	Mark	Description
4	13-16	Knowledge is accurate and generally well detailed. Discussion is thorough and effective. If applicable, use of stem is appropriate and well explained. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively. Minor expansion and/or detail and expansion argument sometimes lacking.
3	9-12	Knowledge of the question is evident. Discussion is apparent and mostly effective. There are occasional inaccuracies. If applicable, use of stem is appropriate although not consistently well explained. The answer is mostly clear and organised. Specialist terminology mostly used effectively. Minor detail and/or detail and expansion of argument is sometimes lacking.
2	5-8	Knowledge is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion is only partly effective. If applicable, use of stem is partial. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology used inappropriately on occasion.
1	1-4	Knowledge is limited. Discussion is limited, poorly focused or absent. If applicable, use of stem limited or absent. Answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used.

Level	AS Level	A Level	Knowledge	Accuracy	Evaluation	Focus	Specialist terminology	Application
4	10-12	13-16	Well-detailed	Accurate	Thorough & effective	Clear, coherent & focused	Used effectively	Appropriate. Links to STEM are explained
3	7-9	9-12	Evident (reasonably detailed)	Occasional inaccuracies	Mostly effective	Mostly clear & organised	Mostly used effectively	Appropriate. Links to STEM are not always explained
2	4-6	5-8	Present (lacks detail)	Numerous inaccuracies	Partly effective	Lacks clarity, accuracy & organisation	Used inappropriately on occasions	Links to STEM are partial
1	1-3	1-4	Limited (limited / absent knowledge)	Highly inaccurate	Limited: not effective or absent	Lacks clarity; many inaccuracies & poorly organised	Either absent or inappropriately used	Links to STEM are limited or absent



## Year 12

Assessment	Grade & Marks	Gaps in knowledge / Plan to address.
Unit 2 RM	/48	
Unit 2 RM	/48	
Approaches and Research methods	/72	
Approaches, Research Methods and Biopsychology	/96	
Unit 1 Memory	/24	
Unit 1 Memory and Attachment	/48	
Unit 1 Memory, Attachment and Social Influence	/72	
End of Unit 1 Memory, Attachment and Social Influence/Psychopathology	/96	
End of year 12 Mock Unit 1	/96	
End of year 12 Mock Unit 2	/96	

## Mock Paper Progress tracker

**Year 13**

Assessment	Grade & Marks	Gaps in knowledge / Plan to address.
Unit 3		
End of Issues and Debates	/24	
End of topic Gender and Issues/Debates	/48	
End of topic Gender and Issues/Debates and Schizophrenia	/72	
Unit 3 mock 1 (all topics)	/96	
A level Unit 1 mock (round 1)	/96	
A level Unit 2 mock (round 1)	/96	
A level Unit 3 mock (round 1)	/96	
A level Unit 1 mock (round 2)	/96	
A level Unit 2 mock (round 2)	/96	
A level Unit 3 mock (round 2)	/96	



## Tracking sheet for essays/other assessments

[illegible]

## Revision focus

Through your weekly retrieval quizzes/lessons, as well as your independent learning, you will identify gaps in your knowledge that will need to be addressed. When you have identified a gap, devise a plan of action for what you need to do and ensure you retest yourself to check the gap is now closed. Log all gaps here so that you will have a revision structure and your teacher knows what to focus on for your personalised revision plan.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

