PSYCHOLOGY

Examination Board Specification: **AQA** 7182

Why Study Psychology?: Psychology asks one key question: why do we behave the way we do? The AQA course is an excellent introduction to the scientific study of human behaviour. The course allows opportunities for debate such as: is behaviour innate or is it learned? Do we have free will or is all our behaviour pre-determined?

Psychology involves approaching a topic from different perspectives and evaluating theories as well as the research evidence these theories are based upon. The methodology used by psychologists during investigation are analysed as well as techniques of data handling and statistical analysis. The AQA course includes an introduction to research and theories within many areas of psychology; including cognitive, developmental, social, clinical, and biological approaches.

Content and Assessment of the Course:

Advanced Level			
Paper 1	**Introductory Topics in Psychology**	**2 hour examination**	**33.3%**
Paper 1 will assess content across four topic areas within psychology. Social Influence is an introduction to social psychology where students will explore famous (and infamous) studies on conformity and obedience. Within the Memory topic, pupils will investigate cognitive experiments on short-term and long-term memory, forgetting, and eyewitness testimony. Within Attachment and developmental psychology, pupils will gain an understanding of early relationships in infancy and the effect this can have on future development. Clinical Psychology and Mental Health offers an applied approach to understanding mental illness through an examination of potential causes and treatments for depression, phobias and OCD.			
Paper 2	**Psychology in Context**	**2 hour examination**	**33.3%**
Paper 2 requires students to have knowledge and understanding of the major Approaches in psychology with evaluation of the strengths and limitations of each approach. Biopsychology involves gaining an understanding of the central nervous system, synaptic transmission, localisation of function, and hemispheric lateralisation. Research methods underpins all topics within psychology and it will be explored in detail on Paper 2. Students require knowledge of experimental methods, scientific processes as well as techniques of data handling and statistical analysis. Research methods is assessed on all three papers in the AQA course and makes up 25% of the marks across all three papers.			
Paper 3	**Issues and Options in Psychology**	**2 hour examination**	**33.3%**
In paper 3, students gain insight into the philosophical issues and debates that underpin the discipline as well as studying three topic areas in depth: Relationships, Schizophrenia and Addiction. In Relationships, students look at the factors affecting attraction and the formation of romantic relationships as well as the reasons for their breakdown. As part of the topics of Schizophrenia and Addiction, we look at the potential biological and psychological causes of such behaviour as well as effectiveness of treatments available.			

Entrance Requirements: There are no specific subject requirements although students will be expected to have an appreciation and understanding of scientific research and have the ability to evaluate information. The data analysis involved will also necessitate a student to have good mathematical skills (e.g. the students will have to conduct some statistical tests by hand). It is expected that students will wish to contribute to discussions and debates. Students will also be required to complete extended writing essay questions as part of their assessments. It is suggested that students have a minimum Grade 6 in Maths, Biology, and English to cope with the demands of the course.