

# A level Psychology

## Why study Psychology?

- Psychology literally translates as 'the study of the human mind' – but Psychology is more than this. Psychology is everywhere around us. It is intriguing, it is emotional, it is scientific and above all, it is thought provoking.
- This course offers you the opportunity to learn about the science behind human behaviour by understanding how research is conducted and used to develop theories and laws about human behaviour.
- You will then go on to explore the many different strands of Psychology such as Social Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Abnormal Psychology and Biological Psychology. Furthermore, you will also consider issues and debates that psychologists consider when attempting to explain complex and abstract human behaviours, such as schizophrenia.



## Why study Psychology at Solihull Sixth Form College?

- You will develop skills highly valued by Higher Education (HE) and employers, including critical analysis, independent thinking and research skills.
- Being an independent learner is vital to your success in A level Psychology. You will be expected to prepare before all lessons. In class, we will use group work, presentations and discussions to support / stretch and extend your understanding.
- You will be taught by highly experienced teachers who are also examiners. They will therefore provide you with expertise that will enable you to maximise your potential and progress in every lesson.
- The Psychology department at Solihull Sixth Form College is highly resourced; teachers are passionate about this subject and in lessons bring the subject to life.

### Case Study

Among the recent successful students to have taken this course is **Louisa Alcock**.

She came to the College from Ninestiles Academy and excelled at A level, achieving all A\* grades in Psychology, English Literature and History. She

has progressed to the University of Warwick to continue her Psychology studies.



*"I enjoyed the freedom to research my subjects in more detail than I could at GCSE and read around my topics if I wanted. The more professional, adult relationship with my teachers was another good thing."*

*- student Louisa Alcock*



## Course Outline

This is a two year A level course which broadly divides into two sections: compulsory content which looks at the various strands of Psychology such as Research Methods, Social Psychology and Development Psychology, and the optional specialised units such as Gender, Schizophrenia and Forensic Psychology.

**Paper 1 Introductory topics in psychology** – This paper asks the following questions:

- Why do we conform to the obvious wrong answer?
- Why does anonymity lead to conformity? - Why do we forget?
- What are the effects of childhood deprivation?
- Does early attachment influence later adult relationships?
- What are the characteristics of obsessive compulsive disorders?
- Can drug therapy help people with phobias?

**Paper 2 Psychology in context** – this paper asks the following questions:

- Can non-scientific research methods generate data that explains human behaviour?
- What types of questions would you include in a questionnaire?
- Do role models influence our behaviour?
- Can the environment influence behaviour?
- Can animal behaviour explain human behaviour?
- Which areas of the brain are responsible for speech, language and spatial tasks?

**Paper 3 Issues and options in psychology** – this paper asks the following questions:

- What explains the acquisition of human behaviours like depression – is it nature or nurture?
- What is the role of hormones & chromosomes in sex and gender acquisition?
- What influences our gender identity?
- What is schizophrenia?
- Can schizophrenia be treated with drugs?
- How is a crime measured and recorded?
- Who commits criminal acts?
- Why do people commit crimes?

## Assessment

No Coursework

Examination (100%) – There will be three two hour papers at the end of the course (each worth 33.3% of the A level), for which we will prepare you thoroughly. Paper 1 will examine 4 compulsory units such as Social Influence, Memory, Attachment & Psychopathology. Paper 2 will comprise of 4 further compulsory units such as Approaches in Psychology, Bio Psychology & Research Methods. The third paper comprises optional units such as Gender, Schizophrenia and Forensic Psychology. Each paper will consist of multiple choice, short answer, extended writing and research methods questions.

Exam Board - AQA

## Special Entry Requirements

Minimum grade 4 in Biology or 4-4 in Combined Science is required. Standard A level entry requirements also apply - [www.solihullsf.ac.uk/courses/entry-requirements](http://www.solihullsf.ac.uk/courses/entry-requirements). There is also a need to be genuinely numerate, as we will be analysing and interpreting data and making simple statistical calculations. Overall, at least 10% of the marks in assessments for Psychology will require the use of mathematical skills.

## Prohibited Options

None. Psychology goes well with all subjects.

## What do our students go on to do?

A high proportion of our Psychologists go on to study Psychology or a closely related course at University. Psychology can help your career either directly or indirectly. If you wish to become a Psychologist, Therapist or Mental Health Worker, this A-Level is of direct value. Many Psychology graduates tend to build careers in Education, the Police, Social Work and Further Research.

## Cost Implications

There may be some travel costs for those students who go on the visits to the University of Warwick with the Psychology Research School.

## Complementary Subjects or Enrichment Courses

The College runs a Psychology Research School, which is an exciting Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) project for students interested in all aspects of Psychology. The Psychology Research School involves students conducting real psychological research with Dr. Elisabeth Blagrove from the University of Warwick. This is a fantastic opportunity to work with a top Russell Group university.

### Examination Results

In the past three years, there has been great success for students on this course. The full breakdown of results is as follows:

Year	Entry	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U	A-E%
2019	279	7	37	87	78	41	25	4	98.6%
2020	215	8	34	66	65	28	14	0	100.0%
2021	229	17	32	72	64	29	15	0	100.0%

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