

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

H167

For first teaching in 2015

H167/02 Summer 2019 series

Version 1

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 2 series overview

H167/02: Psychological themes through core studies is the second of two examined components for the OCR AS Psychology qualification. This component focuses on:

- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of five key themes.
- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a classical and a contemporary study located within each key theme (10 core studies).
- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of areas and perspectives in psychology.
- Methodological issues relating to the core studies.
- Issues and debates in psychology.
- Practical applications of psychology.

To do well on this paper candidates needed to have a sound knowledge and understanding of all the core studies, areas, perspectives and debates. Evaluation skills needed to be good and candidates needed to be able to apply their psychological knowledge effectively to a novel situation.

This paper was accessible with most candidates attempting all questions. Candidates who did well on this paper showed extensive knowledge and understanding of the nine core studies cited in Section A and therefore answered questions competently and confidently. Likewise, candidates who had sound knowledge and understanding of the individual differences area gave in-depth and appropriate answers in Section B Question 6 parts (a) – (d). Those who appreciated that a discussion of a debate involves the consideration of strengths and weaknesses of both sides, supported by appropriate evidence from relevant core studies did well in Section B Question 6 part (e). In Section C, candidates who knew, understood and could apply the principles and concepts of the behaviourist perspective scored well in Question 7 parts (a) and (b). Many candidates who did well on Question 7 part (c) showed a high standard of understanding of how two ways could be used to encourage saving in young people and were also able to apply their psychological knowledge within their suggestions effectively. In Question 7 part (d), candidates often lost marks by simply describing practical strengths and weaknesses of the suggestions they made in Question 7 part (c) without reading that the evaluation needed to focus on issues and debates. Those who did make explicit links to issues/debates struggled to discuss these in enough detail to meet the requirements of the higher bands.

There was some evidence that some candidates are presenting responses that are pre-learnt and rehearsed and are not reading and responding to the specific questions appropriately. Some candidates did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding to respond effectively to questions relating to the individual differences area, the behaviourist perspective and/or psychological issues and debates in psychology. There was evidence that some candidates needed to develop greater skills in applying their knowledge and understanding to novel sources. There was evidence that many candidates did not read Question 7 part (d) carefully and therefore did not answer the question asked.

Section A overview

Section A: Core studies. This section consists of questions based on the ten core studies individually, in their pairs or in terms of their key theme. Questions are short answers but range in mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Describe the background to Milgram's study into obedience.

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Candidates who performed well on this question showed a thorough knowledge of the background to Milgram's study and were able to link this to the subsequent aim of the study, e.g. 'Milgram based his study on previous historical events in which inhumane acts were carried out under the orders of someone in high authority i.e. WW2 and the authority figure of Hitler. Milgram wanted to investigate how likely we are to obey people of high authority, even if the orders appear immoral and we do not personally agree with them.' Some candidates provided an outline of Milgram's actual study, therefore not answering the question.

Question 1(b) (i)

(b) (i) Describe the sample used in Bocchiaro et al.'s study into whistleblowing.

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..... [2]

Many candidates provided detailed and accurate descriptions which included two or more features of Bocchiaro's sample. Others referred to features such as opportunity sampling, Yale University, America; indicating they either muddled core studies or did not have real understanding of Bocchiaro's study.

Question 1(b) (ii)

(ii) Outline **one** way in which Bocchiaro et al.'s study showed sampling bias.

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..... [2]

Many candidates were able to clearly identify a relevant type of bias in the context of Bocchiaro's study. Some candidates, although able to identify an appropriate bias did not contextualise their response and therefore lost marks, e.g. 'Bocchiaro only used students within his sample so findings cannot be generalised.'

Question 2

2 Explain **one** similarity between Loftus & Palmer's study into eyewitness testimony and Grant et al.'s study into context-dependent memory.

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Many candidates were able to (i) identify and develop a similarity between the two named studies (ii) illustrate the similarity with appropriate evidence from both Loftus and Palmer's and Grant et al.'s studies, e.g. 'Both studies gathered quantitative data which allows for the easy comparison of results. In Loftus and Palmer's first experiment, findings revealed that those who were asked how fast the cars were going when they smashed gave an average speed of 40.5 mph while those with the verb contacted gave an average speed of 31.8 mph. Grant et al. gained quantitative data in that on completing the reading of a text on psychoimmunology, participants were given multiple-choice and short-answer questionnaires to complete which produced numerical data.' Other candidates, although able to identify an appropriate similarity, needed to develop and evidence their similarity appropriately in relation to the two named studies.

Question 3

3 Outline **one** way in which Chaney et al. followed ethical considerations in their Funhaler study.

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..... [2]

Most candidates performed well on this question with few candidates not scoring the full 2 marks, e.g. 'Chaney followed ethical considerations by gaining informed consent from the children's parents.'

Question 4 (a)

4 (a) Sperry carried out a study into split brain patients.

Identify the apparatus used in this study.

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..... [2]

Some candidates were able to identify the two pieces of apparatus used – a tachistoscope (projector **and** screen) and objects. Many candidates either referred to how visual material was presented to the participant or considered having a split brain/having their brain split as a piece of apparatus and therefore did not answer the question.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Casey et al. carried out a study into neural correlates of delay of gratification.

Outline **one** way in which the researchers' procedure increased the reliability of their study.

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[3]

There were many good answers here with candidates showing a clear understanding of reliability and being able to provide sound outlines of how Casey et al.'s procedure increased the reliability of their study, e.g. 'As a controlled and standardised procedure, Casey et al.'s study was reliable. This is because in the first experiment for the Go/Nogo task, pre-programmed laptops were delivered to each person's home. This meant all participants were tested in exactly the same way and that the test could be replicated.' Other candidates needed to develop their understanding of the term 'reliability' and their ability to explain how this issue was addressed in the context of Casey et al.'s study, i.e. go beyond such responses as, 'The procedure was highly controlled and standardised', which merely infers an understanding of the term.

Question 5 (a)

5 (a) Freud used the case study method in his research.

Describe how he used this method in his study of Little Hans.

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[3]

Those who scored well on this question provided detailed and accurate descriptions of the case study method in the context of Freud's study which included two key features of the case study method in relation to the study of Little Hans. Some candidates appeared to mis-read the question and gave descriptions of how the data was gathered, e.g. 'Freud used the case study method by not observing Little Hans himself but by asking Hans' father to observe him and send his findings to Freud.' Such responses did not answer the question.

Question 5 (b)

(b) Baron-Cohen et al. used the experimental method in their study of autism.

Explain **one** strength of using this method in this study.

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There were many excellent responses here with candidates providing relevant strengths of the experimental method in the context of Baron-Cohen et al.'s study. Some candidates gave clear responses that identified a relevant strength of the experimental method but needed to contextualise their answer to the named study to gain more than 1 mark, e.g. 'One strength is that it allows for cause and effect to be objectively established.' A few candidates referred to a laboratory experiment/the study was conducted under laboratory conditions, but this study is (i) considered a quasi-experiment with a matched pairs design, (ii) was not conducted under laboratory conditions as some participants were tested in their own homes, some in the researchers' clinic and some in the researchers' laboratory.

Section B overview

Section B: Areas, perspectives and debates. Questions in this section focus on areas, perspectives and debates in psychology. Questions range in size and mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 6 (a)

6 (a) Outline the defining principles and concepts of the area of individual differences.

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[4]

Many candidates were able to identify and elaborate on the basic principle that every individual is unique with differing characteristics, experiences and behaviours but were unable to show greater understanding of the area to gain full marks. Some candidates showed a greater understanding of the principles and concepts of the area by referring, for example, to the principle that human behaviour can be measured and quantified though the measures for one person will be different from those gained from another.

Question 6 (b)

(b) Describe **one** strength of using the individual differences area to explain behaviour.

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[3]

Candidates who scored well on this question were able to identify and elaborate a strength of the individual differences area, e.g. 'The area is holistic as it can provide a variety of explanations for behaviour as shown through Freud's study of Little Hans ...' The better responses focused on methodological issues/debates. Other candidates needed to go beyond providing a brief or muddled strength, e.g. 'One strength is that the area isn't reductionist.'

Question 6 (c)

(c) Describe **one** weakness of using the individual differences area to explain behaviour.

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..... [3]

As with Question 6 (b), candidates who scored well on this question tended to focus on methodological issues and debates, identifying and elaborating an appropriate weakness of the individual differences area, e.g. 'The research method used may not be objective, so open to bias, lowering the validity of findings'. This is shown in Freud's study of Little Hans. Freud gathered qualitative data which he interpreted subjectively so he could gain evidence to support his theory of psychosexual development and the Oedipus complex. This limits the usefulness of research investigating individual differences.' Candidates who did not perform well on this question needed to go beyond merely identifying a relevant weakness of the area, e.g. 'One is unable to generalise any findings'.

Question 6 (d)

(d) Outline **one** application of the individual differences area.

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Some candidates performed well on this question through referring to either therapies or psychoanalysis. Others needed to go beyond merely identifying an application of the individual differences area. There were instances where candidates described the findings of either Baron-Cohen et al.'s or Freud's study without showing how they can be applied. Such responses did not answer the question.

Question 6 (e)

(e)* Discuss the free will/determinism debate in psychology. Use examples from relevant core studies to support your answer.

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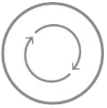
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..... [12]

A special allowance was made in the marking of this question as it produced unforeseen difficulties – many candidates did not provide a discussion of the freewill/determinism debate, instead defining the debate and describing how various core studies supported either freewill or determinism. Such responses could gain a maximum of 6 marks though candidates who considered strengths and/or weaknesses of determinism and/or freewill, supported by appropriate evidence, were able to access the higher marking bands. Specifically candidates needed to write about the strengths and weaknesses of the debate supported by the studies, and not the strengths and weaknesses of the studies supported by the debates.

	<p>AfL</p>	<p>Centres should be mindful of the command verbs used in questions, for example “Discuss” in the context of this question required candidates to consider strengths and/or weaknesses of determinism and/or free will and support it with evidence of core studies.</p>
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Exemplar 1

The free will /determinism debate looks at whether you are in control of your own behaviour throughout life or if your behaviour is already determined and it's for you.

One argument supporting the free will side of the debate is act of being obedient. This can be explained by Milgram's Study on destructive obedience which consisted of the role of a learner and a teacher. The teacher could not see the learner and was ~~forced~~ instructed by the experimenter to ask the learner questions. If the learner got a question wrong the teacher was instructed to give a shock of 15 volts which ranged from 15 volts to 450 volts.

If the teacher didn't obey they would be prodded a maximum of four times by the experimenter.

This study links to the free will debate because the teacher's actions were based on their own free will and what they decided to do in that moment and the study found that 65% of participants reached 450 volts.

However it can be argued that the social context they were in pressurised them into obeying because qualitative results from the experiment found that the participants were sweating and biting their lips which shows signs of extreme stress, thus the behaviour could have to an extent been deterministic [12]

Exemplar 1 shows that the candidate needed to enter a discussion relating to the strengths and weaknesses of both freewill and determinism. The response was given 6 marks as the candidate has described both freewill and determinism and illustrated each explanation for behaviour with appropriate evidence

Section C overview

Section C: Practical applications. Questions in this section require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source. Questions range in size and mark allocation. Total marks for this section = 25.

Question 7 (a)

- 7 (a) Outline the behaviourist perspective in psychology **and** briefly explain how it applies to this article.

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..... [5]

Those who performed well on this question provided accurate outlines of the behaviourist perspective which clearly illustrated the principle that behaviour is learned, and showed how this could be done through the processes of classical conditioning, operant conditioning and observational learning, linking these explicitly to the article. Some candidates needed to develop a greater understanding of the behaviourist perspective so they could go beyond merely identifying such concepts as operant and classical conditioning or positive and negative reinforcement. There were some instances where candidates muddled the processes of classical and operant conditioning, and negative reinforcement and punishment when explaining how bank customers could learn to not overspend.

Question 7 (b)

(b) Briefly describe **two** psychological issues raised by this article.

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- (ii)
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- [4]

Candidates who scored well on this question identified two appropriate psychological issues and applied them appropriately to the article. Some candidates lost marks by simply quoting information from the article without making links to their psychological knowledge. Issues such as operant conditioning, protection of participants and the delay of gratification were often cited.

Question 7 (c)

(c) Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest **two** ways in which young people could be encouraged to save money.

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- [8]

Some candidates provided two clearly different suggestions as to how young people could be encouraged to save money which included extremely effective application of psychological knowledge throughout. The most effective responses were linked to the use of operant conditioning, observational learning (SLT) and delaying gratification. Some suggestions were not clearly explained and included very weak/no application of psychological knowledge. Candidates who provided such responses did not score well.

Exemplar 2

One way young people can be encouraged to save money would be setting up a saving bank account, into which they could be moving money in the ~~bank account~~ and leaving it there. ~~It would be as~~ It would encourage them as they know the money is safe with in their own bank account. Another way ~~was~~ to encourage ~~young~~ young people to save money is giving them goals to achieve. Example would be ~~stop~~ ~~giving~~ ~~to~~ that they have to save up if they want to get new phone or game.

Exemplar 2 illustrates that the candidate needed to show a greater knowledge and understanding of how two ways could be used to encourage saving by young people. The response shows no real application of psychological knowledge though the reference to goal-setting gained credit.

Question 7 (d)

- (d) Evaluate the suggestions you have made in part (c) with reference to issues and debates you have studied in psychology.

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..... [8]

Many candidates did not read the question carefully. The question required them to evaluate the suggestions they had made in Question 7 part (c) **in relation to psychological issues and debates**. Many candidates merely evaluated their previous suggestions and therefore did not answer the question.

Exemplar 3

Saving bank account doesn't have to contain lots of amounts of savings. To start ~~to~~ ~~to~~ encourage the younger people to save up we could start with small amounts of money that is transferred to a bank account like £5 per week. After few weeks the ^{amount of} money could be increase to £10. This could be continued in few months and then we could suggests that the ~~is~~ money that was saved could ~~no~~ ~~to~~ be spend on something this young person wanted all this time. This is positive - punishment technique, where the child can't spend the money until they save up themselves for what they want.

Exemplar 3 illustrates how candidates did not read the question carefully. The candidate has evaluated the suggestions they made in Question 7 part (c) but not in relation to any of the psychological issues or debates identified in the specification.

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