

**A LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **PSYCHOLOGY**

**H567**

For first teaching in 2015

**H567/02 Autumn 2020 series**

## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.



Reports for the Autumn 2020 series will provide a broad commentary about candidate performance, with the aim for them to be useful future teaching tools. As an exception for this series they will not contain any questions from the question paper nor examples of candidate answers.

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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 2 series overview

This series did not see the same range of performance as previous years, with fewer candidates earning the higher end marks, however it was clearly not a typical year. Knowledge and understanding of core studies was a strength, and there were some really good efforts to apply psychological ideas to the source in Section C. Evaluation and analysis of methodology was better than evaluation and analysis of areas and perspectives – the latter being something that our candidates often found challenging.

<b><i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i></b>	<b><i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrated sound evaluation skills</li> <li>• were able to apply their knowledge and understanding to a novel source to good effect</li> <li>• applied their knowledge of research methods explicitly to core studies</li> <li>• were able to draw meaningful comparisons between different perspectives and different studies</li> <li>• showed secure knowledge of different issues and debates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• didn't attempt all questions</li> <li>• had limited knowledge on how to compare different perspectives</li> <li>• demonstrated only a basic knowledge of how psychology can be applied in real life.</li> </ul>

## Section A overview

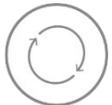
Candidates tended to show relatively accurate knowledge of the core studies and so they performed well on questions requiring descriptions. When they had to be more analytical in their responses, this tended to differentiate between candidates more.

## Section B overview

Most candidates demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of the two perspectives they were questioned about. Some ably made links to concepts such as applications, usefulness and holism. Only a few candidates were able to compare the two perspectives in a meaningful way although most candidates made a good effort to attempt the highest scoring question on the paper.

## Section C overview

Most candidates could make relevant links between what they knew already and the content of the source provided. They were also relatively successful at making suggestions to deal with the issues raised by the source. However, candidates did not find it as easy to evaluate their own suggestions with many of their points being simplistic. There was a tendency for them to focus on practical problems when we were hoping to see more focus on higher level theoretical issues.

	<b>AfL</b>	Provide students with a list of issues that can be used when evaluating their suggestions in Section C. This list can be taken directly from the mark scheme. Not all of the issues will be relevant every time but students can learn and use it as a 'check list' of the kinds of things they should be considering in their response.
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## Themes in candidate responses

Candidates showed good use of psychological terminology and this was often used in an appropriate context. The length of candidates' responses often matched the demands of the question although this was less the case with higher tariff question where candidates tended to offer breadth but not depth. Command words were well understood with most candidates making the effort to address the demands of the questions.

## Comments on responses by question type

### Low tariff questions

These were better answered than higher tariff questions, often because they required knowledge and understanding rather than higher order skills.

### Level of response questions

Questions that required longer responses tended to be structured in the right way but did not always contain relevant content. Points needed to be better developed in the way expected by the mark scheme.

## Source questions

Candidates generally made a good effort with these with some candidates obviously well practised in addressing these types of question.

## Common misconceptions

Common misconceptions on this paper included candidates:

- Believing they could compare core studies on the area they represented or their broad aims. Candidates need to be comparing procedure or findings.
- Assuming all ethical issues apply to every study. They need to be more selective.
- Assuming that different perspectives can be compared on their principles and concepts when looking at similarities and differences.
- Assuming that different perspectives can be compared on issues which apply to all perspectives or areas as they are so broad e.g. they are both useful.

	<b>Misconception</b>	<p>When candidates were comparing the behaviourist and psychoanalytic perspective in the exam, a number of them made points of comparison that pertained to the core studies associated with each perspective rather than considering the perspective themselves e.g. comparing Chaney et al with Freud on factors such as methods used, sample size, control of variables, etc. Although it would be acceptable, for instance, to compare the perspectives on their use of experimentation and use the studies illustratively, this is not the same as writing about the studies without any real reference to the perspectives.</p>
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## Key teaching and learning points – comments on improving performance

- Candidates need to be able to compare approaches on issues and debates which are relatively specific to that pairing e.g. one is holistic while the other is reductionist, both support the nurture side of the debate, both take a scientific approach.
- Candidates need to learn to go beyond practical considerations - such as time and money – when evaluating their suggestions in Section C.
- Candidates need to be able to distinguish between individual, social and cultural diversity rather than discussing them collectively when looking at the contributions of core studies to our understanding.

	<b>OCR support</b>	<p>For support on how to distinguish between individual, social and cultural diversity see <a href="https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/283477-how-the-contemporary-study-changes-our-understanding-of-individual-social-and-cultural-diversity-teacher-guide.pdf">https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/283477-how-the-contemporary-study-changes-our-understanding-of-individual-social-and-cultural-diversity-teacher-guide.pdf</a></p>
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## Guidance on using this paper as a mock

This paper is an appropriate paper to use as a mock as it represents a range of questions that can be asked in any exam. Obviously, the questions will not be repeated and the source is novel but important skills can be practised such as comparing studies, comparing approaches and applying knowledge and understanding. It may be that some questions pertain to studies which have not been covered yet, in which case they can be normally be substituted by a study from the same area.

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