

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

J203

For first teaching in 2017

J203/01 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 1 series overview

J203/01 is one of two examination papers which follow the same structure in terms of sections, skills and patterns of questions. This paper focuses on the topics of Criminal Psychology, Development and Psychological Problems as well as assessing Research Methods through asking candidates to plan and design an investigation.

To do well on this paper, candidates need to have a broad and detailed knowledge of the content, especially with reference to theories and studies. The ability to apply knowledge and understanding to novel sources and scenarios is also important for success. Lastly, candidates' evaluation skills need to be evident and to be effective to achieve the higher marks on this paper.

Candidates who did well on this paper were able to demonstrate the range of psychological skills assessed through this GCSE including mathematical ability. Candidates who did less well often showed limited knowledge of key ideas and found application of understanding a challenge. Their attempts to evaluate sometimes lacked focus or were vague.

<i>Most successful topic/question/set texts</i>	<i>Least successful topic/question/set texts</i>
<p>More successful candidates produced a well-structured response to Question 20 and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of relevant theories as well as the ability to evaluate these to develop a discussion. They also tended to show sound understanding of the principles of neuropsychology by responding appropriately to Questions 4, 11 and 13. Knowledge of key debates also helped candidates to do well and this was most evident in Question 15, which assessed the concepts of determinism and free will.</p>	<p>Candidates who did less well on this paper tended to rely on common sense responses too much, especially in relation to Question 20. They also tended to find Section D difficult. Responses to different questions about their investigation could either be contradictory or overlap leading to a lack of coherency.</p>

Section A overview

Candidates showed sound knowledge of Piaget's and Dweck's theories in this section but were not as knowledgeable about Willingham's.

Question 1 (a), (b) and (c)

1 (a) Identify which of the following is a feature of the sensori-motor stage of cognitive development.

- A animism
- B conservation
- C decentration
- D object permanence

Your answer

[1]

(b) Identify what Piaget meant when he stated that the stages of development are invariant.

- A the stages are not universal
- B the stages can be reversed
- C the stages can occur in any order
- D the stages occur in a fixed order

Your answer

[1]

(c) Identify which of the following is a criticism of Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development.

- A focuses too much on children as individuals
- B ignores the role of nature in development
- C is overly holistic when explaining how the mind develops
- D is too reductionist by over-simplifying the cause of development

Your answer

[1]

Most responses were correct to this question and the least number of errors were made on 1b.

Question 2 (a) and (b)

2

A teacher is working with a group of children aged 7 to 11 years. She notices that they have developed several skills. For example, Abi can focus on more than one aspect of a situation and Marco can place things in rank order. Lucinda now understands that although the appearance of something changes, the quantity does not. The teacher believes this is because of the stage of cognitive development they are in.

Using the source:

(a) Identify the stage of cognitive development the children are in according to Piaget's theory.

..... [1]

(b) Identify the child that is showing the ability to conserve.

..... [1]

Again, most responses were correct, with 2b having more correct responses than 2a. On 2a, pre-operational was the most common incorrect response. Some candidates misunderstood 2b and gave a definition of conservation rather than naming a child from the source.

	AfL	It is important that candidates know and give the full names of Piaget's stages of cognitive development.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 3

3 Choose **two** of the following and place them in the correct order to show the stages of development.

ADOLESCENCE

PRE-NATAL

OLD AGE

..... childhood adulthood [2]

Nearly every candidate earned both marks here.

Question 4

4 Outline how the brain develops and changes in either childhood or adolescence. In your answer you should make reference to brain development and how these changes can affect behaviour.

[3]

- [3]

Those candidates who understood the question were often able to both identify a relevant part of the brain for their chosen stage of development and then explain how it changes or develops within that time. The best responses then linked that change to the development of a behaviour or set of behaviours as required by the question.

	Misconception	Many candidates did not focus on the development of the brain and instead wrote about cognitive development in the named stages. It is important that students can distinguish between mind and brain for this course.
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 5 (a) (i)

5 From Blackwell et al.'s (2007) research study into fixed and growth mindsets:

(a) (i) Describe how fixed or growth mindsets were measured in Study 1.

[2]

[2]

If candidates earned a mark here, it was normally for referencing the use of questionnaires. Some earned the second mark for being specific about how questionnaires were used in the study in particular.

	Misconception	Many candidates suggested that the maths test used in this study were the measure of fixed or growth mindsets, so had muddled the operationalisation of the DV with the operationalisation of the IV.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) There were 198 males and 175 female participants in Study 1.

Calculate the percentage of the sample that were female, expressed to one decimal place. Show your workings.

[3]

The majority of students were able to calculate the right percentage to the right number of decimal places, as well as show their workings which meant many earned all three marks.

Question 5 (b)

(b) Describe **one** finding from the Blackwell et al. (2007) research study into fixed and growth mindsets.

.....
.....
.....

• [2]

Most candidates made some comment about the benefits of growth mindsets but it was not always obvious that this was related specifically to a finding from the study. Most candidates who earned marks, earned 1 mark as their statement of findings was too brief.

Exemplar 1

The study found that at the second time period, What Minded soccer had been a significant predictor of math achievement [2]

[2]

This response shows the level of detail required for 2 marks. If candidates have a number of findings to choose from, they need to understand to choose the more detailed one if there are two or more marks on offer.

Question 6

6

Karen has just qualified as a teacher. One of her students is having difficulties with her studies. The student believes that she is not clever enough to study at A level. Karen is working with her to help her to achieve in her studies.

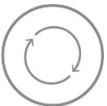
Using the source:

Explain why it is important that Karen knows about fixed and growth mindsets if she is going to help the student.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[3]

Most candidates could correctly identify that Karen's student had a fixed mindset which was worth 1 mark. Some candidates could then go on to suggest how Karen could change the student's mindset with 'praise for effort' being the most common suggestion here. Psychological knowledge was often lacking in responses to this question with too many common sense explanations of how mindsets could be changed.

	AfL	Candidates need to be ready to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts when applying their understanding to a source or similar.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 7 and 8

7 Willingham criticised the theory that students have different ways of learning. Outline **one** way in which Willingham criticised learning styles.

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

8 Outline how Willingham's theory favours nurture over nature.

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

Candidates tended to demonstrate a muddled or vague understanding of Willingham's theory so did not score that well on these two questions.

	AfL	Candidates need to be ready to demonstrate their knowledge of key concepts when applying their understanding to a source or similar.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Section B overview

Candidates were able to deal with data associated with the Psychological Problems topic and to apply their knowledge of theories to good effect. Evaluation of theories was not to the same standard and questions focused on neuropsychology were challenging for a number of candidates.

Question 9 (a)

9 (a) Identify the independent variable in Daniel, Weinberger, Jones et al.'s (1991) study into schizophrenia.

- A whether participants had a history of alcohol and drug use or not
- B whether participants had been given amphetamine or not
- C whether participants had chronic schizophrenia or not
- D whether participants performed on the Wisconsin Card Sorting test or not

Your answer

[1]

(b) Identify which of the following is a criticism of the sample used in Daniel, Weinberger, Jones et al.'s (1991) study.

- A the sample consented to the tests
- B the sample contained both black and white participants
- C the sample contained both males and females
- D the sample was too small

Your answer

[1]

(c) Identify which of the following statements could be a conclusion from Daniel, Weinberger, Jones et al.'s (1991) study.

- A the study did not support either the biological or learning theory
- B the study found support for both the biological and learning theory
- C the study found support for the biological theory
- D the study found support for the learning theory

Your answer

[1]

Most candidates got the correct response for each of the multiple-choice questions, although fewer did on Question 9c.

Question 10 (a)

10 A recent mental health survey done in England showed the following:

Mental health problem	Percentage of people suffering
Generalised anxiety disorder	6.0
Depression	3.3
Phobias	2.4
OCD	1.3
Panic disorder	0.6
Post-traumatic stress disorder	4.4
Mixed anxiety and depression	7.8

Using the data in the source:

(a) Identify the mental health problem least prevalent in England.

..... [1]

The vast majority got this answer right. Candidates had to identify the full term Panic Disorder to gain credit.

Question 10 (b)

(b) Calculate the fraction of people who suffer from generalised anxiety disorder expressed in its lowest possible form. Show your workings.

.....

 [2]

This was correctly answered by most candidates, including evidence of workings.

Question 10 (c)

(c) Explain **one** weakness of using quantitative data to describe mental health problems.

.....

 [2]

Most candidates understood the demand of this question enough to earn at least 1 mark although a number did miss the point of what was being asked and focused on issues like the reliability of data. To earn the second mark, the weakness needed to be clearly applied to the description of mental health problems and this was only evident in a minority of responses.

Exemplar 2

It is not very accurate as mental health cannot be measured using quantitative data. Does not give detailed scientific answers but instead numerical data which is very simplistic to describe such a complex thing. [2]

This response identifies a weakness of the type of data and then makes a decent attempt to apply it to mental health problems by recognising their complexity.

Question 10 (d)

(d) Identify a type of graph you could use to display the data.

Tick **one** of the boxes to show your answer.

scatter diagram

pie chart

[1]

The vast majority of candidates ticked the correct box here (pie chart)

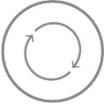
Question 11

11 Describe **one** way in which the brain of someone with schizophrenia has been found to be different from the brain of someone without schizophrenia.

.....

 [4]

Most candidates were able to earn 2 of the marks here demonstrating some level of knowledge and understanding. There was a tendency for candidates to focus on more than one area of difference – possibly to add detail but this strategy does not work when one way has been specified. In these cases, examiners assess the first response only.

	AfL	When candidates have a number of possible ways to respond to a question as above, they need to select the way that is going to maximise marks. In this question there were 4 marks on offer so often candidates that focused on dopamine were able to go into more detail than those that chose to write about volume of brain.
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 12

12 Describe **one** criticism of the biological theory of schizophrenia.

.....

 [2]

Marks given on this question were reasonably evenly distributed. The best responses offered well developed criticisms which were often related clearly to explanations of schizophrenia although more generic criticisms could also earn both marks if expanded on. There was evidence that some candidates did not really understand what is meant by a criticism of a theory, although this was rare.

	Misconception	A popular criticism was the idea that biological theory is too reductionist. However, many candidates' understanding of this limited them to one mark as they went on to suggest that this means that one theory ignores another theory (which is of course what all theories tend to do). Candidates need to understand that if they use this criticism, they are expected to show that they understand that it means a theory is oversimplifying a complex issue or concept.
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Question 13

13 Describe **one** way in which the development of neuropsychology has aided the study of schizophrenia or clinical depression.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

[3]

Good responses often focused on the value of studying the brain and what it shows about the neurological structures and/or functions associated with mental health disorders. Sometimes this was linked to the development of drugs, other times to establishing cause and effect. Most candidates attempted this question and did so with varying degrees of success.

Exemplar 3

The development of neuropsychology has aided the study of schizophrenia by developing anti-psychotics which they will take and is supposed to balance out the dopamine so they aren't fully hallucinating or having other symptoms. [3]

This response has three clear parts to it, which are linked and are all relevant to the question asked.

Question 14 (a), (b) and (c)

14

Angela has recently had a serious operation. She is worried that she will not get better in time to go on a planned holiday to Australia. As the day of the flight gets closer, she becomes more anxious and depressed.

The ABC Model is a psychological theory that can be applied to clinical depression.

From the source:

(a) Identify an example of 'A' using the ABC Model.

..... [1]

(b) Identify an example of 'B' using the ABC Model.

..... [1]

(c) Identify an example of 'C' using the ABC Model.

..... [1]

The vast majority of candidates applied their knowledge to the source to good effect and earned all three marks. A common error was for candidates to give their own examples rather than using the source.

Question 15

15 Outline how the ABC Model of clinical depression ignores determinism.

.....

 [3]

This was a challenging a question but a predictable question given the link between the ABC model and determinism on the specification. Three mark responses tended to acknowledge the role of free will according to the model, applied this to depression by referencing how people choose to think about events, and then showed how other external or internal factors are ignored in the explanation.

	AfL	<p>Every theory on the specification has a specified point or issue which needs to be considered when evaluating that theory. It is this content that allows questions like Question 15 to be asked. Candidates should be ready and prepared for this.</p>
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Section C overview

Candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the Criminal Psychology topic both through the short response questions and the one requiring an extended response. Candidates were less consistent in terms of evaluation skills which represented a range in the extended response.

Question 16 (a), (b) and (c)

16 (a) According to Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theory:

Identify which of the following are characteristics of extraversion.

- A** angry and anxious
- B** confident and sociable
- C** impulsive and aggressive
- D** shy and quiet

Your answer

[1]

(b) According to Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theory:

Identify how personality traits are associated with criminal behaviour.

- A** criminals score high on extraversion
- B** criminals score high on neuroticism
- C** criminals score high on psychotism
- D** criminals score high on all three

Your answer

[1]

(c) Identify which of the following best represents Eysenck's Criminal Personality Theory.

- A** Biological area
- B** Cognitive area
- C** Learning area
- D** Psychodynamic area

Your answer

[1]

Most of the responses to each multiple-choice question were correct. Parts a and b were particularly well answered but candidates were less clear on the area that best represents Eysenck's theory.

Question 17

17 There are many different types of crime.

Draw lines to match the type of crime with the correct definition.

Type of crime	Definition
Violent offences	Crimes where capital or belongings are acquired through illegal means.
Acquisitive offences	Criminal acts that cause harassment, alarm or distress to people who do not share a home with the perpetrator.
Anti-social offences	Crimes that result in physical harm or death.
	Crimes involving trading in or using illegal substances.

[3]

The vast majority of candidates scored full marks.

Question 18

18 Crime is often measured using questionnaires. Outline **one** problem with measuring crime in this way.

.....

 [2]

Most candidates were able to correctly identify a problem of using questionnaires with some successfully relating this to the measurement of crime specifically.

Question 19 (a), (b) and (c)

19

Joe has committed a crime. As part of his punishment he has been ordered to work as a volunteer at a charity shop. Joe is feeling remorseful so has also asked if he can meet with the person he stole from to return the stolen goods. His probation officer thinks this is a good idea so he can apologise for his actions.

Using the source:

(a) Identify the phrase associated with restorative justice.

..... [1]

(b) Identify the phrase associated with community sentence.

..... [1]

(c) Identify **one** other form of punishment Joe could be given.

..... [1]

Most candidates were able to use the source to demonstrate their knowledge of the concepts referred to in parts a and b, and then to suggest a form of punishment other than community sentencing.

Question 20

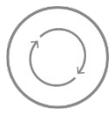
20* Use your knowledge and understanding from across the psychology course to explain how far you agree with the following statement:

'It is really difficult to decide if a person's behaviour develops through nature, or if it develops through life experiences and interaction with the environment (nurture).'

In your answer, you should refer to theories of criminality and **at least one** other area of psychology

[13]

Nearly all candidates attempted this question which is designed to be synoptic and assess a breadth of knowledge and understanding. Candidates chose to write about social learning theory of criminal behaviour and Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality in approximately equal amounts with some candidates covering both in their response. Here, candidates often demonstrated sound knowledge and understanding of theory for which they earned AO1 marks. Theories of development and theories of psychological problems were often included to help to further discuss the nature/nurture debate and these were appropriate choices. Again, sound knowledge and understanding was demonstrated. While candidates' description of theories was good, evaluation through discussion was not as strong. Most candidates attempted a level of evaluation but this was not always relevant. Many candidates evaluated theories by covering all criticisms of the theory and those relating to the nature/nurture debate were credited with AO3 marks. The best responses made clear reference to the quote and centred their response on this.

	AfL	<p>Candidates need to be aware that the synoptic question on any paper will require them to refer to a study or theory from the topic area associated with the section the question is in but also a theory or study from another topic area – normally referred to as ‘another area of psychology’. If a candidate doesn’t do this and only focuses on the area specified this will limit their AO1 and AO3 marks to the bottom band.</p>
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Section D overview

Most candidates showed some ability to apply what they have learnt in Research Methods to plan their own investigation. Those candidates who used the planning space tended to produce better and more coherent responses.

Question 21

You have been asked to carry out an **experiment** to investigate whether learning is affected by time of day. The theory is that people will take longer to learn new things at different times of the day.

Use this space to plan your investigation.

21 State an alternative hypothesis for your investigation.

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

Candidates tended to be quite divided on this response. Many responses suggested hypothesis writing is a well-practised skill for some candidates, while others were less successful with common errors being to offer alternative hypotheses, to predict a correlation or to phrase a hypothesis as a question.

Question 22 (a) and (b)

22 (a) State the dependent variable for your investigation.

Dependent variable [1]

(b) Explain how you will measure your dependent variable in your investigation.

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

Most candidates were able to identify the dependent variable in their investigation although a common error was to identify the independent variable instead. Those that correctly identified the dependent variable were normally able to offer a creditworthy explanation of how they would measure it. The more detailed and clear explanations tended to earn two further marks.

Question 23 (a) and (b)

23 (a) Identify **one** possible extraneous variable that may affect your investigation.

..... [1]

(b) Explain how you would control the extraneous variable you have identified in (a).

.....
.....
.....
.....

[2]

Most candidates were able to offer a feasible extraneous variable showing good understanding of this concept, and most were then able to suggest a way of controlling this – normally through use of standardisation. Explanations tended to be brief so often only one mark was given instead of the full two marks available.

Exemplar 4

(b) Explain how you would control the extraneous variable you have identified in (a).

I would use the same subject, the same teacher to teach the new information and use an repeated the independent design so that the people will not have already been taught the new information at a previous time in the day. [2]

This response suggests standardisation using the word 'same' and then applies this to a number of factors relevant to the investigation and the identified extraneous variable (what is studied).

Question 24

24 Outline the procedure you would use in your investigation.

[4]

[4]

The best responses used key terminology to outline their procedure, such as naming the type of sample and type of experimental design. Candidates also used this as an opportunity to write about other controls they would use besides the one identified in Question 23. In simple terms, the more detailed this outline was, the more marks a candidate earned.

	AfL	Candidates tended to write about features in their outline of the procedure that had been provided in other responses in this section, e.g. how the DV would be measured. Examiners are checking for repetition to make sure that the same detail is not credited. Candidates need to be supported to make sure they plan responses carefully to avoid repetition of details when responding to questions in this section.
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Question 25

25 Explain how you would deal with **one** ethical issue in your investigation.

.....

 [2]

This question was generally well answered, with relevant ethical issues identified and done so in the context of the investigation for the second mark.

	Misconception	A significant number of candidates confused ethical issues with issues of ethnicity on this question and instead wrote about the sample being culturally biased and how this could be addressed.
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Question 26

26 Describe **one** weakness of using an experiment for your investigation.

.....

 [2]

Candidates who identified a common weakness of experiments (e.g. low ecological validity, demand characteristics, lack of construct validity) and then applied them to the investigation itself earned the 2 marks quite easily. A lot of candidates misread the question and identified a general weakness of the investigation they had designed rather than one pertaining to the experimental method.

Question 27

27 Explain how you would calculate the mean score to describe your results.

.....

 [2]

Most candidates earned both marks by demonstrating a clear understanding of how a mean is calculated. This could be done in the context of their investigation or through a more general explanation of the calculation.

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