

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

PSYCHOLOGY

J203

For first teaching in 2017

J203/02 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

J203/02 Studies and applications in psychology is the second of two examined components for the OCR GCSE Psychology qualification. This component focuses on:

- Social Influence
- Memory
- Sleep and Dreaming
- Research Methods

The paper appeared accessible with most candidates attempting all the questions. Candidates who did well on this paper showed good knowledge of the studies, theories, key concepts and terms and were able to use source material effectively to give contextualised responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to pay attention to and use the command words in questions to guide their response. For example, Question 9 required candidates to evaluate the way Bickman (1974) carried out his research and many candidates were seen to describe the research with very few focussing on evaluation alone. Additionally, candidates are encouraged to use the number of marks available for questions as guidance for the level of elaboration required. For example, Question 9 was worth 6 marks, as such merely identifying points is insufficient for an extended response.

Furthermore, candidates are encouraged to carefully read and use the source material. Many candidates did not appreciate Question 10 (b) required the use of the source and did not gain full credit by offering generic responses. In Section D, Research methods, the scenario is provided for context and candidates are required to refer to the source in their responses. In those questions requiring explicit contextualisation; Question 21, Question 22(a/b) and Question 24, candidates often did not use the source material thus only achieving partial marks for generic responses.

When candidates are using the additional pages, clearly labelling the questions in the margin is essential. On many occasions, there was no indication that additional space has been used or the incorrect question numbers were used.

Key point call out

Centres should guide students to be mindful of command verbs and the number of marks available in order to structure their responses.

Key point call out

Candidates should make sure, if they are using additional pages that they clearly label in the margin the question they are answering.

Section A overview

Sleep and Dreaming. Total marks for this section = 24

Question 2

- 2 Explain how the Activation Synthesis Theory of Dreaming is criticised for being reductionist.

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

[2]

Many candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of reductionism, although fewer were able to explain this in relation to the Activation Synthesis Theory. Those candidates who achieved full marks provided specific knowledge of the theory.

Question 3

- 3 Give two functions of sleep.

1.
.....
.....
2.
.....
.....

[2]

Many candidates were able to identify two separate functions of sleep. When full marks were not achieved it was often due to candidates giving interchangeable functions or incorrectly identifying stages of sleep.

Question 4

- 4 There are a number of stages of sleep.

Look at the following diagram.

Draw lines to match the definition to its correct stage of sleep. One stage does not have a matching definition. [3]

Definition

The stage before REM sleep when people are in a deep sleep.

The stage of light, drowsy sleep where people can be stirred quite easily.

The stage where people lose consciousness and brain waves begin to slow down.

Stage of Sleep

Stage 1

Stage 2

Stage 3

Stage 4

A very well answered question.

Question 5 (a)

5

A psychologist wanted to investigate the meaning of dreams. To do this, she carried out a study using a series of interviews in which she had conversations with people about their common dreams and their recent experiences. She concluded that what actually happened in dreams was a symbol of deeper emotions the person was feeling. For example, one of her participants, named David, often dreamt about walking around naked. The psychologist related this to an anxiety the person had about letting out a secret he had been trusted with.

Using the source:

- (a) Name the type of interview used in the study.

..... [1]

Many candidates could not recognise that the interview was unstructured. Candidates are encouraged to read the source carefully and refer to it as guidance for these types of questions.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) Identify the phrase that explains the manifest content of dreams.

..... [1]

Many candidates could not identify 'what actually happened (in dreams)' as the correct response.

Question 5 (c)

- (c) Identify the example of latent content in David's dreams.

..... [1]

Some candidates could not identify 'his anxiety about letting out a secret' as an example of latent content in David's dreams.

Question 5 (d)

- (d) Write an open question that the psychologist could have used in her study.

.....
..... [1]

Lots of appropriate open questions were seen. Some candidates offered a statement instead of a question or mistook closed questions for open. Others provided generic open questions unrelated to the context of the source.

Question 5 (e)

- (e) Outline one strength of collecting qualitative data in this study.

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

Many candidates identified a strength of qualitative data, fewer candidates were able to explain the strength in context of the study in the source.

Question 6

- 6 Describe two criticisms of the Williams et al. (1992) study into the bizarreness in dreams.

1.

.....

.....

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2.

.....

.....

44

[4]

Many candidates demonstrated a thorough understanding of Williams et al. giving appropriate criticisms with specific detail from the study to illustrate. Some candidates relied on generic evaluation, referring to reductionism, bias, subjectivity with no elaboration as to how or why these are a criticism of William's study specifically.

Question 7

- 7 Although Pawel works long hours, he finds it difficult to get to sleep at night as he suffers from sleep onset insomnia.

Using your knowledge of psychological research, outline ways in which Paweł could be helped to get a better night's sleep.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

[4]

Many candidates were able to give appropriate examples of ways Pawel could be helped to get a better night's sleep. To achieve full marks, candidates were required to identify one way to improve sleep from sleep hygiene, changes to the physical environment and relaxation techniques and explain how this could be achieved thus giving an elaborated response. Many candidates identified several ways Pawel could be helped but did not go beyond the mere identification. These responses achieved partial marks.

Exemplar 1

Paul could use relaxation techniques to help ~~as~~ anxiety fall asleep. For example deep breathing ~~and~~ relaxing ~~can~~ ~~cause~~ his muscles. Sleep hygiene can also help him ~~sleep~~ ~~onset~~ ~~insomnia~~ fall asleep. For example he ~~could~~ should ensure his room ~~is~~ is dark and at a comfortable temperature. In addition, he should avoid consuming coffee, alcohol or nicotine before sleeping.

Exemplar one identifies relaxation techniques and sleep hygiene as two ways to improve sleep and elaborates on both to explain how this could be achieved. This response achieved 4 marks.

Section B overview

Social influence. Total marks for this section = 24.

Question 9

- 9 Evaluate the way that Bickman (1974) carried out his research into obedience.

.....

 [6]

Many candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the command word 'evaluate'. Many candidates either gave detailed descriptions of Bickman (1974) alone, or with minimal, basic evaluation at the end of the response. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to identify appropriate evaluation points, justify them in context of Bickman's study then consider their effects / implications.

Exemplar 2

Bickman had 4 white male experimenters... dress up as either a civilian, a milk man or a guard. They then went into different situations eg. give someone a dime, move to a different side of the bus stop or pick up litter. He collected how the costume would effect a rated of obedience. He found there was no difference in rates between the civilian or milkman. But there was a increase in obedience for the guard. He used opportunities meaning the people were in the same place which could mean they are all [6]

one type of person. He used 4 white males which could have acted as an extraneous variable because if it were a lady or a person of different ethnicity the results could have been different. It was also a field experiment meaning there could have been extraneous variables making the sample more or less likely to be ~~comparatively~~ obedient.

Exemplar 2: Here we can see a common example where the student has not fully followed the command term. The response focuses on describing Bickman's study and makes brief reference to evaluation at the end. This response achieves 3 marks (out of a maximum of 6) for identifying two points (2 marks), and justifying one in context (1 mark).

Question 10 (a)

10

Cerys thinks her Science teacher, Mr Singh, is very strict. She is very well behaved in his lessons, and always does her homework on time. She has seen how cross Mr Singh gets when other students don't do as they're told. She will do anything to avoid being told off by him because, when he is angry, he is really scary.

Using the source:

- (a) Name the authority figure.

..... [1]

A very well answered question.

Question 10 (b)

- (b) Explain the effect of authority on obedience.

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

[2]

Many candidates were able to explain how the concept of authority is linked to power/status/the ability or threat to punish/fear of consequences. Few candidates appreciated that this should have been done in the context of the source, as this was part (b) of a question that asked candidates to 'use the source'. The "using the source" instruction should have been applied to both part a and part b for this question.

Question 11

- 11 Using an example, explain what is meant by deindividuation.

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

[3]

Most candidates were able to achieve on this question by either demonstrating an understanding that deindividuation involves the loss of identity or explaining the circumstances under which it occurs (e.g. group/crowd). Fewer candidates offered a relevant example to illustrate the concept. Some common errors seen were responses referring to conformity or the loss of responsibility in isolation.

Question 12 (b)

- (b) The NatCen (2011) study found there were different categories of people involved in riots including:

- watchers
- rioters
- looters

Choose **one** of the above categories and outline what the findings showed about them.

Category:

What the findings showed about this category of people:

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

[2]

Many candidates appeared to misinterpret what this question was asking them to do. Many relied on tautological responses stating, 'watchers watched the riots' or 'looters looted while the riots took place'. These responses did not demonstrate knowledge of what the findings showed about them as required by the question. Those candidates who answered this question well showed knowledge of the categories and sub-categories and were therefore able to outline their selected category and describe at least one of the sub-categories.

Question 13

- 13 Outline how the hippocampal volume of the brain is associated with dispositional explanations of social influence.

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

[2]

Many candidates gave excellent responses to this question. Common errors included referring to the size of the hippocampus or confusing volume with high/low self-esteem.

Question 14

- 14 A researcher observed the amount of social activity that occurred in a workplace over one day. He counted 60 pro-social acts and 15 anti-social acts.

Calculate the ratio of pro-social to anti-social acts expressed in its lowest possible form. Show your workings.

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

[2]

A well answered question. Candidates are encouraged to show all their workings as in this question, 1 mark was available for this. Candidates should take care to read and follow all instruction in questions if they are to gain full marks.

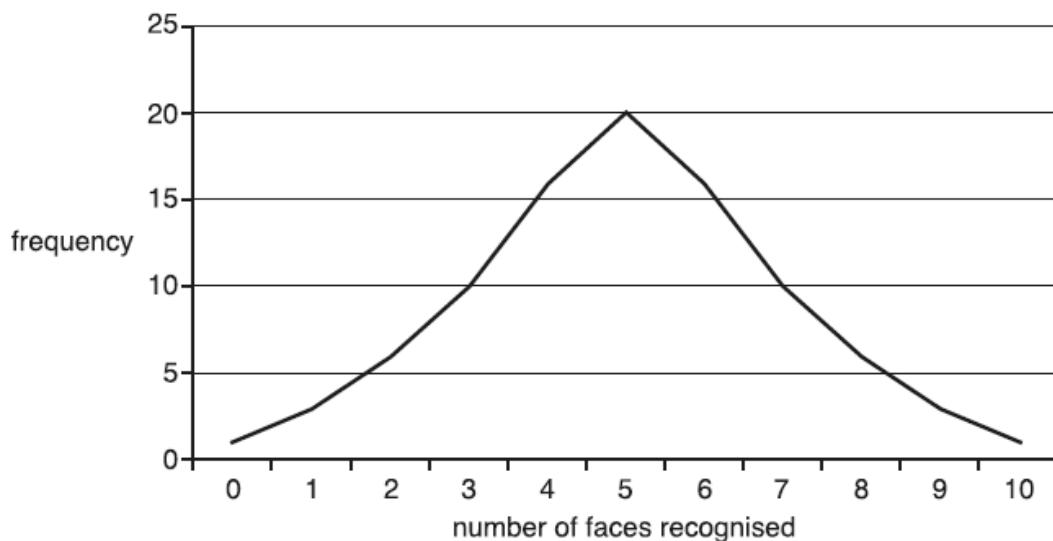
Section C overview

Memory. Total marks for this section = 24.

Question 16 (a)

- 16 The following line graph shows the number of faces recognised in a memory experiment.

A line graph to show the number of faces recognised.



- (a) Name the type of distribution shown in this graph.

..... [1]

Many candidates could not recognise the graph as an example of a normal distribution.

Question 16 (b)

- (b) Give the modal number of faces recognised.

..... [1]

Most candidates gave the correct modal number of faces.

Question 17 (a)

17

The following conversation took place between three students who were discussing their exams.

Ivan: I'm really poor at remembering stuff in the first place. I forget it almost as soon as I've heard or read it.

Kane: My problem is remembering things over time. I can revise for hours at night but then can't recall the information the next day when I'm in the exam.

Samuel: I find it really hard to remember something if I find it boring. That's why I don't do so well in geography exams.

Using the source:

- (a) Name the student who has a problem with his short-term memory.

..... [1]

A well answered question.

Question 17 (b)

- (b) Name the student who has a problem with his long-term memory.

..... [1]

A well answered question.

Question 17 (c)

- (c) Outline how Kane could use cues to help him recall what he has revised.

.....
.....
.....
..... [2]

Some candidates gave examples of an appropriate cue in the context of either revising or doing examinations and were able to show that this would trigger/jog the individual's memory. Some candidates gave non-feasible suggestions or did not demonstrate an understanding of cues.

Question 18

18 Describe **one** criticism of the Multi-store model of memory.

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

[2]

Many candidates explained that the model focused too much on the role of rehearsal because certain memories, such as traumatic or notable events, can go into long term memory without having to be rehearsed. Some candidates were able to identify an appropriate criticism of the Multi-store model of memory such as reductionism to achieve partial marks.

Question 19

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

"Questionnaires are useful for researching people."

In your answer, refer to the use of questionnaires in the Braun et al. (2002) study into reconstructive memory and **at least one** other study which has used questionnaires. [13]

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

This question required candidates to show knowledge of the use of questionnaires in Braun et al. (2002) and at least one other study which has used questionnaires and evaluate their usefulness in researching people. Candidates who performed well on this question knew which studies, in addition to Braun et al. used questionnaires, were able to describe how and why they were administered, the types of questions/rating scales that were used and the type of data that was generated. They were then able to evaluate the use of questionnaires in relation to Braun et al. and at least one other appropriate study, contextualising the evaluation with knowledge of the studies. Weaker responses showed little knowledge or understanding of Braun et al. study and/or referring to studies which used alternative methods, such as Freud, NatCen, Piaget and Wilson. These responses often relied on generic evaluation of questionnaires.

Exemplar 3

The Braun et al. study into reconstructive memory used questionnaires in order to establish the effect of advertising on memory. A questionnaire called the 'Life Events Inventory' was given on week one. Most of the questions were there to distract the participants, but one was the target question, which asked about whether or not they had ever been to a Disney park and shook hands with a cartoon character. The participants were asked to rate on a scale of 0 to 100 how sure they were that this had happened to them, with 0 being definitely didn't happen and 100 being definitely did happen. They also completed several distraction tasks which aimed to reduce demand characteristics if they figured out what the aim of the study was. They then came back the second week and were shown an advert. Half of participants saw a Disney advert, which included footage of someone shaking hands with a Disney character, and they were asked to imagine themselves in that situation. The researcher then came in looking panicked and claimed that there had been a problem coding their results from the Life Events Inventory, so they had to complete the questionnaire again.

The research found that 9.0% of those in the Disney condition showed an increase in their confidence that it had happened to them, compared to 4.7% in the control group.

A strength of using questionnaires in this study is that participants are unlikely to display social desirability due to the nature of the question. People are unlikely to want to change their score for this particular question, so that gives it fairly high validity and makes their use quite useful for determining the effect of advertising on memory.

Heaven's study into delinquency also used questionnaires to establish the causes of criminal behaviour. It was a longitudinal study that looked at ^{adolescents} children from several Catholic schools in Australia. They were given questionnaires 2 years apart to find out about any criminal behaviour that they had participated in. The independent variable was how highly they scored on the questionnaire determining their

Self-esteem and levels of psychotism and the dependent variable was the criminal behaviour that they were involved in. Heaven found that psychotism was the best predictor for criminal behaviour.

The main weakness of the use of questionnaires in this study is social desirability. The children may not have been willing adolescents may not have wanted to admit to crimes that they had committed if they were ashamed, or some may even exaggerate what they had done to make themselves appear 'cooler'. The study is therefore not completely valid, so their findings may not be true. The researchers tried to counteract this by giving each participant a number so they weren't named, but this is unlikely to make much of a difference as many adolescents would still feel self-conscious about writing down what they had done.

In conclusion, I think that questionnaires can provide incredibly useful, in-depth information, although because of social desirability, they will almost never be completely valid.

Exemplar 3 illustrates an excellent response. This candidate demonstrates a very good level of knowledge and understanding of both Braun et al. and Heaven (1996) and evaluates the usefulness of questionnaires using the studies to provide contextualisation. This response achieved full marks.

Section D overview

Research methods. Total marks for this section = 18.

Question 20

A psychologist investigated whether the length of a school lesson affects how well students concentrate. She observed a number of classes across local secondary schools where the length of lesson varied from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. Lessons were observed via a secret camera which the teachers had consented to but the students were not aware of. Every lesson was observed by the psychologist and her assistant who both rated each lesson for how well a class concentrated, with 10 indicating very high levels of concentration and 1 indicating very low levels. They were based in a separate room in the school when they did this.

The results from the study are shown in the table below.

Lesson duration (mins)	40	45	50	55	60
Median rating for concentration	6	6.5	7.5	6	5

Using the source:

20 What type of observation was used to collect the data?

Tick one of the boxes below to show your answer.

Controlled observation Natural observation

[1]

A very well answered question with most candidates recognising the observation as natural.

Question 21

21 Explain whether the observation was participant or non-participant.

.....

 [2]

Many candidates were able to identify that the observation was non-participant. Fewer candidates were able to explain the method in context of the source demonstrating little understanding of what a non-participant observation is or confusing it with a covert observation.

Question 22 (a)

- 22 (a) Explain why the observation was an example of a covert observation.

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

[2]

Many candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge as to why the observation was covert by explaining that the students were unaware that they were being observed. Fewer candidates were able to explain this in relation to the source by saying that the observation was conducted undercover / using a hidden/secret camera.

Question 22 (b)

- (b) Explain **one** strength and **one** weakness of using a covert observation for this study.

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

[4]

Many candidates were able to identify a strength and weakness pertaining to the use of a covert observation. For full marks, both the strength and weakness needed to be contextualised to the study in the source. Fewer candidates were able to do this.

Question 23

- 23 The psychologist collected primary data.

State what is meant by primary data.

.....
.....

[1]

Many candidates were able to state that primary data is first-hand/ data gathered by the researcher themselves.

Question 24

- 24 Explain why the psychologist had an assistant doing the ratings with her in this study.

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

[3]

To achieve on this question, candidates were required to demonstrate knowledge that inter-rater reliability is achieved through agreement / consistency between observers, to produce increased validity / reduced bias in context of the observation in the source (concentration). Many candidates did not go beyond suggesting that having an assistant would reduce bias.

Question 25

- 25 The psychologist calculated the median rating for each length of lesson.

Outline how a median score is calculated.

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

[2]

Most candidates gave excellent descriptions of how the data needs to be organised numerically and the middle score is selected. When errors were made, descriptions of the mean were commonly seen.

Question 26

- 26 Using the data in the source, suggest conclusions that can be drawn about the effect of lesson length on concentration levels.

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

[3]

In order to achieve full marks on this question, candidates were required to give two valid conclusions and evidence use of data from the source to support either conclusion. Many candidates did not demonstrate the ability to draw conclusions. While many were able to cite a result, these were often not supported by evidence from the table. Few candidates showed little / no ability to read a table of results or misinterpreted the findings entirely referring to correlations or no interpretation at all.

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