



General Certificate of Education
January 2010
Advanced Level Examination

Psychology (Specification A)

PSYA4

**Unit 4 Psychopathology, Psychology in Action
and Research Methods**

Wednesday 3 February 2010 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- a 16-page answer book.

Time allowed

- 2 hours

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Examining Body** for this paper is AQA. The **Paper Reference** is PSYA4.
- In Section A, answer **one** question. You should attempt **all** parts of the question you choose. Where appropriate, refer to theories and/or studies.
- In Section B, answer **one** question. You should attempt **all** parts of the question you choose. Where appropriate, refer to theories and/or studies, approaches, issues and debates.
- In Section C, answer **the** question. You should attempt **all** parts of the question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 85.
- You are reminded of the need to use good English and clear presentations in your answers. Quality of written communication will be assessed in Questions 1–6. Questions 1–6 should be answered in continuous prose.

There are no questions printed on this page

SECTION A: PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Answer **one** question from **Section A**. You should answer **all** parts of the question you choose.

Where appropriate, refer to theories and/or studies.

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 1 ‘Therapies can be time-consuming and, in some cases, uncomfortable for the client. It is, therefore, very important to offer the most appropriate and effective type of treatment.’

Outline and evaluate **two or more** therapies used in the treatment of schizophrenia.
(9 marks + 16 marks)

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 2 (a) Outline clinical characteristics of depression. (5 marks)
- (b) Explain issues associated with the classification **and/or** diagnosis of depression. (10 marks)
- (c) Outline and evaluate **one** biological therapy used in the treatment of depression. (4 marks + 6 marks)

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 3 (a) Outline **one** psychological explanation and **one** biological explanation for **either** phobic disorders **or** obsessive compulsive disorder. (9 marks)
- (b) Evaluate explanations for **either** phobic disorders **or** obsessive compulsive disorder. (16 marks)

Turn over for the next section

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SECTION B: PSYCHOLOGY IN ACTION

Answer **one** question from **Section B**. You should attempt **all** parts of the question you choose.

Where appropriate, refer to theories and/or studies, approaches, issues and debates.

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 4 (a) ‘Content analysis has shown that many video games have violent themes. Many of these games are aimed at adolescents. There is a growing concern that such games encourage violent behaviour in the young people who play them.’
- (i) Explain some of the difficulties of conducting research into the effects of playing video games. *(5 marks)*
- (ii) Discuss what psychological research has told us about some of the effects of video games on young people. *(5 marks + 5 marks)*
- (b) Discuss how social psychology explains the attraction of celebrity. *(4 marks + 6 marks)*

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 5 (a) A recent large survey on behalf of the Gambling Commission provided a number of interesting findings about gambling behaviour in Great Britain. For example, 57% of the population had gambled on the National Lottery Draw in 2007, although the rate of problem gambling in the adult population was only about 0.6%.
- (i) Explain some of the difficulties of gathering data about problem gambling. *(5 marks)*
- (ii) Outline and evaluate **one** explanation of gambling addiction. *(4 marks + 6 marks)*
- (b) ‘The relapse rate for smokers in the first three months after trying to give up is estimated at 70%.’

Discuss reasons why relapse occurs in people with addictive behaviour.

(5 marks + 5 marks)

Total for this question: 25 marks

- 6 (a) A researcher wanted to test the ability of a known ‘psychic healer’. Ten volunteers suffering from chronic back pain were selected through newspaper adverts. The volunteers were all given a questionnaire which rated their belief in psychic healing and another questionnaire which rated their levels of pain. They were then randomly assigned to either a treatment group or a control group.

Afterwards, all the volunteers filled in the pain questionnaire again. The researcher found that there was no significant effect on pain relief as a result of psychic healing.

Answer the following questions, using your knowledge about research into psychic healing.

- (i) The researcher wanted to know whether there was a correlation between belief in psychic healing and improvement in pain ratings. What statistical test could the researcher use? Justify your answer. *(2 marks)*
- (ii) Outline **one** ethical issue in this study and suggest how the researcher could have dealt with it. *(3 marks)*
- (iii) ‘It is interesting why, even today in the modern age of science and technology, some people still believe in psychic healing.’

Discuss factors underlying belief in psychic healing. *(5 marks + 5 marks)*

- (b) Outline and evaluate psychological research into belief in out-of-body experiences **and/or** near-death experiences. *(4 marks + 6 marks)*

Turn over for the next section

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SECTION C: PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

You should answer **all** parts of this question.

Total for this question: 35 marks

- 7 A psychologist was interested in testing a new treatment for people with eating disorders. She put up adverts in several London clinics to recruit participants. Thirty people came forward and they were all given a structured interview by a trained therapist. The therapist then calculated a numerical score for each participant as a measure of their current functioning, where 50 indicates excellent, healthy functioning and zero indicates failure to function adequately. The psychologist then randomly allocated half the participants to a treatment group and half to a no-treatment group. After eight weeks, each participant was re-assessed using a structured interview conducted by the same trained therapist, and given a new numerical score. The trained therapist did not know which participants had been in either group.

For each participant, the psychologist calculated an improvement score by subtracting the score at the start of the study from the score after eight weeks. The greater the number, the better the improvement.

Table 1: Median and range of improvement scores for the treatment group and for the no-treatment group

	Treatment group	No-treatment group
Median	10.9	2.7
Range	2.1	0.8

- (a) With reference to the data in **Table 1**, outline what the findings of this investigation seem to show about the effectiveness of the treatment. *(2 marks)*
- (b) The psychologist used a statistical test to find out whether there was a significant difference in improvement between the ‘treatment’ and ‘no-treatment’ groups. She found a significant difference at the 5% level for a one-tailed test ($p \leq 0.05$).

Identify an appropriate statistical test for analysing the participants’ scores. Explain why it would be a suitable test to use in this study. *(4 marks)*

- (c) What is the likelihood of the psychologist having made a Type 1 error in this study? Explain your answer. *(2 marks)*
- (d) The psychologist assumed that improvements in the treatment group were a direct result of the new type of treatment. Suggest **two** other reasons why people in the treatment group might have improved. *(4 marks)*
- (e) The psychologist could have used self-report questionnaires to assess the participants instead of using interviews with the therapist. Explain **one** advantage and **one** disadvantage of using self-report questionnaires in this study rather than interviews. *(4 marks)*

- (f) The psychologist needed to obtain informed consent from her participants. Write a brief consent form which would be suitable for this study. You should include some details of what participants could expect to happen in the study and how they would be protected. *(5 marks)*
- (g) What is meant by reliability? Explain how the reliability of the scores in this study could be checked. *(4 marks)*
- (h) The psychologist noticed that female and male participants seemed to have responded rather differently to the treatment.

She decided to test the following hypothesis:

Female patients with an eating disorder will show greater improvement in their symptoms after treatment with the new therapy than male patients.

She used a new set of participants and, this time, used self-report questionnaires instead of interviews with a therapist.

Imagine that you are the psychologist and are writing up the report of the study. Write an appropriate methods section which includes reasonable detail of design, participants, materials and procedure. Make sure that there is enough detail to allow another researcher to carry out this study in the future. *(10 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page