



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

Psychology B

PSYB3

(Specification 2185)

Unit 3: Child Development and Applied Options

Report on the Examination

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Unit 3: (PSYB3) Child Development and Applied Options

General

The continuous numbering system was used for the second time this session and the majority of candidates indicated the question numbers correctly in their answer booklet. It is equally important, however, that candidates leave a space of **at least two** lines between their answers to each question which was not the case on many scripts. Teachers must impress upon their candidates that adequate spacing and clear numbering are absolutely essential.

The most popular of the Child Development topics were Social Development and Cognitive Development. Of the Options topics, Schizophrenia and Mood Disorders was the most frequently answered. As in the summer series, candidates seemed somewhat unprepared to respond to research methods questions in the Child Development topics. Effective responses to these questions require close attention to the detail of the question and very specific application of knowledge. For example, questions 02 and 06 required candidates to focus on 'children's friendships' and 'very young infants' respectively in order to gain full marks. As always, it is pertinent to note that candidates must be prepared to tailor their material to the question instead of writing formulaic pre-prepared answers. Many responses to question 08 were less than successful because candidates simply did not focus on the issue of differences between the two stages. As in previous series, there was a tendency to present lists of undeveloped or unexplained evaluative points which are so implicit as to offer nothing of value. Whilst it may be necessary for text books to present information in this manner, candidates should be reminded that their task is to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge and understanding through thorough explanation. Overall though, it was pleasing to see evidence of sound knowledge and effective preparation on many scripts; very few candidates omitted to answer questions from their chosen topic areas and there were many well balanced scripts where candidates gained high marks in all three topic areas.

Section A Child Development

Topic Social Development

Question 01

Most candidates were able to specify the outcome of the study but many failed to include any reference to psychological theory or evidence in order to access the second mark.

Question 02

The modal mark for this question was two. Most candidates could evaluate the observational method, but there were few explicit applications to the context of children's friendships. Incorporating a phrase such as '...when observing children's friendships' is not sufficient application.

Question 03

This question differentiated well. Many candidates could offer a valid consequence but rather fewer could provide evidence. Fewer still made any discursive comment.

Question 04

This question elicited a number of extremely good answers with appropriate reference to at least one other researcher, most usually Schaffer and Emerson. There were, however,

some common misapprehensions, for example, many candidates presenting the evolutionary argument suggested that Bowlby proposed that infants attached for food. Many candidates used the case of Genie as evidence in respect of the maternal deprivation hypothesis without noting that hers was more a case of privation than maternal deprivation. Surprisingly few candidates considered the wider implications for childcare of Bowlby's work as part of their discussion.

Topic Cognitive Development

Question 05

Most candidates were familiar with one of Baillargeon's studies although some descriptions were less than clear. Although the question asked for procedure, candidates could be credited for results as long as what they presented as results revealed something further about the procedure. Most usually this occurred where candidates referred to 'longer looking time' as the measure used by the researcher.

Question 06

Many candidates gained no marks for this question because they discussed an issue that was not relevant to the study of 'very young infants'. Given the previous question this problem had not been anticipated. In the event, many candidates erroneously referred to problems typically cited as occurring in Piagetian studies, such as 'asking the same question twice' or 'using complicated language', neither of which would occur in studies involving very young infants.

Question 07

Although many candidates did well on this question there are still some who seem to equate the 'zone of proximal development' with the process of 'scaffolding'. Better answers focused on the difference between actual or present ability and potential ability. A substantial number of answers were simply a repetition of the stem.

Question 08

This question was clearly not anticipated and only the more astute candidates answered it directly with reference to explicit differences between the two stages. More usually candidates dealt with the two stages consecutively, with long descriptions of Piaget's research followed by long descriptions of alternative research in tandem. As a result, differences were largely implicit and marks were therefore limited. This question, more than any other on the paper, highlights the need for candidates to answer the question set rather than present a pre-prepared answer. Directly addressing the question is essential in order to access the top mark bands.

Topic Moral Development

Question 09

Most candidates could provide a suitable question. Responses that did not gain credit tended to be ones where the phrasing was altogether unsuitable for use in a study with young children.

Question 10

Most candidates gained two marks on this question. Those who argued that both groups would state that Kyle was the naughtier because children in the older age group could still be in the moral realism stage were also able to access full marks.

Question 11

Approximately half of the answers to this question were incorrect. The most frequent incorrect answers were ‘the amount of juice’ or ‘the intention of the children’.

Question 12

This question perplexed many candidates and few gained full marks. The most common creditworthy answers were those that recommended the use of a bar chart, table of frequencies or pie charts. Scattergraphs were not accepted although many candidates tried hard to justify why they would be appropriate. Answers were rarely illustrated with a sketch which is a shame as sketching out the idea might have helped candidates to realise that what they were suggesting could not have worked.

Question 13

The majority of candidates answered correctly although a few focused on Piaget’s theory by mistake.

Question 14

Most candidates could offer some appropriate description here, with details that were usually accurate and expressed using appropriate terminology. Better discussions could offer a variety of issues and evidence to counter the Freudian explanation for moral development. Weaker discussions were often limited to general criticisms of the psychodynamic approach rather than centred on issues pertaining to the explanation of morality. Many candidates suggested that Freud’s theory (of morality) was based on only one case study, Little Hans.

Section B Applied Options

Topic Cognition and Law

Question 15

It was evident from a number of answers that many candidates were not absolutely clear in their own minds about holistic form theory. There was also a common misconception, perhaps as a result of misreading due to the pressure of being in examination conditions, that the ‘eyes’ had somehow been altered rather than the ‘spacing between the eyes’. Where this happened, answers became very confused indeed. Although it was possible to gain full marks using either theory of face recognition, it was also possible to gain full marks by taking a combination route, where two possible outcomes were explained, one for subscribers to holistic form theory and one for subscribers to feature theory.

Question 16

This was generally very well answered except where factors were implied rather than clearly identified. One typical example occurred where ‘children’ was identified as a factor, when perhaps the factor should more sensibly have been ‘age of witness’.

Question 17

This was often very well answered, with better candidates starting by clearly defining the key terms of the debate. Less successful were those candidates whose answers were completely one-sided. Such responses focussed almost exclusively on the issue of whether

or not repression exists, omitting any reference to the alternative possibility that such memories may not be real and are possibly the product of reconstruction and confabulation. In general, the knowledge of studies in this area was particularly impressive.

Topic Schizophrenia and Mood Disorders

Question 18

Many good answers to this question were seen, with labelling and family dysfunction forming the basis of most responses. Many candidates gained three or four marks here.

Question 19

A good many candidates based their answers to this question on cost, often simply stating that community care was 'expensive'. Whilst good community care might be costly, it is probably not as costly as keeping a patient in hospital and therefore such simplistic cost-based arguments without explanation or justification were not credited. Creditworthy economic arguments were presented by candidates who argued that good community care requires an appropriate level of funding which is not always available, and therefore often community care is inadequate or of poor quality.

Question 20

This question elicited some very high level responses where candidates showed accurate knowledge and sound understanding, although, perhaps surprisingly, there were few references to evidence. It was especially pleasing to read some very capable accounts of cognitive therapy. As ever in this topic area, a small minority of answers indicated profound confusion between mood disorders and schizophrenia.

Topic Stress and Stress Management

Question 21

Most responses to this question gained the mark for application, although quite a number failed to provide a coherent definition.

Question 22

It was rare to see full marks awarded here. Often the answer consisted of description and examples rather than evaluation.

Question 23

Many good answers demonstrating clear and accurate knowledge of the physiological responses to stress were seen. Weaker responses tended to be limited in content and based entirely on PSYB1 biological approach material.

Question 24

Candidates who concentrated their answer on personal variables tended to perform well on this question and often gained AO2 marks through appropriate links to the stem. There were, however, a fair number of answers where candidates meandered around the whole topic area and spent some considerable time discussing ways of measuring stress. Whilst some of this material might have been linked appropriately to the question, quite often the necessary links were not made.

Topic Substance Abuse

Questions 25-27

As these questions were linked, those candidates who chose fear arousal tended to perform better than those who chose other techniques, mainly because of the necessity to refer to a study in 27. Failure to gain full marks for 25 tended to be fear arousal answers where candidates did not refer to an appropriate medium (television adverts, newspapers, pamphlets etc) or explained fear arousal in the same terms. Answers to 26 based on fear arousal and ethics did not usually gain credit because the whole point of the technique is to frighten and upset. In order to gain full credit for the study in 27 it was important for candidates to include reference to the target behaviour, substance or activity and quite a number did not provide this essential information.

Question 28

A number of poor responses to this question were seen. In some cases candidates did little more than list a set of personality characteristics, and quite frequently the cited attributes were not personality characteristics at all. There was a tendency to veer off onto a discussion of alternative explanations without any links to the question. Most usually the proffered alternative was the biological explanation, which could easily have been made creditworthy if the candidate had suggested that personality may well have a biological basis and thus the two explanations need not be exclusive. Unfortunately very few candidates offering biological explanations made any link to the question set.

Topic Forensic Psychology

Question 29

Most candidates gained one mark for reference to physical features associated with offenders. Rather fewer made any additional point in relation to Lombroso, for example, atavism as a primitive species or an evolutionary throwback unsuited to the demands of civilised society.

Question 30

There were many full mark answers to this question.

Question 31

Answers varied but most candidates made some sort of reference to stereotyping and expectations based on looks. Better answers also explored theoretical influences and the shift to more biologically based explanations for criminal behaviour. Some candidates completely misinterpreted this question and wrote evaluations of Lombroso and Sheldon.

Question 32

There were many rubric infringements here from candidates who wrote about three ways of measuring crime instead of confining themselves to two. In such cases it was left to examiners to award credit to the greatest benefit of the candidate. It did mean, however, that such answers then contained considerable irrelevance. The requirement to refer to evidence and/or published examples also meant that a number of thoughtful and well constructed answers could not be awarded more than 8 marks. Better answers were those where the candidate clearly distinguished between the two types of survey, victim and offender. Often this was not the case and examiners were struggling to determine exactly which way of measuring crime was being discussed.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.