



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

Psychology A

PSYA2

(Specification 2180)

**Unit 2: Biological Psychology, Social
Psychology and Individual Differences**

Post-Standardisation

Mark Scheme

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SECTION A BIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Question 1 a

AO1 = 4 marks **Knowledge of stress in everyday life**

Life changes = A, D, F, G

Daily hassles = B, C, E, H

Candidates to select two from each group. 1 mark for each correct answer.

Question 1 b

AO2 = 4 marks **Analysis/explanation of stressful impact of either life changes or daily hassles**

Candidates focus on what research has shown about the impact of either life changes or daily hassles. Life Changes would probably make use of Holmes & Rahe and the SRRS which suggested that people with an LCU of between 200-300 have a 50% chance of getting ill, while a score of over 300 increases this to 80%. Daily Hassles could consider Kanner's research and that of De Longis which suggest that for most people it is the small daily hassles that affect us, especially if the intensity, duration and frequency are great. Any relevant research to support their argument is acceptable.

If candidates write about both Life Changes **and** Daily Hassles, credit the best one.

4 marks Effective explanation Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of the stressful impact of either Life Changes or Daily Hassles.
3 marks Reasonable explanation Reasonable explanation that demonstrates knowledge of the stressful impact of either Life Changes or Daily Hassles.
2 marks Basic explanation Basic explanation of the impact of Life Changes/Daily Hassles on health.
1 mark Rudimentary Rudimentary, muddled, explanation of Life Changes/Daily Hassles, demonstrating very limited knowledge.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

Question 2

A03 = 2 marks + 2 marks Use and understanding of research methods

Ethical issues could include:

- Informed consent
- Right to withdraw
- Protection from harm
- Anonymity
- Confidentiality
- Deception

Any relevant ethical issue can receive credit, but the question requires candidates to explain the ethical issue.

1 mark for identifying the ethical issue and a further mark for the explanation. For example, confidentiality is an issue because when investigating stress the participant might be disclosing personal information that they want to keep private.

Limitations of using questionnaires could include:

- Social desirability
- Leading questions
- Ambiguous wording/different understanding of words
- Participants may not tell the truth, especially with regard to stress-related issues which are sensitive
- Sampling difficulties/response rates

Any other relevant problem can be credited, as long as it is NOT an ethical one.

1 mark for identification for the problem and a further mark for elaboration. For example, participants might not understand the question (1 mark) and so make a guess and give answers that do not really represent their stress (further mark for elaboration).

Question 3 a

A01 = 3 marks Outline of a problem-focused approach to coping with stress.

Problem-focused approach to coping with stress involves the person actively trying to do something that deals with the stress. This might involve taking control by getting as much information as they can, considering possible alternative strategies, improving their coping resources etc.

1 mark for a basic statement and further 2 marks for elaboration. For example, problem-focused coping is doing something active such as taking control (1 mark) by finding out as much information about the forthcoming exam as possible and then planning and implementing a revision strategy (2 further marks for elaboration).

Question 3 b

AO1 = 3 marks

Outline of an emotion-focused approach to coping with stress

Emotion focused coping involves strategies that deal with the emotions linked with the stress, rather than the stress itself. These might include, denial, venting, wishful thinking etc.

1 mark for a basic statement and further 2 marks for elaboration. For example, emotion focused coping is dealing with the emotions created by the stressful event such as through denial (1 mark). The person might carry on as if nothing is wrong and there is no stressor (a further mark for slight elaboration).

Note: social support can be a problem-focused approach (discussing the problem with other people can help put the problem into perspective and provide practical information). It can also be an emotion-focused approach (getting emotional support from friends). Both are creditworthy.

Question 4

AO2 = 6 marks

Analysis of unfamiliar situation

CBT is an umbrella term that includes a range of different treatments, such as SIT and hardiness training. All these methods share the common aim which is to change irrational thoughts and cognitive biases. Candidates can refer to a specific method or to CBT in general, either way would be creditworthy. SIT uses conceptualisation and skills training.

CBT could help Karen because she has irrational thoughts (worried she is unable to do the job properly even though she receives praise). The therapist might challenge Karen and ask her for evidence of examples when she couldn't do her job well. Karen might also practice saying "no" to her therapist so that she can later do so in the real world. Since her problems appear to be due to her cognitions, CBT would be an appropriate treatment.

For 4-6 marks, there must be active engagement with the scenario (this is not the same as merely using the name 'Karen').

6 marks Effective analysis of unfamiliar situation Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of CBT and how it could be used to help Karen.
5-4 marks reasonable analysis of unfamiliar situation Reasonable explanation of CBT and how it could be used to help Karen.
3-2 marks Basic analysis of unfamiliar situation Basic explanation of CBT or weak explanation plus some engagement.
1 mark Rudimentary analysis of unfamiliar situation Rudimentary, muddled consideration of CBT, demonstrating very limited knowledge.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

SECTION B SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Question 5

AO1 = 3 marks + 3 marks Knowledge of types of social influence

Informational social influence is where someone conforms because they do not know what to do, but they want to be correct. They follow the majority because they assume that the majority know what is the right thing to do. This type of social influence tends to involve internalisation.

Normative social influence is where someone conforms because they want to be liked and accepted by the group. The person may publicly change their behaviour/views but privately disagree. This type of social influence is also known as compliance.

For each of the terms, 1 mark for a basic statement and a further 2 marks for elaboration. Candidates may offer research as part of the elaboration. For example, in Sherif's experiment, participants were unsure what the correct answer was and so looked to others for information as to how to answer; thus showing informational social influence.

Question 6

AO3 = 2 marks + 2 marks Knowledge of research methods

An advantage of research outside of laboratory settings is that it may be high in ecological validity, this means that the results can be generalised beyond the research setting.

A limitation of research outside of the laboratory settings is that there is a lack of control, other factors may have influenced the outcome.

Usually 1 mark for identification of the advantage/limitation and a further mark for elaboration. Examiners should be aware that sometimes a very concise answer can gain both marks.

Question 7

AO1 = 4 marks **Knowledge and understanding of explanations of independent behaviour**

AO2 = 4 marks **Commentary on these explanations**

The focus of this question is on explanations of independent behaviour, but candidates may offer explanations relating to the resistance to either conformity or obedience or indeed both.

Explanations could include:

- Situational factors
- Personality characteristics
- Locus of control
- Prior commitment
- Disobedient role models
- Agentic shift

Since the question asks for one or more explanations, there is a breath/depth trade off. Candidates could offer one in depth or more but in less detail. The commentary can come from a consideration of the research that supports the explanation; a consideration of cultural or historical factors; the value of independent behaviour and whether it can be taught.

AO1 Knowledge and understanding
4 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed Accurate and reasonably detailed answer that demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of explanations of independent behaviour. There is appropriate selection of material to address the question.
3 marks Less detailed but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate answer that demonstrates relevant knowledge and understanding. There is some evidence of selection of material to address the question.
2 marks Basic Basic answer that demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail and may be muddled. There is little evidence of selection of material to address the question.
1 mark Very brief/flawed or inappropriate Very brief or flawed answer demonstrating very little knowledge. Selection and presentation of information is largely or wholly inappropriate.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

AO2 Commentary on these explanations
4 marks Effective commentary Effective commentary that demonstrates sound evaluation of explanations of independent behaviour.
3 marks Reasonable commentary Reasonable commentary that demonstrates some evaluation of explanations of independent behaviour.
2 marks Basic commentary Basic commentary into the explanations of independent behaviour.
1 mark Rudimentary Rudimentary, muddled commentary on independent behaviour, demonstrating very limited knowledge.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

Question 8

AO2 = 6marks

Analysis of unfamiliar situation and application of the psychology of social change

Social change occurs when a minority view challenges the majority view and is eventually accepted as the majority. This can take place in several ways, such as social impact theory, the snowball effect, social cryptoamnesia, or the views and beliefs of a powerful individual. Research into minority influence by Moscovici and Nemeth can be used to explain how this change happens. In the example of recycling, while the idea started with the minority of individuals, it is now a common behaviour (majority influence). Many schools are now actively teaching the importance of recycling and local authorities are introducing new schemes to encourage recycling. The majority of homes in the country have some form of recycling facility provided by their local authority. Through the snowball effect, what was originally a minority belief, the importance of recycling, has become a majority behaviour and accepted as the social norm.

Candidates need to use their knowledge of how social change occurs and apply it to recycling.

Candidates may draw on other parts of the specification, such as attitude change, the role of the media and if it is sound psychology, this can clearly gain credit.

6 marks Effective analysis and application Effective explanation that demonstrates sound knowledge of the psychology of social change as applied to recycling.
5-4 marks reasonable analysis and application Reasonable explanation of the psychology of social change as applied to recycling.
3-2 marks Basic analysis and application Basic explanation of the psychology of social change.
1 mark Rudimentary analysis of unfamiliar situation Rudimentary, muddled consideration of the psychology of social change, demonstrating very limited knowledge.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

SECTION C INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Question 9

AO1 = 1 mark **Identification of definition of abnormality**
AO2 = 2 marks **Limitation of definition**

The definitions on the specification are:

- Deviation from social norms
- Failure to function adequately
- Deviation ideal mental health

However, other definitions are also creditworthy (eg statistical infrequency).

AO1 = 1 mark for correct identification of a definition of abnormality.

The limitation must be appropriate to the definition given. For example, one limitation of the deviation of social norms definition is that norms can vary over time. This means that behaviour that would have been defined as abnormal in one era is no longer defined as abnormal in another. With failure to function adequately, there is a cultural limitation in that the definition does not take account that 'adequate' behaviour varies from one culture to another.

The main limitation with ideal mental health is that the criteria are so demanding that very few people will be able to meet all the criteria.

AO2 = 1 mark for identifying the limitation and a further mark for elaboration.

Question 10

AO3 = 4 marks Drawing conclusions from data

Possible conclusions:

- Some therapies are more successful for some disorders than other therapies.
- For some disorders there is little difference between the different types of therapy.
- For disorder A, biological therapies are much more effective than any other therapy.
- Psychoanalytic therapies are not very effective, except for disorder C, but even here, there is little difference between the three types of therapy.

Findings should only be credited if they are explicitly linked to a conclusion.

Candidates could offer several conclusions or only a few, there is a breadth/depth trade off.

4 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed Accurate and reasonably detailed answer that demonstrates sound interpretation and understanding of what the bar chart shows about the effectiveness of different types of therapies. There is appropriate selection of material to address the question.
3 marks Less detailed but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate answer that demonstrates interpretation and understanding. There is some evidence of selection of material to address the question.
2 marks Basic Basic answer that demonstrates some relevant interpretation and understanding but lacks detail and may be muddled. There is little evidence of selection of material to address the question.
1 mark Very brief/flawed or inappropriate Very brief or flawed answer demonstrating very little understanding. Selection and presentation of information is largely or wholly inappropriate.
0 marks No creditworthy material.

Question 11

AO1 = 3 marks Knowledge of SD
AO2 = 2 marks Explanation of weakness

(a) SD involves the client and therapist designing a list or hierarchy of frightening/stressful events or objects. The client is then taught deep muscle relaxation. Finally the therapist helps the client to work their way up the hierarchy while maintaining this deep relaxation. At each stage, if the client becomes upset they can return to an earlier stage and regain their relaxed state.

1 mark for a basic statement and a further 2 marks for elaboration.

(b) One weakness of SD is that it relies on the client's ability to be able to imagine the fearful situation. Some people cannot create a vivid image and thus SD is not effective. Another weakness is that while SD might be effective in the therapeutic situation, it may not work in the real world.

1 mark for a basic statement and a further mark for elaboration.

Question 12

AO1 = 6 marks

Knowledge and understanding of the psychodynamic approach to abnormality.

AO2 = 6 marks

Evaluation of the psychodynamic approach to abnormality.

Candidates can consider the main assumptions of this approach as well as the therapies that are used. The main assumptions include Freud's belief that abnormality came from the psychological causes rather than the physical causes, that unresolved conflicts between the id, ego and superego created anxiety, this could be dealt with by the ego's use of defence mechanisms, early childhood experiences shaped later adult life and unconscious motivation were responsible for disorders. The techniques that are used to access the unconscious could include free association, dream analysis and the use of projective techniques.

An answer that describes therapies alone cannot access the top bands (AO1). However, if the answer clearly demonstrates theoretical underpinning of therapy then it can access the full range of marks.

The evaluation can include a consideration of the difficulty in supporting the existence of such abstract concepts such as the id, or repression. The lack of empirical evidence, although candidates may of course use Freud's case studies as support. Candidates could also consider just how influential Freudian theory has been and they could examine the impact it has had on the way people think. An evaluation of the therapy could consider whether it is effective and for what disorders, as well as ethical issues.

A01 Knowledge and understanding	A02 Application of knowledge and understanding
<p>6 marks Accurate and reasonably detailed Accurate and reasonably detailed description that demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the psychodynamic approach to abnormality. There is appropriate selection of material to address the question.</p>	<p>6 marks Effective evaluation Effective use of material to address the question and provide informed commentary. Effective evaluation of research. Broad range of issues and/or evidence in reasonable depth, or a narrower range in greater depth. Clear expression of ideas, good range of specialist terms, few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>
<p>5-4 marks Less detailed but generally accurate Less detailed but generally accurate description that demonstrates relevant knowledge and understanding. There is some evidence of selection of material to address the question.</p>	<p>5-4 marks Reasonable evaluation Material is not always used effectively but produces a reasonable commentary. Reasonable evaluation of research. A range of issues and/or evidence in limited depth, or a narrower range in greater depth. Reasonable expression of ideas, a range of specialist terms, some errors or grammar, punctuation and spelling.</p>
<p>3-2 marks Basic Basic description that demonstrates some relevant knowledge and understanding but lacks detail and may be muddled. There is little evidence of selection of material to address the question.</p>	<p>3-2 marks Basic evaluation The use of material provides only a basic commentary. Basic evaluation of research. Superficial consideration of a restricted range of issues and/or evidence. Expression lacks clarity, some specialist terms used, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling detract from clarity.</p>
<p>1 mark Very brief/flawed or inappropriate Very brief flawed description demonstrating very little knowledge. Selection of material is largely or wholly inappropriate.</p>	<p>1 mark Rudimentary evaluation The use of material provides only rudimentary commentary. Evaluation of research is just discernable or absent. Expression of ideas poor, few specialist terms used, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling often obscure the meaning.</p>
<p>0 marks No creditworthy material</p>	<p>0 marks No creditworthy material</p>

Assessment Objectives

Question	AO1 Mark	AO2 Mark	AO3 Mark
Biological:			
1	4	4	
2			4
3	6		
4		6	
Total:	10	10	4
Social:			
5	6		
6			4
7	4	4	
8		6	
Total:	10	10	4
Individual Differences:			
9	1	2	
10			4
11	3	2	
12	6	6	
Total:	10	10	4