

Psychology

Answers and commentaries

GCSE (8182)

Paper 1

Marked answers from students from the June 2022 exams.
Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written by the student.

This resource is to be used alongside the GCSE Psychology Paper 1 June 2022 Question paper.

Question 4

You have been asked to investigate the effect of interference on the accuracy of memory.

Describe how you would design an experiment to do this.

You need to include:

- what participants would be asked to do
- a suitable hypothesis for your experiment
- the results that you expect to find.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

[AO2 – 4 marks and AO3 – 2 marks]

AO2 (Assessment Objective 2)

Up to **2 marks** for describing a method that would investigate the effect of interference on the accuracy of memory:

- **2 marks:** a clear and accurate description where participants do a similar thing with similar material.
- **1 mark:** a limited or muddled description.

Up to **2 marks** for a suitable hypothesis for the experiment that has been described:

- **2 marks:** there must be both conditions of the independent variable and a clear dependent variable which makes the statement operational.
- **1 mark:** the hypothesis lacks some clarity.

AO3

Up to **2 marks** for the results you expect to find:

- **2 marks:** a clear and accurate description of the expected results with both conditions of the independent variable.
- **1 mark:** a limited or muddled description of the expected results.

NOTE: The 'description' **and** the 'results' marks can only be awarded if the described experiment investigates the effect of interference on the accuracy of memory.

NOTE: Distraction is a distinct process (preventing encoding) and not the same as interference (a failure to retrieve). An experiment that focuses on distraction is therefore not likely to be creditworthy.

NOTE: If a student only describes a known study rather than basing their design on a known study (max 1 mark).

Student responses

Response A

I will use an independent groups research method. I would take 20 participants I would split them into 2 groups a ~~control~~^A group and the ~~real~~^B group. I would give them both a list of 20 words on a subject. I would let them see them for 15s then take them away. I would then show them another list of words on something completely different only for the ~~real~~^B group. Then I would ask ~~the~~ both groups to free recall the 1st set of words. The ~~control~~^A group only see one set. I predict that the ~~control~~^A group will have better recall than the real group B as there is no interference. I expect that group A will have better recall than group B of the 1st list.

This is a mid-level response

This answer would be marked as follows:

- 2 marks for a clear and accurate description of a method that would investigate the effect of interference on the accuracy of memory.
- 1 mark for a hypothesis that lacks some clarity. The dependent variable is not clear in that 'better' is not a measurable concept. Better in what way? This means that the statement is not operational.
- 1 mark for a limited or muddled description of the expected results. Wording such as 'accurate recall of more words' is clearer and more precise than 'better recall'.

4 marks

Question 5

Murdock investigated the effects of serial position on recall.

Describe **and** evaluate this study.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

Marks for this question: AO1 – 3 marks and AO3 – 3 marks

Level 3 – Detailed

5-6 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Murdock’s serial position curve study is accurate with detail.

AO3: Analysis and evaluation of Murdock’s serial position curve study is effective. Any conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed.

Relevant terminology is used consistently throughout. The answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning, and is clear, coherent and focused

Level 2 – Clear

3-4 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Murdock’s serial position curve study is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions.

AO3: There may be some effective analysis and evaluation of Murdock’s serial position curve study. There may be an attempt to draw conclusions.

Relevant terminology is usually used. The answer frequently demonstrates substantiated reasoning, and is clear, generally coherent and focused although structure may lack some logic.

Level 1 – Basic

1-2 marks

AO1: Knowledge and understanding of Murdock’s serial position curve study is present but limited.

AO3: Analysis and evaluation of Murdock’s serial position curve study is of limited effectiveness or may be absent. Any attempts to draw conclusions are not always successful or present.

Relevant terminology is occasionally used. The answer occasionally demonstrates substantiated reasoning, but may lack clarity, coherence, focus and logical structure.

Level 0 No relevant content.

0 marks

Possible content

AO1

- To investigate whether there are separate short-term and long-term memory stores or to see if the likelihood of recalling a word depends on its position in the list.
- Participants heard lists of words. The word lists had between 10 and 40 words on them. The participants were asked to recall as many as possible.
- Participants recalled more words from the start of the list (primacy effect) and the end of the list (recency effect) than those in the middle of the list.
- These results have been taken to show that the words at the end of the list were recalled best as they were still in the short-term memory. The ones at the start of the list were recalled well because they had been transferred to the long-term memory. The words in the middle of the list were not remembered well and this suggests that they were not in either the short- or long-term store.
- These results indicate the likelihood of recalling a word depends on its position in a list.

AO3

- This provides evidence for the existence of short- and long-term memory stores.
- This is a laboratory-based study, so participants were using their memory under highly controlled conditions. This allowed the researcher to eliminate many extraneous variables so they can be sure the position of a word in a list affected the likelihood of it being recalled.
- Participants were asked to listen to word lists. This was an artificial task because people do not normally have to do this. This means the results may lack validity because they may not predict how serial position affects memory recall in everyday memory.
- The effects of serial position were tested in a laboratory setting in this study. This may have increased the artificiality of the performance of the participants. This means it is difficult to generalise research findings to predict the effects of serial position in a more normal setting.
- A limited sample of participants was used in this study. They were all psychology students and so may have been of a similar age. This means it is difficult to generalise the findings to predict the effects of serial position to people of different ages or who have not studied psychology.

Accept other relevant content.

NOTE: Reference to 'serial position' is not enough for 'relevant content' because it is part of the question stem.

Student responses

Response A

Method: In a lab experiment, participants were shown a list of 20 words, for 2 seconds each, and were given 90 seconds to write down as many words they could remember – in any order. This was repeated 80 times over several days with a different list of 20 words used each time.

Results: The words at the end were recalled first and well (recency effect). The beginning words were also recalled well (primary effect). The middle words weren't recalled very well.

Conclusion: The primary and recency effect were evidence for separate short-term and long-term memory stores because the beginning words were released so flowed to the long term memory and the end words were still in the short-term memory.

To evaluate, a weakness of the study is that it's a lab experiment so lacks ecological validity as the task of remembering a list of words isn't close to real life activities. The setting was also artificial so results can't be easily generalised beyond the study settings. Another weakness is that some psychologists argue that evidence for separate long-term and short-term memory stores are too simplistic and a simple memory model. They argue that there are more than one long-term memory store, for example: episodic, semantic and procedural.

This is a Level 3 response

An excellent answer.

Relevant knowledge and understanding of Murdock's serial position curve study is accurate with detail.

Analysis and evaluation of Murdock's serial position curve study is effective and conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed.

6 marks

Response B

Murdock's aim was to see how the recall of a list of words related to the Serial position curve. ^{It was a lab study} His method was that he read his participants (who were university students studying a psychology course) a list of 20 words that were read at a rate of one per second. Then he asked the participants to recall the words he said, using free recall (after a few seconds of him finishing). He found that the words at the start of the list had been remembered well because they had been rehearsed and placed in long term memory. He also found that the words at the end of the list were remembered well as they had been stored in short term memory. ^{This is the primacy recency effect.} He concluded ^{seperate} that there are ^{seperate} short term and long term memory stores. A limitation of the study is that it's hard to generalise because participants were all the same age. A strength is it provided evidence for separate long and short term memory stores.

This is a Level 2 response

The knowledge and understanding of Murdock's serial position curve study is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions.

There is some effective analysis and evaluation of Murdock's serial position curve.

4 marks

Question 11

Bruner and Minturn investigated the effect of expectation on perception.

Describe this study.

Evaluate the research method used in this study.

[9 marks]

Mark scheme

[AO1 = 4 marks AO3 = 5 marks]

Level 3 – Detailed

7–9 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Bruner and Minturn’s study is accurate with detail.

AO3: Analysis and evaluation of laboratory-based studies is effective. Research conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed.

Relevant terminology is used consistently throughout. The answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning and is clear, coherent and focused.

Level 2 – Clear

4–6 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Bruner and Minturn’s study is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions.

AO3: There may be some effective analysis and evaluation of laboratory-based studies. There may be an attempt to draw conclusions.

Relevant terminology is usually used. The answer frequently demonstrates substantiated reasoning and is clear, generally coherent and focused although structure may lack some logic.

Level 1 – Basic

1–3 marks

AO1: Knowledge and understanding of Bruner and Minturn’s study is present but limited.

AO3: Analysis and evaluation of the laboratory-based studies is of limited effectiveness or may be absent. Any attempts to draw conclusions are not always successful or present.

Relevant terminology is occasionally used. The answer occasionally demonstrates substantiated reasoning, but may lack clarity, coherence, focus and logical structure.

Level 0 No relevant content.

0 marks

Possible content

AO1

- 24 participants took part in an experiment on recognising numbers and letters using an independent groups design.
- Half of the participants were shown a series of letters with an ambiguous figure in the middle. The other half were shown a series of numbers with the same ambiguous figure in the middle.
- The ambiguous figure was a broken 'B' that could be seen as either the letter B or the number 13.
- Most of the participants who had been shown numbers drew a '13'. Most of the participants who were shown letters drew a 'B'.
- The researchers concluded that the participants' expectations had directly affected how they interpreted the ambiguous figure.
- This shows that expectation affects perception.

AO3

- This is a laboratory-based study, so people were perceiving figures under highly controlled conditions.
- This is useful for the researcher who has eliminated many extraneous variables so can be sure the IV has affected the DV if the results show an effect.
- Procedures are standardised so the study can be replicated.
- Laboratory-based studies are often carried out in artificial settings. This means there is a lack of ecological validity.
- Laboratory-based study often use artificial tasks (such as interpreting ambiguous images). Because people do not normally have to do these, this can reduce the validity of the results.
- High control can decrease the validity of the results because it increases the artificiality of the performance of the participants. This means it is difficult to generalise research findings to predict behaviour in a more normal setting.

Credit other relevant content.

NOTE: Where a description is not given, or is not creditworthy, AO3 marks for accurate evaluation of laboratory-based studies can still be awarded.

NOTE: Reference to the effect of expectation on perception is not enough for 'relevant content' because it is part of the question stem.

NOTE: Evaluation of Bruner and Minturn's study with no link to the research method used (MAX 1 AO3 mark).

Student responses

Response A

This study involved a test stimulus of a broken 'B'. This meant that it could be perceived as a 'B' or '13'. They had two groups. One group was first shown a ~~list~~^{group} of four numbers one at a time. They would flash up on a screen. To start with, they would appear faster than the eye could see. ~~And~~ And gradually they would be shown for longer amounts of time. As soon as the participant could tell what they were being shown they needed to ~~say~~ tell the experimentalist. Then the same group would be shown the test stimulus. Again it would flash up and when they knew what it was they told the experimentalist. After this they were shown a group of four letters in the same way. And then the stimulus. Finally they were shown a group of mixed letters and numbers. And then the stimulus. To counterbalance, the other group were these lists in a different order. First the letters, then the numbers, then the mixed group. The results showed that when the group of numbers had previously been shown, participants perceived the test stimulus as a '13'. However, when the group of letters had previously

Extra space been shown, participants perceived the test stimulus as a 'B'. And when the mixed group was shown, a mixture of 'B's and '13's were perceived. The conclusion drawn was that ~~the~~ expectation can affect perception. ~~The research~~

The research method used in this study was a laboratory experiment. A strength of laboratory experiments is that extraneous variables can be controlled. They are easy to replicate and should produce the same results each time for this reason. A weakness of laboratory experiments is that they ~~are~~ cannot be generalized ~~as~~ and ~~do not~~ are not representative. They cannot be generalized due to the fact that the experiment is performed in an unlikely situation that does not represent everyday life. ~~However,~~ ~~they do have ecological~~


This is a Level 3 response

The answer provides relevant knowledge and understanding of Bruner and Minturn's study that is accurate and has an appropriate amount of detail for the 4 AO1 marks available.

Some of the analysis and evaluation of laboratory-based studies is effective. The conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed. The section on generalisation lacks some clarity and is therefore less effective.

8 marks

Response B

Bruner & Minturn showed 2 separate groups images. One group was shown the alphabet and then shown a figure that looked like a broken capital B, which looked like this , they were then asked to record what they thought it was. The same this was done to the second group, except instead of numbers rather than letters, and were asked to record it. A strength of using independent groups is that results could arguably be more accurate due to participants in each condition being unlikely to guess the study and change answers depending on this.

Extra space The results of this study showed, participants expecting a letter, recorded it to be a 'B', whereas participants in condition B, expecting a number recorded it being thirteen (13). By using volunteer sampling it is less time consuming. This experiment was a lab experiment, an advantage of this is that variables are much more easily controlled than other types. However, it is not very reliable because it is not in a natural setting and the participants were aware they were being watched, meaning behaviour may have been altered.

This is a Level 2 response

There is relevant knowledge and understanding of Bruner and Minturn's study present in this answer but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. The description lacks some clarity and does not have an aim or a conclusion. Although the question does not specifically require both – they do add to the completeness of a description.

Not all of the offered evaluative points are relevant to laboratory experiments but positive marking is used and so the answer is not penalised for this. There is some effective analysis and evaluation of laboratory-based studies and some attempt to draw conclusions.

6 marks

Question 13

What is meant by 'praise' in the context of learning?

[2 marks]

Mark scheme

[AO1 = 2 marks]

Up to **2 marks** for a definition of praise in the context of learning:

- **2 marks:** a clear and accurate definition.
- **1 mark:** a limited or muddled definition.

Possible content

- Expressing approval for the effort put into a piece of work.
- Expressing admiration for the standard of a piece of work.

Accept other relevant definitions.

NOTE: A definition should be considered as limited unless there is direct reference to praise in the context of learning.

NOTE: An example may be used to add clarity to a definition (e.g. by providing a learning context) but is not by itself creditworthy.

NOTE: Where the words 'praise', 'praising' or 'praised' are used as part of the answer and are not defined/explained, this will reduce the clarity of the answer.

Student responses

Response A

praise is giving students ~~the~~ recognition and upliftment due to their efforts put into their work and answering questions correctly. For example, a teacher might praise a student if their work was submitted before the due date

This is a full mark response

This is a clear and accurate definition of praise in the context of learning. An example is used to add clarity to the definition but is not by itself creditworthy.

2 marks

Response B

praise is when a person is given a reward, verbally or physically, based on their efforts and performance.

This is a mid-level response

A limited or muddled definition that is not a direct reference to praise in the context of learning.

1 mark

Question 15

Read the following information

Two doctors are discussing factors that influence the brain development of a baby before it is born.

“The mother’s genes play a key role,” says Doctor Kumar.

“I agree,” replies Doctor Andersson, “but the quality of a mother’s diet during pregnancy also affects how the brain develops. A healthy balanced diet is very important.”

Explain the role of nature **and** nurture on the brain development of a baby before it is born.

Refer to Doctor Kumar’s **and** Doctor Andersson’s comments in your answer.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

[AO1 = 4 marks AO2 = 2 marks]

Level 3 – Details

5-6 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development is accurate with detail.

AO2: Clear and accurate application of knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development to Doctor Kumar’s **and** Doctor Andersson’s comments.

Relevant terminology is used consistently throughout. The answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning and is clear, coherent and focused.

Level 2 – Clear

3-4 marks

AO1: Relevant knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions **or** level 3 knowledge of **either** nature or nurture.

AO2: Reasonable application of knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and/or** nurture on early brain development to Doctor Kumar’s **and/or** Doctor Andersson’s comments.

Relevant terminology is usually used. The answer frequently demonstrates substantiated reasoning, and is clear, generally coherent and focused although structure may lack some logic.

Level 1 – Basic 1-2 marks

AO1: Knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and/or** nurture on early brain development is present but limited.

AO2: Limited application of knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and/or** nurture on early brain development to Doctor Kumar's **and/or** Doctor Andersson's comments.

Relevant terminology is occasionally used. The answer occasionally demonstrates substantiated reasoning, but may lack clarity, coherence, focus and logical structure.

Level 0 No relevant content.

0 marks

Possible content

AO1

- Nature refers to the argument that characteristics and behaviours are genetically influenced.
- This suggests that how a baby's brain develops before it is born is influenced by the genes inherited from its parents.
- Nurture refers to the argument that characteristics and behaviours are influenced by upbringing, environment and experiences.
- Nurture suggests that how a baby's brain develops before it is born is influenced by the mother's environment, lifestyle and experiences during pregnancy.
- Most brain development before birth is due to nature but nurture also plays a role.
- Both nature and nurture can affect early brain development (interaction between nature and nurture).

AO1

- Doctor Kumar is talking about nature when highlighting the influence of a mother's genes on early brain development.
- Both Doctor Kumar and Doctor Andersson state that nature plays a key role in early brain development because they agree that a mother's genes are important in early brain development.
- Doctor Andersson is talking about nurture when highlighting the importance of the mother's diet during pregnancy.
- Doctor Andersson is talking about nurture when saying that a mother's lifestyle and experiences will influence brain development.

Accept other relevant content.

Student responses

Response A

Nature refers to the impact of biology on development and nurture refers to the impact of a person's environment ~~and referring to~~ the way they ^{develop} ~~develop~~. Doctor Kumar's comments support the role of nature because they are saying that the primary factor involved in brain development is genetics. However Doctor Andersson's comment supports the role of nurture because the factors that they are talking about (diet during exercise) are not already determined or ~~uncontrolled~~ but they are free to change which supports nurture's role.

This is a Level 2 response

Relevant knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. There is clear knowledge of what the two terms mean but limited depth to the explanation.

There is reasonable application of knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development to Doctor Kumar's **and** Doctor Andersson's comments.

4 marks

Response B

nature of brain development in a child baby's brain would be the genes and you cannot change this whereas Doctor Anderson says that "the quality of a mother's diet during pregnancy effects ^{how} ~~the~~ the brain develops" this is nurture because you are able to change this, being if the mother is healthy then cells are likely to be healthier creating a better developed brain for the ~~child~~ ^{baby}.

This is a Level 1 response

The knowledge and understanding of the role of nature **and** nurture on early brain development is present but limited. The knowledge and understanding of nurture is contained within the addressing of Doctor Anderson's comments.

There is limited application of knowledge and understanding of the role of nurture on early brain development. Only Doctor Anderson's comments are referred to.

2 marks

Question 17

Read the following information

A survey of employees highlighted some differences between two restaurant businesses.

Zuppa is a business that focuses on employee performance and recruiting talented people. Risk taking is not encouraged and people who work at Zuppa often say they dislike challenges.

Bravas places a higher value on the hard work of employees and only recruits people who show willingness to develop new skills. It encourages risk taking, and employees who work in Bravas say they enjoy challenges.

Describe **and** evaluate Dweck's mindset theory of learning.

In your answer, refer to the mindset encouraged by **both** restaurant businesses in this information.

[9 marks]

Mark scheme

[A01 = 3 marks A02 = 3 marks A03 = 3 marks]

Level 3 – Detailed 7-9 marks

A01: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning is accurate with detail.

A02: Clear application of knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning to both restaurant businesses.

A03: Analysis and evaluation of Dweck's mindset theory of learning is effective. Any conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed.

Relevant terminology is used consistently throughout. The answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning, is clear, coherent and focused.

Level 2 – Clear 4-6 marks

A01: Relevant knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning is present but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions.

A02: Reasonable application of knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning to either/both restaurant businesses.

A03: There may be some effective analysis and evaluation of Dweck's mindset theory of learning. There may be an attempt to draw conclusions.

Level 1 – Basic 1-3 marks

AO1: Knowledge and understanding of Dweck’s mindset theory of learning is present but limited.

AO2: Limited application of knowledge and understanding of Dweck’s mindset theory of learning to either/both restaurant businesses.

AO3: Analysis and evaluation of Dweck’s mindset theory of learning is of limited effectiveness or may be absent. Any attempts to draw conclusions are not always successful or present.

Relevant terminology is occasionally used. The answer occasionally demonstrates substantiated reasoning, but may lack clarity, coherence, focus and logical structure.

Level 0 No relevant content.

0 marks

Possible content

AO1

- People with a fixed mindset believe that success is due to innate factors like genes. This means there is nothing you can do to change your ability or talent.
- People with a fixed mindset view failure as a lack of talent.
- People with a growth mindset believe that ability and success is due to hard work and perseverance.
- People with a growth mindset view failure as an opportunity to grow.
- Mindset is affected by the form of praise (i.e. person praise or process praise) a student is given.

AO2

- Employees in Zuppa are more likely to have a fixed mindset. People are recruited according to their talents and this business values results over hard work.
- Employees in Zuppa dislike challenges because if they fail on a task it will be seen as due to a lack of talent.
- Employees in Bravas are more likely to have a growth mindset. People are recruited according to their work ethic and this business values hard work over natural talent.
- Employees at Bravas enjoy challenges because they know they can learn from experiences, even if they fail.

AO3

- One strength of mindset theory is that people can change their mindset and this can be used to improve performance in different contexts such as at school, in sports or in the workplace.
- There is evidence to support the idea that a growth mindset can improve performance.
- Dweck’s research showed that teaching children to develop a growth mindset in schools increased their motivation and grades.

Accept other relevant content.

NOTE: The AO2 may be separate or embedded elsewhere; both are equally acceptable.

Student responses

Response A

Dweck's mindset theory states that there are two types of mindset: fixed and growth. People with fixed mindsets tend to believe that their intelligence and levels of which are beyond their control whereas people with growth mindsets believe in improvement through hard work is possible. It is clear that Zuppa encourage a fixed mindset amongst employees as well as teaching them to possess low self efficacy which means they are less likely to succeed at challenges as mentioned in the text. Contrastingly to this, Bravas encourages that of a growth mindset and high levels of efficacy which will simultaneously push them to a higher chance of succeeding at challenges - down to the fact they put effort in.

Dweck's mindset theory is important
Extra space as it shows us that a
change in mindset is possible,
so teachers can attempt to instill
growth mindsets in students in
hopes of improving exam results, for
example. However some may argue
that it makes excuses for those
who do not prevail ~~extra~~ in
certain aspects of their life, as
opposed to finding solutions to
it.

This is a Level 3 response

Relevant knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning is accurate with detail. There is clear application and some effective analysis and evaluation (only one accurate AO3 statement). Relevant terminology is used.

This answer is focused and does cover all of the required elements (i.e. description, evaluation and reference to mindset encouraged by both restaurants).

8 marks

Response B

~~Dweck's~~ Dweck's mindset theory of learning involves 2 types of mindset fixed mindset and growth mindset. People with a fixed mindset often think people who are good at things were born that way and they don't have to try. They don't like to take risks in fear of getting things wrong and don't like challenges as they like to stick to what they are good at. However people with growth mindsets often think in order to be good at something you need to keep on trying/practicing to succeed at it. They like to take risks and learn new things even if they aren't good at it straight away. Zuppa is a business with a fixed mindset as they only employ people with talent and aren't willing to try new things or take risks. However Bravas is a business showing qualities of a growth mindset as they employ people who are willing to work hard ~~as~~ as well as try.

Extra space new things and take risks. Carol Dweck believes people who have fixed mindsets often received person praise and people who have growth mindsets often received process praise. Person praise is praise based around the person doing the work "you so smart" and process praise is based around the work the person is doing "you made a real effort"

This is a Level 2 response

Relevant knowledge and understanding of Dweck's mindset theory of learning is present. There is reasonable application but no analysis and evaluation. Relevant terminology is used.

This answer has reasonable focus but does not cover all of the required elements - there is no attempt to evaluate. This immediately limits the marks to 6 (MAX AO1 + AO2 = 6).

5 marks

Question 23

Evaluate the use of correlations in psychological research.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

[A03 – 6 marks]

Level 3 – Detailed

5-6 marks

Analysis and evaluation of the use of correlations in psychological research is effective. Any conclusions drawn are sound and fully expressed.

Relevant terminology is used consistently throughout. The answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning, is clear, coherent and focused.

Level 2 – Clear

3-4 marks

There may be some effective analysis and evaluation of the use of correlations in psychological research. There may be an attempt to draw conclusions.

Relevant terminology is occasionally used. The answer occasionally demonstrates substantiated reasoning, but may lack clarity, coherence, focus and logical structure.

Level 1 – Basis

1-2 marks

Analysis and evaluation of the use of correlations in psychological research is of limited effectiveness or may be absent. Any attempts to draw conclusions are not always successful or present.

Relevant terminology may not be used at all or may be muddled.

Level 0 No relevant content.

0 marks

Possible content

- Correlations can be used to investigate relationships without the researcher manipulating variables. This means that correlations can be used when other research methods are not suitable due to ethical or practical reasons – for example, to investigate whether social media use is linked to mental health problems.
- Correlations can provide a useful starting point for research because they allow a researcher to see whether two co-variables are connected. If a pattern is established between variables, a researcher can then use an experiment to further investigate this relationship.
- Correlations cannot be used to establish cause and effect relationships between two co-variables. For example, we might find a positive correlation between playing violent computer games and aggressive behaviour. However, we cannot show that one causes the other as there may be a third variable that could explain this relationship.
- Correlations can be used to identify and investigate non-linear (curvilinear) relationships between two variables, for example, stress level and task performance.

- Large amounts of information are required for correlational research to be useful. This is because establishing relationships from small samples may not be reliable.
- Collecting a large enough data set for correlations to be considered reliable can be time consuming and expensive for researchers.

Credit other relevant evaluation.

NOTE: Full credit can be awarded without reference to examples, but answers can receive credit for using examples to illustrate evaluations.

Student responses

Response A

A weakness of using correlation is that correlation only show the relationship between 2 variables. Correlations do not explain if one causes the other, of how or why the two variables are connected. Therefore, the use of correlations is limited as it doesn't establish cause and effect, it simply suggests two variables are linked.

However, a strength of correlation in psychological research is the fact they identify relationships. Correlations do tell us if the variables are connected, which can lead to further psychological research. It also helps save time, as a connection is already identified, it's just a matter of finding how and what links the two variables together. Therefore, correlations are useful as they enhance and pave the way for advance psychological research.

This is a Level 3 response

Analysis and evaluation of the use of correlations in psychological research is effective. Some conclusions are drawn and are sound and well expressed.

Relevant terminology is used and the answer demonstrates a high level of substantiated reasoning, is clear, coherent and focused.

5 marks

Response B

Correlations in psychology are useful as they can establish a link or similarity between two variables, allowing for easy comparisons. These comparisons may also extend beyond variables to other studies of a similar nature.

Despite this, correlations by themselves cannot establish cause and effect, meaning they do not show why something happens and what can occur as a result, hindering their credibility when placed in isolation.

This is a Level 2 response

There is some effective analysis and evaluation of the use of correlations in psychological research and an attempt to draw conclusions.

There are some valid points made but the attempted to develop these points are generally not relevant or accurate.

3 marks

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/8182

You can talk directly to the Psychology subject team

E: psychology@aqa.org.uk

T: **01483 477822**

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