



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel
GCSE Psychology (1PS0) Paper 2

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General Comments

The examination structure provided a range of question types over the compulsory research methods and mathematics section and five optional sections from which centres can select any two of the five available. Most candidates demonstrated good psychological knowledge and understanding in this examination.

Strengths were seen in the understanding of mathematical skills. Most were able to respond to all of these question types, and most candidates were able to access marks.

Application to scenario-based questions was mixed, particularly in the shorter response questions posed some difficulties for some candidates. Candidates would benefit from developing this AO2 skill for future exams,

Many were able to meet the demands of question taxonomy, with an area for development AO3 justification which was often not fully developed in both sort questions and also the extended essays.

The remainder of this Examiner Report will focus on each individual question and specific examples with the aim of highlighting areas of good practice and some common errors which can be used to help prepare candidates for future 1PS0/02 examinations.

The remainder of this report will focus on specific questions from the examination.

Section A: Research methods – How do you carry out psychological research?

Q01b

Question Introduction

Candidates usually achieved one mark for their correct knowledge that this was quantitative data.

Q01c

Question Introduction

Candidates were usually able to achieve the mark here for the correct answer. Where errors were seen it was often that they had not simplified the answer.

Q02a

Question Introduction

Candidates were generally able to calculate the mean correctly and give their responses to two decimal places. Where there were errors, this was often seen in the rounding of the answer incorrectly or giving more than two decimal places.

Q02b

Question Introduction

Candidates were able to rank order and give the correct answer, achieving both marks. If errors were seen it was often due to missing a number in the rank list and therefore working out an incorrect answer overall.

Q02c

Question Introduction

Candidates accessed this question well, most giving the correct range here.

Q03a

Question Introduction

Candidates mostly achieved well here. Where candidates did not achieve the mark available, they had often reworded the question and simply stated that a laboratory experiment was conducted in a laboratory.

Q3b

Question Introduction

Candidates did not perform as well as expected on this question. Many confused volunteer sampling with opportunity sampling. Where the sampling was correct, the candidates often failed to achieve the two marks available, either by presenting an example and gaining the AO2 mark or presenting basic knowledge and gaining the AO1 mark.

Q03c

Question Introduction

Candidates often achieved the mark for understanding a single-blind technique which was commendable here, however application to the use of this for the scenario was often limited.

Q03d

Question Introduction

Candidates were mostly able to give a correct ratio here. Where they did not achieve the mark they had often used incorrect simplification.

Q03e

Question Introduction

Candidates responses here were mixed. Where they had achieved the mark the candidates were clear on what was meant by significant figures. Where the mark was not achieved, it was often due to confusion with decimal places, or incorrect rounding of numbers.

Q03f

Question Introduction

Candidates struggled with the requirements of a justified conclusion. Some achieved well, however many restated the results rather than giving a conclusion. Some candidates gave a conclusion without then supporting this with the data presented, achieving one of the two marks available. Many candidates confused the data, thinking that the longer the period of time taken by males/females, then the better the males/females were at the task.

Q04a

Question Introduction

Candidates were usually able to calculate the correct percentage here.

Q04b

Question Introduction

Candidates did not always perform well on this question. Most were able to plot the bars successfully, however few labelled the axis and did not achieve the third mark.

Q04c

Question Introduction

Candidates were mostly able to use the data to support the conclusion, referring to the differences between the students as small or insignificant.

Q04d

Question Introduction

Candidates did not often achieve well here. There were significant misunderstandings of a participant variable, with many giving situational variables rather than participant variables.

Q05

Question Introduction

This was a 12-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2 and AO3 skills. Candidates were required to evaluate the use of the case study method, applying their understanding to the stimulus material given in the question and draw on strengths and weaknesses to make an evaluation. Many candidates were again able to draw from the stimulus material in their answers, this was really pleasing to see.

Some candidates were able to give their understanding of the case study research method for AO1 here, and their understanding was generally good, although where candidates did not provide any understanding of the methodology required in the question, they did not achieve well in the AO1 skills. AO2 was generally good, with links to the stimulus being made at various levels across candidate answers.

The AO3 evaluative skills demonstrated relatively basic strengths and weaknesses of this methodology. Common links were of there being only one person which lacked representativeness, or that it was a valid method because of the depth and detail in a case study, little else was seen across most candidates.

Section B

Criminal psychology – Why do people become criminals?

Q07

Question Introduction

Candidates answers were mixed here, with some giving an appropriate conclusion. Where candidates did not achieve the mark, they had given an opposite to the conclusion, such as aggression increases due to television.

Q08

Question Introduction

Candidates demonstrated some confusion with a token economy, with many not fully appreciating that the tokens are given for pro-social behaviour and that they can then be exchanged.

Q09

Question Introduction

Candidates were usually able to understand that the verbal warning was an ineffective punishment, and this was expressed in a range of ways to achieve the AO2 mark here. The AO3 justification was mostly limited, with few candidates able to make a link to an appropriate theory to support their weakness.

Q10

Question Introduction

Candidates often achieved well here, especially with the application to the scenario. There was a good understanding of restorative justice in most cases. Where errors were seen it was often due to confusion with community service, or where the AO1 understanding was not evident.

Q11

Question Introduction

Candidates usually achieved the application marks here, and the weakness was often more successfully answered. Where candidates did not achieve well, it was due to limited AO3 justification of their strength or weakness.

Q12

Question Introduction

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well anger management would work for Krystian, applying their understanding of anger management to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this. Many candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of anger management was not well expressed, with many candidates not giving any AO1 understanding of this treatment. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen especially often, and where it was evident it was often limited to just one point about the potential biological nature of his aggression.

Section C

The self – What makes you who you are?

Q14

Question Introduction

Candidates were usually able to give a correct aim for the study here.

Q15

Question Introduction

Candidates were not often successful on this question, there was confusion about the nature of conditional or unconditional positive regard and candidates often believed that 'positive' simply meant good, thus giving inaccurate responses.

Q16

Question Introduction

Candidates were usually able to achieve the AO2 mark here, giving appropriate content and links to the scenario material. AO3 was limited, with justification of their point rarely being made.

Q17

Question Introduction

Candidates responded well with the application to Jessica here, however there was not always AO1 understanding of the study evident in responses.

Q18

Question Introduction

Candidates mostly achieved well in the AO2 skills here. The AO3 justification was often limited, and there was some confusion seen around Allport's (1936) personality traits.

Q19

Question Introduction

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well Erikson's (1959) 'Intimacy versus Isolation' stage can explain Jacob's behaviour. There was some good evidence of applying understanding to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this theory. Many candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of Erikson (1959) was not well expressed, with many candidates not giving any AO1 understanding. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen especially often, and where it was evident it was often limited to simplified points about a lack of scientific evidence and that development is not as linear and fixed as Erikson (1959) suggested.

Section D

Perception – How do you interpret the world around you?

Q21

Question Introduction

Candidates usually achieved well on this question with most understanding what a perceptual hypothesis was.

Q22

Question Introduction

Candidates mostly achieved one mark for their responses for understanding that the cube can be perceived in more than one way, although few developed this response sufficiently to achieve a second mark.

Q23

Question Introduction

Candidates did not always demonstrate justification for the AO3 here, and the links to emotion were not always evident. The AO2 mark was accessed more often, although many of the responses gave very basic links between Mark and the perception of the coat.

Q24

Question Introduction

Candidates showed some basic understanding in their responses, although this was not always accurate and often the application to the scenario was limited in the answers seen.

Q25

Question Introduction

Candidates mostly gained marks in the AO2 application to Zak here, although where errors were seen it was often generic responses. AO3 skills were not often evident in answers, candidates were unable to justify or exemplify their reason.

Q26

Question Introduction

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess whether the Direct Theory of Perception (Gibson, 1966) can explain how Kim was able to interpret her surroundings. There was some good evidence of applying understanding to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this theory. Many candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of the Direct Theory of Perception was not well expressed, with many candidates not giving any AO1 understanding. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen especially often, and where it was evident it was often limited to a weakness using ideas about prior knowledge and little else.

Section E

Sleep and dreaming – Why do you need to sleep and dream?

Q28

Question Introduction

Candidates usually achieved well here, with good knowledge of narcolepsy.

Q29

Question Introduction

Candidates performed quite poorly on this question. There was evidence that candidates did not fully understand the purpose or benefits of REM sleep and giving inaccurate responses to this question.

Q30

Question Introduction

Candidates often achieved the AO2 mark here, identifying that the lack of sleep would leave him agitated and without proper rest. There was little AO3 evident in responses as candidates did not justify the reason they had given.

Q31

Question Introduction

Candidates were mostly able to achieve the AO1 mark for their understanding of the pineal gland and some good AO2 application was seen to Pragma in the answers.

Q32

Question Introduction

Candidates quite often gave generic answers to this question and did not apply their weakness to the scenario of Marcel and the client's dreams. Some candidates had also attempted AO3 justification here, however few were able to achieve marks as this was often generic as they had not given their responses in relation to the scenario.

Q33

Question Introduction

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well circadian rhythms can explain the change to Libby's sleep pattern. There was some evidence of applying understanding to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this explanation. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of the circadian rhythms was not well expressed, with many candidates not giving any AO1 understanding and where this was attempted there were a range of inaccuracies. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen very often in this essay, and where it was evident it was often limited to a weakness that simply stated Libby may just be tired from her travels.

Section F

Language, thought and communication – How do you communicate with others?

Q35

Question Introduction

Candidates responded well to this question, with the vast majority able to give the correct answer of a horizontal prime.

Q36

Question Introduction

Candidates sometimes achieved well on this question. A few were unable to give a developed answer about a similarity between human and animal communication and often achieved one mark here.

Q37

Question Introduction

Candidates were able to give the AO2 applied response for this question, but often failed to justify this using a concept from this topic area. AO3 marks were therefore limited in this question.

Q38

Question Introduction

Candidates mostly achieved well on this question, demonstrating good understanding of personal space and good application to the scenario they were presented with. Where there were errors, it was often in limited application to Kendra.

Q39

Question Introduction

Candidates quite often gave generic responses to this question where they had used general strengths and weaknesses of the study without applying their understanding to the scenario.

Q40

Question Introduction

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess whether Vygotsky's (1981) explanation of language and thought can explain the actions of Katie's children. There was some evidence of drawing from the stimulus material given in the question although at times this was not always relevant. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of Vygotsky (1981) was not always accurate, with some candidates not giving any AO1 understanding at all. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen very often in this essay, and where it was evident it was often limited to a weakness that simply stated a point from Piaget (1950), although this was at times also inaccurate.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper candidate are offered the following advice:

- Candidates should write in full sentences in responses that require detailed information in the answers. Bullet pointed lists of key terms or brief phrases are not appropriate for questions that require description, explanation, assessment, or evaluation.
- AO3 justification in the shorter questions requires some development, and candidates should be encouraged to support and exemplify their points with clear and accurate links to appropriate theories, studies, or concepts.
- Generic points should be avoided when there is a scenario-based question, candidates should be able to give specific responses that are clearly linked to the question content and taxonomy.
- Candidates should review the taxonomy expectations within the specification to aid them in understanding the key requirements of the questions and the distinctions between these.