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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE Psychology 5PS01

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June 2010

Publications Code UG024561

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Introduction

This was the first paper on the new GCSE specification. It was pleasing to see that so many candidates were able to give relevant and appropriate answers across a range of questions. Whilst the paper offered accessibility, with candidates typically being able to provide responses indicating that they have acquired psychological knowledge and were able to apply it, it also differentiated, with a range of answers on many questions allowing for a good spread of scores. This report gives future candidates and their teachers information about how these questions were answered and how those answers could have been improved.

Comments on Individual Questions

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and/or comments, for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come mainly from questions which required more complex responses from candidates.

Question 11(a)-(b)

Most candidates were able to answer this question using their understanding of schemata. They used the source effectively to help them to answer the question so could identify that Barry thought the girl was a thief. Candidates earned marks in part 11(b) for an appropriate contrast to their answer to 11(a). There were many sensible alternative reasons suggested, such as a fault or a fire.

A minority of candidates did not use their knowledge of eyewitness memory so misunderstood the question. They tended to offer simple statements such as 'Barry heard it', which did not earn credit.

11 Barry lives in a town where lots of CDs have gone missing from the local music shop. Everyone in the town thinks it must be teenagers stealing them. Barry's cousin Geoff comes to stay. Geoff lives far away and doesn't know about the missing CDs. When they get to the music shop Barry and Geoff see a teenage girl leave the shop as the alarm goes off.

Use your knowledge of eyewitness memory to answer the following questions.

(a) Suggest why Barry thinks the alarm has gone off.

(1)

because he knows there is suspicion of someone stealing so he assumes the girl set it off because of stealing.

(b) Suggest why Geoff thinks the alarm has gone off.

(1)

because he may think the CD wasn't scanned properly or something because his schema is different to Barry's.

(c) Give one psychological term that is used to explain why people tend to see the



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Examiner Comments

Note that in part (a) the candidate has effectively described Barry's schema without using the term itself.

In part (b) the candidate has earned the mark with their first comment about the CD not being scanned properly.



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Examiner Tip

Use the question stem to help you to understand what is required - this stem explains the difference between what Barry and Geoff understand about the situation.

This clip illustrates a less obvious and therefore more difficult way to earn full marks on this question.

Use your knowledge of eyewitness memory to answer the following questions.

(a) Suggest why Barry thinks the alarm has gone off. (1)

As he thinks the teenage girl has stolen the CD

(b) Suggest why Geoff thinks the alarm has gone off. (1)

She has stolen something, but doesn't have an idea of what it is

(c) Give one psychological term that is used to explain why people tend to see the

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Examiner Comments

This candidate has made it clear that they understand the difference between Barry's and Geoff's understanding without having to find a reason other than theft for the alarm going off.

Question 11(c)

Many candidates gave suitable answers, most being effectively cued to give the anticipated answer of 'schema' (although other suitable answers were credited). Some candidates spent time explaining their term or putting it in the context of the question, neither of which were necessary; all that was required was a simple statement of the term. They could have spent their time more effectively elsewhere on the paper. A few candidates described what could be going on without actually stating a psychological term so could not gain credit.

(c) Give **one** psychological term that is used to explain why people tend to see the same event in different ways.

(1)

Schema



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Examiner Comments

As this question only asks the candidate to 'give' a term, rather than 'explain' one, single word answers are appropriate.



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Examiner Tip

Save yourself time in the exam by only writing as much as you need to. If the question asks you to 'state' or 'give' a term, all you need to do is write down the term. You don't need to put it in a sentence.

The mark scheme awards marks to the first term that is given, so if an incorrect term is supplied, followed by a correct one, the candidate would score zero.

(c) Give **one** psychological term that is used to explain why people tend to see the same event in different ways.

(1)

People see the same event in different ways because of their schemas



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Examiner Comments

In this case, the candidate has (unnecessarily) written an explanation of their term (schemas). Even though their explanation comes first it is not an incorrect term (just the word 'term' in italics) so they still score the mark.

(c) Give **one** psychological term that is used to explain why people tend to see the same event in different ways.

(1)

perceptual set explains why see the same event in
~~percept~~ different ways due to experience, ~~and~~ context and
schemas.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate has given a correct term, perceptual set, so earns the mark. They didn't need to provide any elaboration.

Question 11(d)

11(d)(i)

Most candidates chose suitable studies (eg Bartlett, Carmichael et al. or Palmer) which they described with a range of levels of detail (many being more than adequate). A small number of candidates described studies from Topic B (dreaming) and others described studies they had conducted in class, neither of which earned credit. Some candidates confused the details of more than one study and didn't quite reach the maximum with the 'best credited' rule.

11(d)(ii)

Achievement on this question was very varied. Better candidates had clearly learned specific strengths and were able to provide them. Some candidates were able to apply their psychological knowledge to evaluate the study they had described but typically did so too generally to earn full marks. Some candidates were unable to answer the question, leaving it blank, or supplied further description or conclusions. A common error was to suggest that generalisations could be based on a large sample even when the samples used were actually small.

Note that this candidate has provided a good reference for the study. There are many different ways to identify a study: using the names of researchers (with or without dates unless there are many similar studies) or using a descriptive title such as 'the verbal labels study'.

(d) (i) Describe **one** study you have learned about memory.

The study I am describing is Carmichael et al.

(4)

Carmichael's study was to find out whether ~~words~~ verbal labels affected ~~the~~ picture recall, there were ~~two~~ groups of participants, they both saw the same picture to look at but for each group the picture had a different label, they ~~it~~ were then told to draw the picture again with the verbal label as a stimulus. Almost invariably, the participants recall was heavily affected by the verbal label. eg. both participants would have seen sketch A but some would have had the verbal label



"kite" and their drawing would look like sketch B, whereas participants with the label 'diamond', would have drawn sketch C

(ii) Outline **one** strength of the study you described in (d)(i).

(2)

one strength is that many participants saw the same picture and verbal stimulus so you can be sure the results were not a fluke.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gives just a little more detail than would be needed to score full marks in part (i). The candidate correctly identifies the study, provides an aim, detail of the method which is good (though incomplete - there was also a control group) and details of the results which, whilst accurate, do not draw a conclusion. Nevertheless, there is ample here.

In part (ii) the candidate makes a useful comment about validity in layman's terms. This illustrates the point that it is often more important to understand and be able to explain an idea than to know the term.

To earn the second mark in part (ii) the candidate could have suggested that each participant saw 12 drawings, which improved reliability, or that there was a control group, so the researchers could be certain that the differences in the drawings were due to the verbal labels.



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Examiner Tip

If it will help to explain your answer, a diagram can sometimes be useful.

Question 12(a)

Marks were earned in this question for explaining why retelling after exactly five minutes was important, so the answer had to focus on controls, standardisation or reliability. Although these terms did not have to be used to earn both marks, appropriate use earned credit. Conversely, as 'unfair' and 'accurate' are not psychological terms, their use alone did not earn credit but when such words were used in the elaboration of a creditworthy point they were able to earn marks.

Candidates could also earn two marks by suggesting two different reasons why it was important.

(a) Shilpa made sure that each person retold the story exactly five minutes after having heard it. Explain why this was important.

(2)

This is important because if one participant was left longer than the others they may forget more, making the ^{experiment} ~~test~~ un-fair.



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Examiner Comments

This is an example of an answer which earns the first mark for making the observation about time affecting forgetting, which is then elaborated.



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Examiner Tip

When there are two marks available, try to make two points.

Question 12(b)

There were some excellent answers here, offering sensible suggestions such as the title of the story, genders of the characters, length of story, complexity of story and similar vocabulary. Some candidates were unable to recognise that the stories could not be the same as this was the IV.

(b) It was important that the two stories Shilpa wrote were as similar as possible.

Suggest **two** things she should have kept the same between the two stories.

(2)

1. The amount of people in each story as more people in one story could be hard to remember.
2. The length of the story as the shorter a story is the easier to remember.



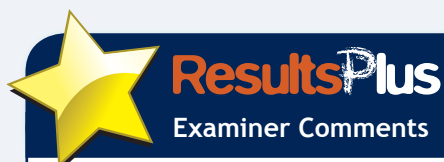
This candidate has justified their ideas. Although this isn't necessary here, it can sometimes be helpful if the candidate's idea isn't very clear.

(b) It was important that the two stories Shilpa wrote were as similar as possible.

Suggest **two** things she should have kept the same between the two stories.

(2)

1. the length of the stories
2. the complexity of the language used in the stories



This is a typical response scoring full marks.

Question 12(c)

12(c)(i)

This question was typically answered well enough to gain one of the two available marks, with many candidates getting across the point that the stories would be muddled or confused but then stopping. There were many ways to gain the second mark but relatively few candidates did so when they could easily have extended their answers saying 'muddled' to include an explanation of whether the first or second story would have been remembered better (either justification could have been creditworthy, using ideas of either interference or enhancement although terms would not have been required).

There were, however, some excellent answers giving clear accounts of the problems associated with the experimental design used by Shilpa. Therefore, some candidates had been thoroughly prepared on experimental (participant) designs.

12(c)(ii)

Many candidates gave full and appropriate answers to this question. Most were able to suggest either using two separate groups or introducing a delay. Many were also able to correctly name the independent groups design. However, some candidates did not give full enough answers and needed to state why (bold or italics) their suggestion made the design better and/or solved the problem.

(c) (i) One possible fault with Shilpa's study was that the same participants heard both stories. Explain why this might have been a problem. (2)

If they heard both stories they might not be able to remember the second story that well because they could be too busy while still remembering the first story.



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Examiner Comments

In part 12(c)(i), the candidate earns full marks as they identify that recall might be worse for the second story due to interference (note that the term was not necessary to earn the second mark).

In part 12(c)(ii), the candidate earns one mark for their suggestion and could have earned a second for identifying that their suggested change was to use an independent groups design.



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Examiner Tip

If you can add an appropriate term to your answer, do so - but remember that it is often even more important to include the explanation.

(ii) Explain how Shilpa might have changed the experimental (participant) design of her study to solve the problem you explained in (c)(i).

(2)

she could have one set of participants one story but told
another group of participants the other story.

Question 12 (d)

The correct answer was 'hypothesis'. Although a range of other possible terms, such as 'alternative hypothesis' would have been acceptable, this was the most common answer. It will be reassuring to readers of this report to know that variant spellings were accepted.

Question 12(e)

There were many excellent suggestions in response to this question, such as getting the participants to write the story down or say their answers into a recorder. Some candidates considered right to withdraw, informed consent and confidentiality well, showing that they knew their ethical guidelines and could apply them to this study.

However, some candidates had misunderstood the original study and wrote down things which Shilpa had already done to help overcome the ethical problem (such as improving privacy by testing each participant separately, which was already the case).

There were many different ways to earn two marks in this question, such as by naming an ethical guideline and explaining it.

(e) One of Shilpa's participants said that she was embarrassed about having to recall the story out loud. Explain how Shilpa might have avoided this ethical issue.

(2)

shilpa could have avoided this ethical issue by giving all the participants informed consent. telling them everything about the experiment further giving them the right to withdraw.

(Total for Question 12 = 11 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has named 'informed consent' and explained the term for their second mark. Note that they could not have earned the second mark for naming the second ethical guideline (right to withdraw), as the second mark in this case is for elaboration.



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Examiner Tip

Unless the question only asks you to 'give' or 'state' a term or concept (such as an ethical guideline), you will often need to explain or apply the idea.

(e) One of Shilpa's participants said that she was embarrassed about having to recall the story out loud. Explain how Shilpa might have avoided this ethical issue.

(2)

she could of asked for her participant to write
the 'story' that she recalls on a piece of paper and hand it
to Shilpa. Or she could reassure her that it's okay



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has provided two different ideas - an alternative way to earn two marks (recalling onto paper or reassuring the participants afterwards).

Question 30(c)

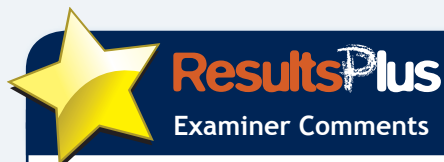
Better answers identified a benefit relating to collaboration or comparison. Some simply referred to having two researchers (ie more information) rather than to working *together*. Other candidates readily identified why the procedure was good in terms of reliability and validity and explained it well. However, their understanding of reliability was sometimes weak, with an assumption that simply having two researchers is sufficient to improve reliability, giving answers such as 'two heads are better than one' or 'working together is good' (which were not creditworthy) rather than suggesting, for example, that they could 'discuss their ideas'.

Two mark answers could either suggest two different reasons or suggest a reason and elaborate it. The latter is the case in this example.

(c) Daren and Sophie analysed Rachel's dreams together. Explain why this was a good procedure. (2)

When interpreting dreams, it is subjective, meaning it is opinion based, so you cannot be sure if the interpretation is correct. However, if both of the people agree with the interpretation, it is more likely to be true.

(d) Daren and Sophie concluded that Rachel found her dreams were more disturbing



Here the candidate earns two marks for their elaboration of the role of two people in counteracting subjectivity.

This candidate has earned two marks by suggesting two different reasons why it good that Daren and Sophie analysed the dreams together.

(c) Daren and Sophie analysed Rachel's dreams together. Explain why this was a good procedure.

(2)

When interpreting dreams, it is subjective, meaning it is opinion based, so you cannot be sure if the interpretation is correct. However, if both of the people agree with the interpretation, it is more likely to be ~~the~~ true.

(d) Daren and Sophie concluded that Rachel found her dreams were more disturbing



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Examiner Comments

The first point the candidate makes, about being more sure that they are right if they both come up with the same idea is about reliability. The second point, about combining their ideas, is about working collaboratively, implying that they will be able to combine their ideas into more effective explanations. They are two separate points, each worthy of a mark, but would have been better if each had included just a little more detail.



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Examiner Tip

When you are asked for an explanation, make sure that you have explained yourself fully.

Question 30(d)

The most popular responses here focused on them having only tested one person (ie that it lacked generalisability). Other good answers suggested that dreams could be random memories or from the unconscious.

Some candidates did not earn a mark here because they presented an 'everyone is different' answer without following this observation through, ie did not complete the idea that Daren and Sophie 'had only tested one person/Rachel' or 'should therefore have tested more people'.

Why couldn't they be sure that everyone's disturbing dreams are related to negative events?

(1)
They havent analysed enough peoples dreams,
they have only analysed one persons dream
making their findings ungeneralisable.

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Examiner Comments

This answer contains more than enough for one mark.

Why couldn't they be sure that everyone's disturbing dreams are related to negative events?

(1)
AS they have only done this
case study on one particular person.

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Examiner Comments

This answer contains enough information for one mark.

Why couldn't they be sure that everyone's disturbing dreams are related to negative events?

(1)

Because they only studied Rachel's dreams and what had happened to her during the day. so ~~it~~



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Examiner Comments

This answer contains enough information for one mark.

Why couldn't they be sure that everyone's disturbing dreams are related to negative events?

(1)

Because it could be because of ~~negative~~ random thoughts during REM sleep that had caused her to dream - using the theory of activation synthesis.



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Examiner Comments

This is an alternative way of earning one mark.

Question 31

31(a)

Many candidates answered this part of the questions very well, often with more information than was necessary. A small number of candidates inappropriately described Freud's theory of dreaming or amalgamated the two theories. Others inappropriately described Hobson's revised ideas (relating to activation of recent memories) although as many candidates had more than enough for full marks, this was rarely an issue.

31(b)

There were varied and excellent answers here. Some candidates had learned specific strengths and weaknesses (such as the problems presented by trying to explain lucid dreaming or recurring dreams). Other candidates applied their understanding with varying levels of success to discussions of issues such as generalisability.

This is an example of an excellent answer. It is worth noting that this is so even though there are minor errors and terms have not always been used correctly. In this particular example the candidate has provided a balance of strengths and weaknesses in part (b). Although this was not a requirement for full marks, it is good practice.

(a) Describe Hobson and McCarley's theory.

(4)

Hobson and McCarley believed that dreams were meaningless. They explained dreaming with the activation-synthesis model (ASM). The theory was during REM sleep, neurons would randomly activate in your brain. The neurons would then be synthesised (put into together) creating dreams. In the theory, they said that Pons caused movement inhibition, preventing the sleeper to act out dreams, and sensory blockade, in which that information from the senses would not come through and get access into the brain during REM sleep.

(b) Evaluate Hobson and McCarley's theory. You can include both strengths and weaknesses in your evaluation.

(4)

In Hobson and McCarley's theory of the activation synthesis model, there was the use of machinery in which to record brain wave activity during REM sleep, making it objective. Also, since the theory is supported with a number of scientists and the government, this makes the study credible as well. However, the aim of the theory was to show that dreams ~~are~~ are meaningless, but there was lucid dreaming in which they had meaning. When the theory was tested, 34% of people's dreams were said to be meaningless, making most people's dreams to apparently have a meaning, so the theory lacks generalisability. Furthermore, cats were also used to study brain wave activity and therefore it could lack validity and reliability because cats' brain wave activity may be different to that of human's.

(Total for Question 31 = 8 marks)



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Examiner Comments

In part (a) the candidate has made some minor errors but these are not sufficient to prevent them from earning the full four marks.

In part (b) the candidate earns one mark for the strength they identify relating to objectivity, another for their comments on the strength relating to science and credibility, a third mark for the weakness about lucid dreaming and a fourth for the weakness they describe relating to dreams in fact being meaningful. Their final point, about the relevance of work on cats for people would also have been creditworthy.



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Examiner Tip

Look at the number of points that are available for each part of a question and try to make sure that you have made at least that number of different points.

Grade Boundaries

Raw mark boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
60	51	45	39	34	29	24	19	14	0

Uniform Mark Scale boundaries

Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16	0

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