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Examiners' Report

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GCSE Psychology 5PS01 01

PEARSON

Introduction

This was the third sitting of the Unit 1 paper for the new GCSE specification and offered the first opportunity for two-year students sitting both modules at the end of their course to take their examination. Once again, candidates showed a sound understanding of many elements of the course and some outstanding answers were found across all the questions. The paper offered good differentiation with many questions being accessible to candidates throughout the ability range and others offering a genuine challenge to those seeking the higher grades. This report is intended to give future candidates and their teachers guidance regarding the way that the questions were answered and marked, and how individual candidate's responses could have been improved.

Question 13

This was a question about distortion illusions and Gregory's explanation of this type of illusion. Many candidates made reference to the figures provided to help them throughout the question, and in so doing gained marks easily in part (b). It was not, however, a requirement to refer to the figures and many candidates gained full marks in (b) without doing so.

Part (a) was multiple choice question. Answer 'B' correctly identified the Muller-Lyer illusion. Note that, although this was generally answered correctly, an error here would not have prevented a candidate from achieving full marks in the rest of the question.

Question 13 (b)

Good answers here often suggested that without depth cues you wouldn't know which looked closer (or whether to scale up or down). Other candidates mentioned depth cues but were unable to apply appropriate ones to the example(s) they had chosen. Other candidates offered confused answers which tried to use Gestalt laws to explain Gregory's theory.

Example 1

(b) Describe how Gregory's theory explains distortion illusions.

(2)

We perceive them as if they were three dimensional. For the Muller-Lyer illusion we perceive it as being a corner of a building, because of this the bottom one which we perceive as further away is scaled up and the top one scaled down because we perceive it as closer to us. For the Ponzo we use the depth cue linear perspective thinking line at the top is further away and scalling it up and thinking the bottom line is closer so scaled down

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Examiner Comments

This answer easily gained two marks. The first point about "them", i.e. distortion illusions, being interpreted as if they were three-dimensional just gains a mark and a second mark is earned for the successful explanation of how we apply constancy scaling to objects which are further away. This mark could alternatively have been awarded for the reverse argument about how we scale down objects which are closer to us (although only one of these marks could be earned by any individual answer). Finally, this mark could have been awarded for the same arguments applied to the Ponzo illusion.

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Examiner Tip

If you can use information or examples from the question to help with your answer, do it!

Example 2

(b) Describe how Gregory's theory explains distortion illusions.

(2)

Gregorys theory uses gestelt laws to explain distortion illusions. For example the Muller-lyer illusion Gregorys theory explains that we see things as a whole and distortion illusions try to fool your eyes by making things look different to what they are.

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Examiner Comments

This answer scored zero. There is a weak attempt to define illusions which, even if it had been a good definition would not have earned marks as this was not what the question was asking for. There is also a comment about the explanation saying that 'we see things as a whole' which is central to the Gestalt explanation of perception rather than Gregory's so there is no creditworthy content.

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Examiner Tip

Muddling the two theories was quite a common mistake, so it is important to remember which is which. To avoid needlessly losing marks, some students had learned mnemonics (memory aids) to help them. For example if you want to remember that Gregory's theory is about perceiving in **3D, D**epth **C**ues and **C**omparison to **B**oxy **B**uildings you might think of the number 3 and three letters: 3DDCCBB. It is even better if you make up your own mnemonics.

Question *13 (c) (i)*

In response to 13ci, many candidates simply said that Gregory's theory only works with straight lines. This is neither true nor a sufficient explanation so gained no marks.

Example 1

(c) (i) One problem with Gregory's theory is that it cannot easily explain some distortion illusions, such as the one below.

Explain why this illusion is a problem for Gregory's theory.

(2)
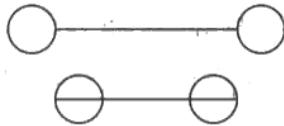
In this illusion you cannot use the linear perspective like you can in the original. This means you can see no converging lines and so cannot see one object as being further away than another.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gained two clear marks. The first is for recognising that linear perspective can't be applied and the second for why: because in the absence of converging lines one object (one of the lines) cannot be judged to be further away than the other.

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Examiner Tip

Many candidates referred to there being circles instead of fins. Whilst this is true it doesn't explain why this matters – because circles don't provide depth cues.

Example 2

(c) (i) One problem with Gregory's theory is that it cannot easily explain some distortion illusions, such as the one below.

Explain why this illusion is a problem for Gregory's theory.

(2)
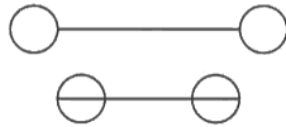
This is a problem for Gregory's illiosun because they seem to be at the same distance. Gregory's theory doesn't work well with circular objects it tends to work better with straight lines, because the straight lines provide more of a depth cue. These circles don't provide one, if you ae on the page across the one line looks bigger because we see it as being the inside of the room so scale it up. on this illusion we can't relate it to the corner of a room.

(ii) Outline one other problem with Gregory's theory

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Examiner Comments

This answer also gained two marks. The first is almost gained for the first sentence, but this doesn't say *why* they seem to be at the same distance. However, the next sentence, although also weak, provides enough for one mark as it explains that straight lines provide depth cues whereas circles tend not to. The second mark is awarded for explaining why constancy scaling can't be applied.
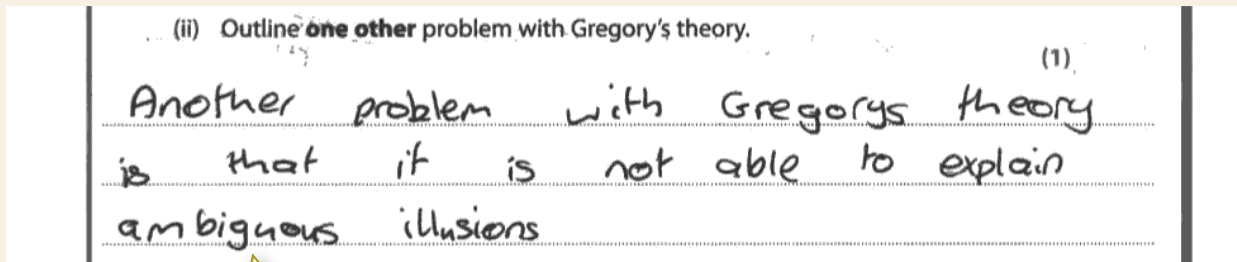
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Examiner Tip

Relating the answer here to the corner of a room was useful, it made the candidate's answer more clear.

Question 13 (c) (ii)

Candidates found this question challenging with many giving too simplistic answers.

Example 1

> (ii) Outline **one other** problem with Gregory's theory.
> (1)
>
> Another problem with Gregorys theory is that it is not able to explain ambiguous illusions

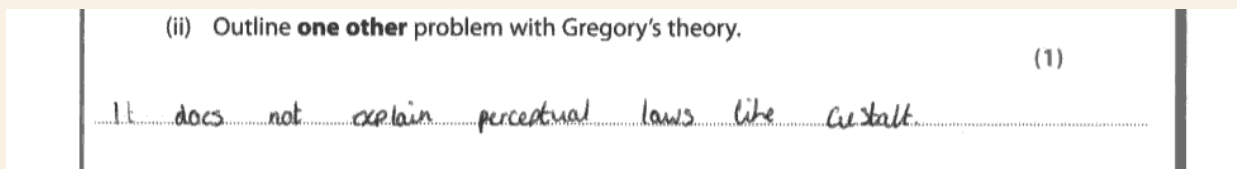**ResultsPlus**
Examiner Comments

This answer scored zero. Although Gregory's theory cannot explain some ambiguous figures, it can explain others, so this statement is too general. For example, Gregory's theory can explain the Necker cube. Similar answers relating to fictions also scored zero.

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Examiner Tip

Many candidates make the mistake of being too dogmatic (rigid) in their answers. Try not to be over precise especially if you are not sure!

Example 2

> (ii) Outline **one other** problem with Gregory's theory.
> (1)
>
> It does not explain perceptual laws like Gestalt.

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Examiner Comments

This answer also scored zero. Whilst the statement is true, it doesn't answer the question - Gregory's theory doesn't attempt to explain perceptual laws so this is not a problem for the theory.

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Examiner Tip

An easy way to gain a second mark is often to give an example. Here, for example, candidates suggested illusions that Gregory's theory could not easily explain, including ambiguous figures such as Leeper's Lady or fictions such as the Jesus illusion.

Question 14

This question provided good discrimination, with a range of answers. Some candidates knew ample, accurate information to gain more than four marks, others offered confused or inaccurate information about Palmer or described a different study altogether (commonly Brewer & Treyens, Bartlett or Carmichael et al).

Question 14 (a)

Marks could be gained for any aspect of the study described other than repeating the stem (i.e. aims, procedure, results or conclusions). Common correctly identified points included that it was a laboratory experiment and an appropriate conclusion (based on the stem of the question). A frequent error was to describe and/or name the design as independent groups.

Example 1

14 Palmer did a study about how context affects recall of items in a scene.

   (a) Describe Palmer's study. You can include his procedure, results and conclusion in your answer.

                                                        (4)

Palmer wanted to see if our schema's affect regonition. He showed a group a pickture of a kitchen scene to his participants. Then he asked them to identfy three different images (a loaf of bread, a mailbox and a drum). He found out that the participants could correctly identfy the loaf first then the mailbox and then the drum. This was because the loaf was related to the kitchen, the mail box was of similar size and the drum was unrelated. He concluded that the previous knowledge of the kitchen affect the participants idenfication of the objects.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gained full marks. The candidate provides an exact aim, some good details of the procedure and results, then an appropriate conclusion – this is more than the maximum for the question.

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Examiner Tip

Make sure that you know which studies were conducted by which researchers. If you are not sure, look for clues in the question.

Example 2

14 Palmer did a study about how context affects recall of items in a scene.

(a) Describe Palmer's study. You can include his procedure, results and conclusion in your answer.

(4)

Palmer did a study about wheather a scene would affect recall of objects in that scene. For example if you had a kitchen scene with a loaf of bread, a mailbox and a drum in, then you would be most likely to notice the loaf of bread, then the drum then the mailbox as the loaf of bread belongs to the scene, the drum doesn't fit so wouldn't be looked or, but the mailbox is to similar to the bread to stands out. To conclude Palmer found out that an unfamiliar object in a scene would be remembered less as it is an doesn't fit to the scene

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Examiner Comments

This answer earned only one mark, for the correct reporting of the main finding from the study. Many candidates suggested that participants went into a kitchen or saw a picture with the objects present. This may have been because they conducted a mini replication of the study in class. Acting out studies helps understanding but students also need to learn the actual methods and materials used.

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Examiner Tip

To help you to remember the studies, write or draw mnemonics. Imagine palm trees (for 'Palmer') growing out a loaf of bread in a kitchen!

Question 14 (b)

This was a band-marked rather than points-marked question. Common errors were to make the evaluation too general – points needed to be related to Palmer's study in order to score well and to have some depth. Good answers often included reference to controls, and why these were reasons for high validity (even though the latter is not required on the specification for Unit 1), as well as reliability. Many candidates referred to the removal of potential participants who had forgotten their glasses although not all could identify *why* this was a strength.

Example 1

> (b) Evaluate Palmer's study using both strengths **and** weaknesses.
>
> (5)
>
> A strength could be that he used a variety of participants split into two groups so he could trust his results were reliable e therefore generalisable to others. However a weakness could be that those people may have just made toast or eaten bread e had those things on their mind, therefore other factors could have had an effect on the D.V. A strength for the experiment could be that he produced quantitative data from alot of people, therefore data there was a lot of data. A weakness for the experiment could be that it was a case study however was not true-to-life as people don't really have to re-draw things often, therefore data could be invalid, another point is that it was not scientific e as a result not creditable.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gained three marks. Although a 'variety' of participants was used, this is not sufficient for a mark as it is too general. This candidate offers an original weakness relating to a participant variable (eating toast!) and elaborates on why this is a problem. They then provide a strength of the study. The answer ends with a confused statement about redrawing things and an incorrect statement about the study being unscientific. Both of these are ignored in the marking process.

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Examiner Tip

If a question asks for two things, such as 'strengths **and** weaknesses' (or 'aims **and** procedure' of a study) make sure that you include both in order to access all the available marks.

Example 2

(b) Evaluate Palmer's study using both strengths **and** weaknesses.

(5)

Strengths: Gathered lots of ~~evidence and~~ data to give more evidence e.g. lots of participants.
His study was objective and not affected by him.

Weaknesses: Done in a controlled environment so not true to life and could put more pressure on participants.
Data was quantitative and so not very ~~in-depth~~ in-depth.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gained two marks. The first strength is true, but is too general to earn marks – it would be so for most laboratory experiments. The point could have been improved by either adding exactly how many participants Palmer used (71 minus drop outs) or by explaining why in this case it was important to have a large sample (eg to enable generalisation to contexts other than kitchens). The second point is also weak but together they can be rewarded in a band-marked question. Similarly, each weaknesses is too general and brief, but correct and relevant so together they are creditworthy.

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Examiner Tip

When evaluating studies, relate the point you are making to the method used and try to explain why the feature is good (in the case of strengths) or bad (in the case of weaknesses).

Question 25

Most candidates could answer part (a) and gained at least some marks for parts (b) and (c) in this question.

Question 25 (a)

This question was answered well.

Example 1

> 25 Aimee has noticed that she tends to dream about what has happened to her during the day. She is designing a case study to find out about people's dreams.
>
> (a) Write an aim for Aimee's study.
> (1)
>
> To find out wether your dreams are formed by things you see in the day.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gains one mark.

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Examiner Tip

There are lots of ways to express an aim. Try to write a sentence beginning 'To find out ...', 'To investigate ...' or 'To see if ...'.

Example 2

> 25 Aimee has noticed that she tends to dream about what has happened to her during the day. She is designing a case study to find out about people's dreams.
>
> (a) Write an aim for Aimee's study.
> (1)
>
> To find out why people dream about occurances during the day

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Examiner Comments

This answer scored zero. It would not be possible in such a study to investigate *why* the relationship might exist between daytime activities and dreams.

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Examiner Tip

Some students made an error here by suggesting the aim was to find out whether *everyone* dreams about what they have done in the daytime. This is too wide a generalisation: evidence from case studies would not be sufficient to draw this conclusion.

Question 25 (b)

Many students produced good answers here, covering aspects of *how* to collect data, such as using a log of dreams, doing this daily and immediately on waking, suggested a timeframe or gave examples of possible questions Aimee could ask Joel. Stronger answers included appropriate use of terminology and a good level of detail.

Example 1

> (b) Aimee told her friend Joel about her case study looking at how daytime experiences affect dreams. He agreed to help her by participating.
>
> Describe how Aimee might collect information for her case study from Joel.
>
> (4)
>
> She could first of all ask him how his day went and then ask him if he dreamt about it. If this doesn't work she could organize a series of events which she does often and see if his dream is effected by this. Or just make Joel do some random things and then see if this effected his dream

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Examiner Comments

This answer earned just one mark for the point about asking him about his day and his dreams. The remainder of the answer is muddled, some is not about the effects of Joel's day but Aimee's, and is not about the case study method but about experimental manipulation.

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Examiner Tip

Make sure that you know the key differences between case studies and experiments. You could be asked to suggest aspects of the procedure for either method.

Example 2

(b) Aimee told her friend Joel about her case study looking at how daytime experiences affect dreams. He agreed to help her by participating.

Describe how Aimee might collect information for her case study from Joel.

(4)

She could ask him about the day he had and then about his dream checking to see if there is a direct or in direct link to the days events

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Examiner Comments

This answer also gained just one mark for the point about asking Joel about his day and his dreams. The remainder of the answer contains unnecessary detail about how the data would be analysed which does not earn credit.

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Examiner Tip

If you are asked to suggest how you would do a study, think about the stages you would have to go through, for example: finding participants, collecting the information (perhaps giving examples of possible questions or tests), how often to test people, how much data to collect, how you would record it and how you could do this ethically.

Question 25 (c)

Although many students gained full marks for this question, many were muddled by the difference between privacy (ensuring Joel does not have to reveal things he feels are too personal) and confidentiality (ensuring that information cannot be identified as relating to Joel). It was a band marked question looking for two clear rather than simple solutions.

Example 1

> (c) In psychology studies we try to overcome ethical issues.
>
> Privacy and confidentiality are important ethical issues. How could Aimee deal with such issues in her study?
>
> (2)
>
> Not ask him any personal questions that he may want to keep to himself and no cameras or microphones in his room to observe. Keep all his details safe about his identity such as name or picture.

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Examiner Comments

This answer easily gains full marks, offering a clear solution to both privacy and confidentiality.

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Examiner Tip

Try to write a detailed sentence for each point you make, using an example (such as the cameras and microphones in this answer) often helps.

Example 2

(c) In psychology studies we try to overcome ethical issues.

Privacy and confidentiality are important ethical issues. How could Aimee deal with such issues in her study?

(2)

That she doesn't let out any information about any of the participants. That she tells the participants that they do not need to share any private information.

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Examiner Comments

This answer gained one mark. Although a solution of offered for both confidentiality and privacy, both are simple so it is a band 1 answer.

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Examiner Tip

If a question asks *how*, as this one does, you need to provide more than just a definition of the idea.

Question 25 (d)

Most candidates could identify an advantage. Some answers successfully related ideas to the example of Joel in order to give a detailed response. Weaker responses lacked detail, for example identifying an appropriate term but demonstrating no understanding of why it was a strength.

Question 25 (e)

Most candidates could also identify a practical problem, finding this somewhat easier than part 25d. However, weaker answers again lacked detail.

Question 26 (a)

Most candidates recognised that dreaming was related to the unconscious but some struggled to provide any more relevant ideas than a mention of symbols that was insufficiently detailed to earn credit or claimed that Freud (always) thought that symbols were generic. Weaker answers often contained unnecessary detail about the iceberg analogy or described little Hans in depth. Stronger answers gave excellent descriptions of the key aspects of dream theory such as manifest and latent content and the processes of dreamwork.

Question 26 (b) (i)

Many candidates could identify a strength although weaker responses lacked detail, for example identifying an appropriate term but not saying *why* it was a strength.

Question 26 (b) (ii)

Many candidates could also identify a weakness although weaker responses centred on problems with Freud's methods so only indirectly answered the question.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx

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