

Examiners' Report
June 2014

GCSE Psychology 5PS02 01

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Introduction

Now a well-established GCSE Psychology paper, candidates this series responded well to the familiarity of the paper format and question type. Candidates performed particularly well on standard format questions and made significant improvement in responding to questions that required application of knowledge, although there was room for improvement here; candidates could evaluate questionnaires, but struggled to specifically evaluate questionnaires investigating phobias. Similarly, candidates offered an explanation of phobias using evolutionary theory, but struggled somewhat to use this knowledge to explain how Ling may have a phobia of spiders but not cars. The responses seen seemed to be more a discriminator of examination technique than ability, which no-one wants to see.

Evaluation questions that required more than an identification of a strength or weakness, were not always tackled well. This is an area for improvement across the range of abilities as many of the responses seen were not clearly or fully explained, either due to a lack of knowledge or not recognising that the question demanded further elaboration. If a question asks for one element but has a mark allocation of more than one, it is expected that the candidate goes beyond identification of a point. Useful discriminators of understanding are typically the methodological application style questions, which cannot be prepared for or predicted. The methodology questions in this paper not only discriminated on understanding but also on psychological imagination and technique. Similarly the essay style questions of 5 or more marks showed the range of ability expected at GCSE level. The ability of this paper to allow the cohort range to access all of the marks was evident in the range of marks allocated, with many candidates achieving a very high raw score.

Question 1 (b)

Following on from the initial multiple choice question; where most candidates correctly identified Williams' study as a natural experiment, three quarters of the candidates were able to correctly identify all four statements as true or false, the last two statements proved most difficult for some. A handful did not know that leisure time was recorded and some believing it to be a case study method.

Multiple choice questions often involve statements that need to be identified as correct or incorrect. They require careful reading as the whole statement needs to be correct before judging it as true.

(b) Which of the following statements are true or false about the techniques used in Williams' study?

Put a cross in the correct box to indicate whether each technique is **either** true **or** false.

(3)

Technique	True	False
Children were tested in laboratories to see if they became violent after playing video games.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children were observed in the school playground and classrooms to see if they were aggressive.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Participants' leisure time was recorded to see if time spent on leisure activities changed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A case study was conducted on one child to see how far they were affected by television.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Although the majority of candidates answer this question correctly, a typical incorrect response is caused by a lack of knowledge concerning the data collected about leisure time and activities. Some candidates do not acknowledge that the last statement concerned the case study method, which is not employed in this study.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should always read the whole statement for accuracy as elements of the statement can be false whilst others true, rendering the whole statement technically incorrect.

Question 1 (c)

Although some candidates confused the study with that of Charlton, Anderson and Dill, and Bandura, many successfully offered an overall conclusion regarding the nature of TV violence and aggression. However, a number of candidates made simplistic statements regarding aggression increasing without reference to which town showed an increase or the relative increases in aggression between towns. There was a pleasing number of answers referring to leisure activity time and IQ. It was pleasing to see some responses rich in detail, candidates should be mindful however of the mark allocation as many provided too much information.

That children were affected by the TV they watched, for example when they saw someone else hit the Bobo doll they the kids hit it too.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response exemplifies one of the difficulties with some of the studies in this area becoming merged. This candidate has clearly written about Bandura rather than Williams. This response does not achieve any marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

It is common for candidates to confuse Williams, Charlton, Bandura and Anderson and Dill. It is perhaps worth recognising this difficulty and spending time making sure they can accurately distinguish between them.

Williams found that aggression in the children of 'notel' increased ~~considerably~~ ^{considerably} while IQ level and creativity levels dropped slightly. Television did affect the children's behaviour.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response correctly identifies the main findings relating to aggression and IQ, in addition to providing an overall conclusion for all available marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

It is important to observe that aggression increased twofold in Notel relative to Unitel and Multitel. Many candidates simply stated that aggression increased, without referring to the relative increases.

Question 1 (d)

For named studies on the specification, it is important that candidates offer specific evaluation rather than generalised statements of evaluation. With this type of question, candidates will typically be awarded 1 mark for identifying a strength/weakness and a further mark for explaining the importance of that issue or giving a suitable example. Therefore it is worth considering quality of evaluative statements rather than quantity. The majority of candidates offered an appropriate strength or weakness, but most failed to elaborate sufficiently for a second mark, and it should be noted that many more offered generic comments that were not clearly expressed.

More able responses referred to Williams study being a natural experiment whereby the IV was naturally occurring for a first mark and explaining the point in terms of ecological validity and realism of participant behaviour. A strong weakness referred to the lack of control/measurement Williams had over how much TV/what content children were exposed to, and further explaining this in terms of cause and effect or other variables that may be implicated, such as media culture. More able answers ensured that the implications of the strength/weakness were clear with regards to the validity/reliability/accuracy/generalisability of the study.

Strength

The children got used to the researchers being there before they were observed so they acted naturally and the way they would if the researchers weren't there.

Weakness

They did not control what the children were watching on TV and they may not have watched anything violent at all. This would make their results inaccurate.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a clear response that links directly to the Williams' study and explains the strength and weakness fully. This is an important note as many answers were generic or confused. One point made well is preferable to confused statements.

This answer scores 2 marks for a well explained strength and 2 marks for a well explained weakness of the study.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

It is important for candidates to learn both the strengths and weaknesses of research studies named in the specification. It is advantageous to learn two strengths and two weaknesses that can be stated and explained rather than taking a scattergun approach to evaluation.

Question 2 (a)

Considering this type of question has occurred on previous papers, responses varied from ill-defined (e.g. verbal aggression), non-aggressive (e.g. hand gestures) to extreme (punching). Although any operational definition of aggression was accepted this time, candidates should be mindful of the context of the scenario. A simple debate would probably not escalate into physical violence, so less extreme aggressive behaviours such as shouting or banging a hand on the table would have been more appropriate in the given context.

1. Shouting
2. hand gestures / body language.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The first suggestion of an aggressive behaviour gains a mark but the second suggestion does not. Hand gestures/body language does not adequately reflect aggression and is also not clearly operationalised as a measurable behaviour.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Suggested behaviours should be linked appropriately to the scenario, in this case a debate, and should be measurable behaviours.

Question 2 (b) (c)

The majority of responses successfully identified two ethical issues in part (b) that could be related to the context of the study, such as informed consent and right to withdraw. However, many responses did not explain the ethical issue for a second mark. Candidates should be encouraged to use the information in the scenario to embellish the response. For example, stating the ethical issue of deception could have been successfully linked to the information in the scenario about telling participants it was an experiment on video game skills rather than the real aim of the study in to video game violence and aggression. Many responses failed to make this connection and offered generic descriptions of ethical issues instead.

Part (c) answers did offer general ways of overcoming ethical issues, such as offering a right to withdraw, but again many failed to elaborate or explain their suggestion. More able answers offered a suitable suggestion, such as debriefing, and made a useful connection back to the scenario, such as explaining to the participants it was really a study of video game violence and aggression not gaming skills. A handful of suggestions were imaginative; placing a glass wall between the debating sides.

1 Tom and Owen hid the true aim of their experiment which could affect the participants once they know the true aim of the study.

2 In the boxing game that one group played the age restriction may of been too high for the groups ages and they may of been exposed to scenes they shouldn't see. This could have upset them causing them distress.

Inform participants of the age limits of the video games before they play them; this will allow participants to withdraw from the experiment if they feel that this could affect them negatively.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

For part (b), the first ethical issue, although not a name guideline, is clearly identified as lack of informed consent. The response does not further elaborate on either the aim that is hidden or the implications for the participant, so achieves 1 mark for this answer. The second ethical issue of distress is identified and explained as resulting from perhaps the age certification of the game. This further elaboration achieves both available marks. The suggestion for improvement in part (c) is clearly linked to the second ethical issue in part (b) and is well explained in the context of the study, therefore gains both available marks.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should be encouraged to draw upon and use the information given in methodological scenarios as part of their answer. Although candidates can speculate to some extent about the nature of the study, often this leads to confused or ill-informed answers.

Question 3 (a)

Simplistic answers generally referred to some sort of cover up of information, with more successful definitions including the nature of the media that requires censoring (inappropriate/violent) or the purpose of censoring material in terms of protection. Many responses did not access the second mark due to lack of elaboration or insufficient definition. Both media and government censorship was creditable.

Acts that are considered to be socially sensitive or unsuitable for some age groups are restricted so that they are either only shown after the watershed, or have an age restriction on such as some films.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer clearly defines censorship as restricting material that may be unsuitable and gives an example of age restrictions on films for a second mark. Further detail on the watershed is necessary before gaining credit.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Definitions should be full and accurate. Simple statements about restricting 'some' information is not sufficient as a definition of censorship as it is not clear what 'some' information relates to.

Question 3 (c)

With a modal mark of 3, it is clear that the majority of candidates engaged with the question well and successfully connected Social Learning Theory to Emily's behaviour. It was particularly pleasing to see responses that used the technical terminology in content: modelling, vicarious reinforcement, identification, role model, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation were used to connect what Emily could have been watching on television with her resulting aggressive behaviour with her school friends.

Because of Emily being ten years old she won't know that what is on TV is acted out and she could see this as normal behaviour. So she would have to watch TV with supervision because a child would not know that what he/she is watching on TV is wrong to do in your average life.

Also kids learn from what they watch that is why that at a young age kids books have a lot of images in them but when you expose a child to TV and let them on for on total hours then it could begin to play on their mind.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This response unfortunately fails to engage with the appropriate theory and offers a lay response to the question.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

A strategy that could be employed to Social Learning Theory could be to list the concepts, such as modelling, identification, vicarious reinforcement, etc., and explain each concept in terms of Emily's behaviour and television viewing.

The type of programmes Emily watches could be influencing her aggression. Through Social Learning Theory, she sees the characters as ~~the~~ role models and observes what they do. Identification would mean she believes she wants to be just like the characters and copy exactly ^{what they do}. This is a case of Social Learning Theory as she copies acts and scenarios from what she sees and observes on TV. She may also learn her aggressive ways from TV through vicarious reinforcement, an indirect reward or punishment, she may see characters being praised for being aggressive and aim to imitate the behaviour to gain the same reward.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This response has used the terminology with reasonable effect by defining each concept with reference to Emily.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates could be encouraged to elaborate further to firm up the link between television viewing and behaviour, e.g. 'she sees the characters as role models and observes what they do', could be improved by a description of the role model, such as being of the same gender/female television character that she observes punching a bad guy and copies this by punching a school friend.

Question 3 (d)

Most responses identified that an educational psychologist would try to identify the trigger/ cause of Emily's aggressive behaviour, but few managed to go beyond general statements to this effect. More able responses were more realistic in terms of the role of an educational psychologist being to assess, support, offer strategies and refer Emily to other agencies.

An educational psychologist may speak to Emily's teachers and parents and observe her behavior in lessons. They may try to ~~est~~ figure out what causes the anger and aggression in her and then begin to try and help Emily recognise ~~this~~ ~~when~~ what triggers her anger. They might then let her teachers know where her anger stems from, and set up a scheme with Emily which involves her removing herself from the situation when she feels that she is going to get angry and lash out aggressively.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response offers a realistic answer and gains a mark for each comment.

They may sit her down and talk to her about her issues and behavior and try to resolve the problem.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This response fails to offer any tangible way that an educational psychologist might help Emily. It is simply not enough to talk to her and resolve her problems. The answer also fails to mention anger, so is not credited.

Question 8 (a)

Response bias can include social desirability, acquiescence or central tendency/mid response bias. Two of these were options in this question and the remainder did not define any response bias. The majority of candidates identified these biases correctly, particularly social desirability, but some struggled to identify mid response bias or failed to cross a second box.

- 8 (a) Which **two** of the following statements best describe how response bias may have been an issue with Darren and Ela's questionnaire?

Mark **only two** boxes.

(2)

- A The majority of participants were honest about their phobias, saying they disliked cats.
- B A minority of participants said that they liked cats.
- C Some participants tried to help Darren and Ela by saying they disliked cats.
- D Many participants gave the middle rating on most questions.
- E Many participants did not understand the aims of the study.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has correctly identified social desirability as an issue with Darren and Ela's questionnaire but incorrectly identifies the second statement.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates should be exposed to multiple choice questions that contain two or more correct statements, to remove the mindset that multiple choice questions only require a cross in one box.

Question 8 (b)

Although many responses clearly identified appropriate strengths of a questionnaire, a significant number did not address the requirement of the questionnaire content. Answers that gave generic strengths without reference to phobias did not achieve more than 2 of the 3 available marks. Successful links to phobias were made by comments comparing questionnaires to interviews and the potential embarrassment of answering questions on phobias, or comparing questionnaires to distress caused by exposing participants to phobic objects under laboratory conditions. Responses that referred to questionnaires being quick and easy were not credited without further qualification.

Question 9 (a)

Many candidates were prepared to explain why Ling was fearful of spiders, but many omitted to explain why she would not be phobic of cars as a modern object. Typically answers clearly expressed that spiders were dangerous to ancestors and that this fear had evolved as a genetic preparedness to fear objects that did not look human (slimy, hairy, speedy) and many referred to genetic transmission. Some mistakenly stated that cars were not harmful in the evolutionary past rather than showing an understanding that they did not exist. Some offered descriptions of Social Learning Theory instead without any link to evolutionary preparedness.

Ling's phobia of spiders is due to ~~the~~ her ancestors avoiding spiders to survive. Genetically, Ling has inherited the phobia as her ancestors before her have realised spiders are a threat to a person's survival. This is not the ~~the~~ case with cars as they are a modern object so no fear from ancestors would be developed.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer gains all 3 marks available for acknowledging that spiders were harmful and therefore avoided, understanding genetic transmission and also being aware that cars are modern objects. It is a simplistic but effective explanation that directly addresses all aspects of the question.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates should be careful when explaining this theory as the emphasis should be on 'preparedness'. That is, we have inherited a predisposition to learn (prepared) to be fearful of things that were harmful to humans in the evolutionary environment of adaptation. This concept is often poorly expressed.

Question 9 (b) (c)

The most popular study choice was Bennett-Levy and Marteau, however, Curio and Mineka (the correct study) were used to good effect. Candidates did well to describe the aspects of the study demanded by the question and were particularly strong when describing the results and conclusions. A handful of candidates described Jones' or Heinrichs study which could not be credited as description. Despite some super study descriptions candidates struggled to offer an appropriate strength. Successful evaluation referred to the independent groups design of Bennett-Levy and Marteau used to prevent demand characteristics or the ethical nature of using a questionnaire as opposed to showing pictures or exposure to real animals. Acknowledging the Bennett-Levy and Marteau used both males and females was accurate as a strength but many failed to qualify this with an explanation of why this would be important.

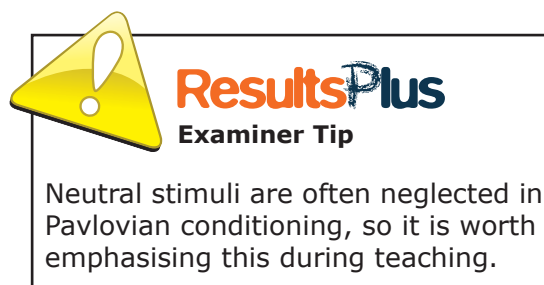
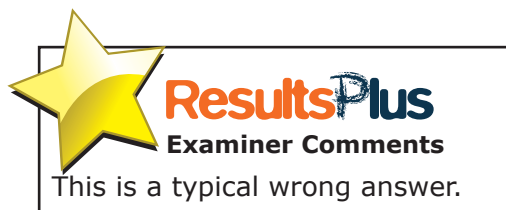
Question 10 (a)

The majority of responses seen correctly matched the explanation to the appropriate example. 2 marks were available for all correct pairings and 1 mark for two correct pairings. The reason for this is that two correct pairings would automatically result in a third correct match being made by default.

Question 10 (b) (i)

Many candidates incorrectly identified 'unconditioned stimulus' as the answer.

Leon was taken horse riding as a treat for his birthday. He really liked horses and was looking forward to his riding lesson. The horse was a/an unconditioned stimulus because Leon was not scared of horses at first.



Question 10 (b) (ii)

The majority of candidates correctly placed 'conditioned stimulus' here.

Question 10 (b) (iii)

The majority of candidates correctly identified 'conditioned response' as the answer.

which Leon now associated with fear. Fear was now the

unconditioned response for Leon.



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Examiner Comments

Although the majority of candidates correctly identify 'conditioned response' the typical wrong answer is 'unconditioned response'.

Question 10 (c)

Although many candidates scored 1 mark here for identifying that a degree was a necessary qualification, very few expressed clearly that a doctorate in clinical psychology was needed. Many described work experience or personal attributes rather than qualifications.

(c) State **two** qualifications needed to become a clinical psychologist.

(2)

1 *A three year doctorate*

2 *an A level in psychology*



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Examiner Comments

This answer gains 0 marks as the doctorate was not specific to clinical psychology. A Levels are not a requirement that precursors all higher education courses, so is not a necessary qualification.

Question 10 (d)

Flooding and systematic desensitisation were the most common therapies described. Reference to Leon's phobia of horses was required to access higher marks, and most candidates managed to make at least one link to either Leon or horse phobias. It was common for candidates to evaluate the chosen therapy towards the end of their response, presumably to fill up the answer space. More able candidates referred to technical terminology and concepts related to the therapy, such as hierarchy of fears, reciprocal inhibition, forced exposure and associating phobic objects with relaxation, and described the course of the therapy in detail.

CBT. Cognitive behavioural therapy could be used by the educational clinical psychologist to help treat the phobia. The clinical psychologist would help ASIC Leon to write down a hierarchy of fears concerning the horse. Starting from not very scary ~~from~~ for Leon to ending up near or petting the horse. The clinical psychologist would go through the hierarchy step by step over a course of treatment with Leon; starting with the first step on the hierarchy list. If Leon didn't feel comfortable moving ~~on to~~ the next step on the hierarchy then the clinical psychologist would ~~wait for~~ wait till Leon felt ready. Also Leon would have a right to withdraw from the therapy.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response gains credit for the production of a hierarchy of fears, movement through the hierarchy when comfortable and the right to withdraw (accepted as written as description rather than an evaluative comment). It earns 3 marks overall but could have gained more with a better description of relaxation techniques that could be used, ensuring that the client was relaxed before moving to the next fear, and eventually associating horses with relaxation/desensitisation/reciprocal inhibition.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

When a question is linked to a stimulus, as it is here, it is important to embed the description within the context of the stimulus.

A clinical psychologist may help treat Leon's phobia of horses through the process of flooding. They may force Leon to ride a horse and face his fear head on. This would cause Leon to panic and ~~be~~ become very stressed, but, after a while his body would begin to calm down and relax as our bodies psychically cannot ~~too~~ handle loads of stress and will begin to shut down. Leon will then begin to feel much more calm, and will then learn to associate horses with the feeling of relaxation.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gains all the available marks. They clearly identify that flooding involves facing fear directly and immediately, the processing causing initial panic but eventual biological calming and ultimately a new association between horses and relaxation being formed.

Question 11 (b)

Candidates who incorrectly identified XXY in the multiple choice question precursor often failed to adjust the mistake and offered rather confused and inaccurate findings in this question. It was pleasing to see that the majority of responses referred correctly to the findings not showing a conclusive link but acknowledging that moderately more aggression was found in XYY than XXY. More able candidates referred to intelligence being lower in XYY and the potential link between low academic status and aggression. There were also some intelligent comments relating to the actual similarities between XXY and XYY being found and the lack of causality in the findings.

Question 11 (c)

Some candidates misread the stem of this question and evaluated Theilgaard's study. Less able answers tended to refer to criminals not telling the truth, whilst more able answers gave a range of possible reasons why this may be the case; such as glorifying their crimes to look good in the presence of other criminals, not telling the truth to avoid recrimination, feeling guilt and distress, accuracy of memory, and underplaying crimes for early release.

Convicted offenders may lie about their crimes and act as if they are sorry in order to get out of prison early. They could also glorify their crimes and make them seem worse than they actually were which would make the information ~~the~~ gathered not entirely accurate.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer gains 2 marks for the comments regarding lying for early release and glorifying their crimes.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates need to learn about both practical and ethical issues regarding gathering information from convicted offenders. Here they could have used either.

Question 12 (a)

This question was not answered well; often the independent variable was stated or the dependent variable was not operationalised despite being fully described in the stem of the question.

Question 12 (b)

The clear reason for Iain to use an independent groups design was to ensure the participants did not hear both accents and alter their rating as a result of demand characteristics. Many candidates identified that a repeated measures design could cause demand characteristics for 1 mark, but typically did not explain why this might be the case. Other candidates described that hearing both accents would not be preferable for 1 mark but did not explain the consequences of this. Material that did not gain credit often referred to comparisons being made between the groups but without explanation.

Question 12 (c)

Many candidates correctly explained quantitative data as numerical, statistical or not prose. The typical mistake was to confuse quantitative with qualitative data.

Question 12 (e)

Although candidates found little difficulty in identifying either race or attractiveness as potential factors that could bias decision making, few elaborated as to the potential effect. More able answers drew information from research studies to provide examples of its effect. Many candidates wrote about both race and attractiveness which took up valuable answer space.

if the dyendent was attractive this could have affected Iain's results because it is said that if an attractive person is arrested they would ^{have} be ~~be~~ a shorter sentence. ~~because~~ This is because people believe that an attractive person is more likely to have a good job, money and they wouldn't need to steal and do other crimes where as an unattractive person is more likely to get a longer sentence because their less likely to have a decent job and money so they would need to steal and commit crimes to make money.

(Total for Question 12 = 8 marks)



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Examiner Comments

This response gains 1 mark for explaining unattractive characteristics potentially leading to a longer sentence and a further mark for how attractive features could lead to a shorter sentence, with some elaboration as to why this may be the case. A more sophisticated answer could have linked attractiveness to type of crime, as found in Sigall and Ostrove's study.



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Examiner Tip

When asked to 'use your knowledge' candidates should be strongly encouraged to draw upon theory and research to elaborate their answer.

Question 14 (a)

Many candidates did well on this question as they were able to successfully comment on the purpose of profiling (catching criminals or narrowing the list of suspects) and many provided detail on the process of profiling. More able answers correctly stated that a list of features is produced based on evidence from the crime scene, many offered the type of characteristics (gender, body size, hobbies, employment, marital status). Ambitious answers attempted to explain the criminal consistency hypothesis or the American profiling process, although some of these were unclear. Less able answers described profiling as being able to describe the actual criminal and produce a facial identification. It was nice to see that some had knowledge of other features of profiling such as being able to identify souvenirs that might be taken and interview techniques that could be used.

Question 14 (b)

The majority of candidates achieved both marks here for correctly stating that profiling could be regarded as guesswork which could result in an innocent person being convicted of a crime or leading the investigation down the wrong path and wasting time. Less able answers highlighted issues with police procedures rather than inherent problems with profiling, e.g. criminals moving. Answers referring to a change in modus operandi tended to be confused.

Question 15

Social explanations offered varied from parenting strategies, family circumstances, self-fulfilling prophecy, social learning theory and maternal deprivation hypothesis. Few candidates offered a biological theory. The strongest element of many essays was description rather than evaluation. Although the reverse was true for self-fulfilling prophecy. These imbalanced answers rarely achieved the top marking level. Evaluation, which was notably weaker or absent, could have included research studies and alternative explanations. Less able answers tended to offer lay explanations often referring to gangs or poor conditions that might encourage stealing, without any explicit theory/explanation to support claims being made.

Paper Summary

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

- Definitions should be full and accurate.
- It is important to learn both the strengths and weaknesses of research studies named in the specification. It is advantageous to learn two strengths and two weaknesses that can be stated and explained rather than taking a scattergun approach to evaluation.
- Remember to link suggested behaviours appropriately to the given scenario.
- Remember to draw upon and use the information given in methodological scenarios.
- Learn the concepts, such as modelling, identification, vicarious reinforcement, etc.
- When asked to 'use your knowledge' you should draw upon theory and research to elaborate your answer.

Grade Boundaries

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

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