

Report on the Units

June 2008

1989/MS/R/08

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Psychology (1989)

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1989/01 Paper 1 (Foundation)

General Comments

The paper produced a similar spread of performance to previous years, resulting from a number of questions which differentiated well. The questions in the style of matching lines and boxes, true/false etc. were answered well by the majority of candidates and questions drawing on Source material were answered better than in previous sessions. However there appeared to be an inadequate knowledge and understanding of research relating to personal space, long-term effects of deprivation and separation, conformity and obedience. Candidates need to be reminded that when asked to 'describe' research or a study, they should include the aim, procedure and findings. Many candidates lost marks for making no reference to findings. The high tariff question differentiated well but many failed to give any response at all which was disappointing. Quality of Written Communication remains poor. Few candidates scored full marks on this because of either; too great a use of colloquialism (e.g. "Milgram done a study..."), poor grammar, poor sentence construction, or inadequate use of Psychological terminology.

Section A: Social Psychology – Environment and behaviour

- 1(a) The majority of candidates used the Source correctly to identify where the observation took place.
- 1(b) Most candidates correctly identified the distance as 13 cm.
- 2(a) Most candidates were able to explain that an observation involves looking at /watching but many did not link this to what is watched i.e. behaviour. A minority of candidates explained that the observed behaviour needs to be recorded.
- 2(b) Most candidates correctly identified an advantage of the observation method but few fully explained their chosen advantage.
- 2(c) Most candidates were able to identify a disadvantage of the observation method but few supported the disadvantage with a reason.
- 3 Most candidates were able to identify two ways in which people can mark out their territory but many failed to link their suggested methods to an identifiable public place e.g. 'put a coat over a chair' - but did not state where – this could be home (primary territory) or airport lounge (public territory).
- 4(a) The majority of candidates gave reasonable descriptions of an appropriate study into personal space. However a number either mixed up Felipe and Sommers' research in a library with Fisher and Byrne's research and/or failed to give any of the research findings. No statement of findings meant only 2 marks could be gained. In addition, some candidates tried to describe both of Felipe and Sommers' field studies which resulted in confused answers.

- 4(b) Some candidates continued their description of the research given in part (a). Credit was awarded for such information in part (a). They therefore failed to gain marks for a criticism of their chosen study. Fortunately the majority of candidates did identify an appropriate criticism even if they did not describe it fully.

Section B: Behavioural Psychology - Phobias

- 5(a) The majority of candidates used the Source correctly to identify how Watson and Rayner conditioned Little Albert to fear the white rat, though many only wrote, 'They made a loud noise,' and therefore gained no marks.
- 5(b) Most candidates were able to identify that it took 7 trials to condition 'Little Albert'.
- 6 Few candidates managed to score full marks on this question. It was apparent that understanding of the components of classical conditioning was poor, overall.
- 7 Although the majority of candidates were able to identify 3 appropriate ethical issues, few were able to either describe the issue or explain how the issue could be raised against the research described in the Source.
- 8(a) Most candidates correctly matched the given definitions with the given phobias.
- 8(b) The majority of candidates provided at least one common sense account of how one of the named phobias in part (a) might have started. Unfortunately, far too often, the theory explained was not identified and the description was vague and confused.

Section C: Developmental Psychology - Attachment

- 9(a) Most candidates correctly identified where the children were looked after.
- 9(b) Although the majority of candidates were able to quote correctly from the Source on how Sam first reacted to his mother's absence, some described his behaviour inaccurately in their own words and so scored no marks.
- 10 This question was ambiguous so in order to be fair to all candidates full credit was given for any responses; partial, full or no response.
- 11 Few candidates provided anything resembling a good answer for this question. Although some candidates gave common sense answers, many were not linked to identifiable cultures and were too vague. Candidates, who understood what "cultural variations in childcare practices" referred to, gave two very clear, detailed descriptions.
- 12 Few candidates were able to explain either a case study and/or an example of how the use of the case study method has proved useful in the understanding of human behaviour.
- 13 Most candidates were able to list some effects of deprivation/separation. Many were also able to make vague references to the work of Rutter/Bowlby/Tizard. Unfortunately too many candidates misread the question and described short-term effects of separation i.e. the Strange Situation.

Section D: Social Psychology – Social influence

- 14 Most candidates correctly identified two differences in behaviour between British and Spanish youngsters, though many candidates just identified 'drinking' and not 'binge drinking' and so lost an easily achievable mark.
- 15 Here again nearly every candidate correctly matched the given definition with the type of mathematical measure.
- 16 Though many candidates were able to correctly identify two factors which can affect conformity, few actually explained how they affected the level of conformity i.e. increased/decreased it. A small number gave factors clearly related to obedience so failed to gain any marks.
- 17 Here candidates had the opportunity to describe and evaluate one or more obedience studies. The most popular studies were Milgram and Hofling. Although descriptions of Milgram's experiment were reasonable, there were many confused and vague responses with far too many candidates giving either inaccurate or no results, or failing to explain how the study showed obedience. With reference to Hofling's research: most candidates mentioned the results, but descriptions of the study lacked depth and accuracy, which were required for this extended answer. There were a number of candidates who either offered nothing or some sketchy anecdotes about children being obedient to their parents with no reference to studies.

Evaluations were generally sound, when answered, most often focusing on ethics. It was pleasing to read some positive evaluation as well as negative evaluation from the better candidates.

1989/02 Paper 2 (Foundation)

General Comments

There were a good range of responses in this series' examination, reflecting the changing cohort for this qualification. Although there were fewer very high scoring candidates, this seemed to be a reflection of the fact that Centres are now entering candidates for the appropriate tier. Section A (Attitudes of Prejudice) and Section C (Sex & Gender) tended to illicit the best responses with Section D (Perception) having some weak ones. In some cases, whole Centres appeared not to have covered the Perception topic. If this is the case, it is worth noting that any one of the 6 topics examined by this paper can be assessed and there is no means of predicting which ones. Performance on Section D was poor, largely due to the number of candidates who are still not attempting the final extended response question. Although this question is challenging for many candidates, those that do attempt it often score some marks if only for quality of written communication (which they cannot be awarded unless there is some response to the last question). Question 25 was not the only question to be frequently left blank however – questions 7, 13 and 20 were often not attempted as well. Given the positive marking employed in this GCSE, candidates should be encouraged to 'have a go' at an answer – especially as the issue of non-completion is unlikely to be to do with time.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

Question 1(a)

Most candidates could extract the correct information from the Source.

Question 1(b)

Most candidates could extract the correct information from the Source again. However, some decided to give their own definitions and/or examples of the affective component of prejudice which was not creditworthy.

Question 2

Many candidates gave two succinct responses to this question, with ageism, racism and sexism being popular. Other candidates responded less succinctly but could still earn marks. A number of candidates mistakenly gave egocentrism as an example of prejudice. It was also common for candidates to give two components of prejudice (normally taken from the Source). Candidates should know that only the first two questions in a section are directly related to the Source.

Question 3

Most candidates correctly matched the feature to the definition. Some candidates penalized themselves by drawing more than two lines despite the instruction to only draw one line from each feature.

Question 4

It was pleasing to see that the majority of candidates scored full marks on this question, demonstrating sound teaching and a sound understanding of the area of ethics. Where mistakes were made, it was usually because consent and conduct were confused on the table.

Question 5

Most candidates attempted this question and most scored both marks, with the problem of interviewees not telling the truth, being the favoured response. This actually worked quite well in the context of studying prejudice, and many candidates alluded to issues of social desirability for a second mark. Where candidates only scored 1 it was often because the problem did not relate clearly enough to studying prejudice, as required by the question. A notable number of candidates seemed to be confusing interviews with observations.

Question 6

There were few good, technical answers to this question despite it being explicitly on the specification. Most responses were common sense or anecdotal. This sometimes still gained a mark but often did not.

Question 7

The mark scheme anticipated descriptions of Adorno's or Tajfel's theory but there were few of these. Those candidates that did offer these theories often gave incomplete and/or vague outlines. Candidates offered a study rather than a theory, described prejudice rather than explained it, and offered common sense theories of prejudice. On this basis, few candidates scored above 1 mark. A number of candidates also defaulted to social learning theory with varying degrees of success.

Section B

Question 8(a)

Most candidates extracted a clear example from the Source. Some responses were overlong, even if correct.

Question 8(b)

As above, most candidates gave a correct response.

Question 9

Many candidates could offer two memory aids, and since only brief responses were required, many could earn 2 marks. Common errors were to offer 'retrieval' as a memory aid or to offer vague ideas, such as 'sounds'. The best answers named well known techniques.

Question 10

It is common to have a Memory question based around stages of memory and it was encouraging to see more candidates getting full marks compared to previous series. Nearly all candidates knew the correct 3 terms to include in the diagram but there was still some confusion of the order, especially with storage and retrieval.

Question 11(a)

Most candidates could offer one of the range of acceptable answers i.e. Atkinson, Shiffrin, multi-store, two processes – but too many candidates could not name this theory despite it being core to the Memory topic.

Question 11(b)

There was a lot of variability in the standard of responses to this question. Some candidates were clearly well prepared for this type of question giving 'textbook' responses. Despite some flexibility in marking, there were too many vague responses e.g. LTM lasting for 'years' and STM having a 'small' capacity. A common mistake was to omit the units for the capacity of STM, whether chunks, items, words or something similar.

Question 12

Not many candidates scored 1 mark here. Candidates either seemed to know how to answer this question or did not. Many of the best answers focused on issues of ecological validity. Weak answers were either too general or offered disadvantages that would apply to any or many methods, or they were misinformed e.g. assuming all experiments are costly and time consuming.

Question 13

Compared to previous series, more candidates could offer a psychological theory of forgetting. Most seemed to fair best with motivated forgetting and trace decay. Some theories were more discernible than others, depending on the quality of description. There was the inevitable confusion of theories, especially between trace decay and displacement, in which case examiners credited the better description. There were still too many common sense answers, given the predictability of this question e.g. candidates talking about stress causing forgetting or lack of concentration. In addition, a number of candidates described the process of remembering so that forgetting was only implied. Such candidates tended not to score more than 1 mark. A final problem was candidates offering studies into forgetting rather than actual theories.

Section C

Question 14(a)

Not all candidates seemed to be aware that content analysis is a method and so ended up guessing at other methods, or extracting the wrong bit of information from the Source.

Question 14(b)

This question presented few problems for candidates and nearly every one scored a mark here.

Question 15

Almost every candidate attempted this question and most candidates scored both marks here. This showed that even if they were unsure about the nature of a content analysis they did know something about what it might be used for.

Question 16

Most candidates were able to identify the correct definition of 'sex typing'. Wrong answers were more or less divided equally between the other two options.

Question 17

There was a wide range of responses to this question. Not only were the range of marks (0-3) distributed almost equally, but there was no obvious statement that candidates were getting wrong or right. In short, some candidates understood these key concepts while others seemed to be guessing what was true and what was false – and often getting it wrong!

Question 18

Most candidates scored full marks here. Where candidates made mistakes, it was because they mixed up the sex chromosomes rather than the sex hormones.

Question 19

This was poorly answered, with only a handful of candidates being awarded both marks. Those candidates, who did score 1, did so often only because they offered statements that, although not explicitly evaluative, could be interpreted as such e.g. statements distinguishing between sex and gender, statements making references to sex reassignments, etc. Criticism of theory seemed to be beyond many candidates.

Question 20

It was disappointing to see many anecdotal, and often factually incorrect, responses to this question. Too many candidates seemed to be relying on their own (sometimes questionable) general knowledge rather than anything they had been taught. 'Cultural differences in gender role development' is explicitly on the specification but only a minority of candidates seemed aware of this. Mead's research is a good illustration of cultural differences in gender role development and the few candidates that cited it, often scored the best marks here.

Question 21(a)

This question presented few problems for candidates. Those who got it wrong tended to quote the 'series of faces' as the stimulus.

Question 21(b)

Most candidates were able to interpret the bar chart to give the correct answer. A significant number of candidates gave other scores from the chart e.g. 8 and 10 were common responses.

Question 22

There were few creditworthy responses here. Very few candidates appeared aware of experimental subjects designs. However, some candidates used their logic, with 'dependent groups design' being frequently offered.

Question 23

Not many candidates were able to answer this question correctly. A large number missed it out, and others just offered terms from the Perception topic which did not fit. It was also surprising that a number of candidates could offer one constancy but not a second.

Question 24

Only a few candidates could actually quote relevant depth cues to achieve the marks here. However, other candidates could at least describe depth cues e.g. 'road narrowing', 'nearer trees in front of ones in the back' which was also creditworthy. However, too many candidates just identified objects in the picture e.g. 'signs' without saying how they showed depth. This was not creditworthy.

Question 25

Where candidates answered this question, there were a variety of responses and quality of written communication was of a reasonable standard. Most candidates drew their studies from 10 or so classics e.g. Gibson & Walk, Fantz, Hudson, etc. Very good responses described relevant studies clearly and offered one or two criticisms of each study. Average responses tended to be descriptive rather than evaluative, but still included most of the key details of studies. Weak answers outlined studies that were just about discernible – however, examiners had to work hard to make sense of them. It was good to see that most candidates were able to follow the instruction and offer one 'nature' and one 'nurture' study. There were still a minority of candidates who seemed unsure of the research, which constituted studies into Perception, although fewer than previous years, when Perception was assessed. Common errors were to offer research into cognitive development, attachment and gender role development – despite two of these areas being relevant to the other exam paper and the latter having been assessed in Section C already.

1989/03 Paper 3 (Higher)

General Comments

Examiners felt in general that the majority of candidates had been appropriately entered for the higher paper and that many demonstrated excellent content knowledge and a good understanding of psychological terms and concepts. Unfortunately many candidates failed to follow the accepted convention of aim-procedure-results when describing research and therefore lost valuable marks.

The topic of attachment appeared to challenge candidates the most, with many either not appreciating the requirements of the questions or not understanding the various methodologies used to research this topic. This section served as a good differentiator.

The final high tariff question was mostly answered and, because it was possible to give so much detail, it served as a good differentiator. The Quality of Written Communication ranged from excellent to poor.

Section A: Social Psychology – Environment and behaviour

- 1(a) The majority of candidates used the Source correctly to identify where the observation took place.
- 1(b) Most candidates correctly identified the distance as 13 cm.
- 2(a) Most candidates were able to explain that an observation involves looking at /watching but many did not link this to what is watched i.e. behaviour. The minority of candidates explained that the observed behaviour needs to be recorded.
- 2(b) Most candidates correctly identified an advantage of the observation method but few fully explained their chosen advantage.
- 2(c) Most candidates were able to identify a disadvantage of the observation method but again, few supported their disadvantage with a reason.
- 3 Although most candidates gave good explanations of 'defensible space', many confused this term with personal space and failed to mention that it is a 'physical area which is usually home centred'.
- 4 The majority of candidates gave good explanations of how personal space may be protected.
- 5 Candidates generally described and evaluated one study well, with the most common evaluative issues being ethics and ecological validity. Unfortunately a large number of candidates either tried to describe both of Felipe and Sommers' field studies or confused Felipe and Sommers' library study with that of Fisher and Byrne, causing them to lose valuable marks.

Section B: Behavioural Psychology - Phobias

- 6(a) The majority of candidates used the Source correctly to identify how Watson and Rayner conditioned Little Albert to fear the white rat, though many only wrote, 'They made a loud noise,' and therefore scored no marks.
- 6(b) Most candidates were able to identify that it took 7 trials to condition Little Albert.
- 7 Although candidates generally knew both terms, there was much confusion over the loud noise being the CS and a generally weak understanding of CR with many saying it was 'the response to the stimulus'. This question proved an excellent differentiator.
- 8 Although the majority of candidates were able to identify 3 appropriate ethical issues, few were able to either describe the issue and/or explain how the issue could be raised against the research described in the Source.
- 9 The majority of candidates were able to describe two clearly identifiable explanations in adequate detail using correct terminology to gain full marks.

Section C: Developmental Psychology - Attachment

- 10(a) Most candidates correctly identified where the children were looked after.
- 10(b) Although the majority of candidates were able to quote correctly from the Source on how Sam first reacted to his mother's absence, some described his behaviour inaccurately in their own words and so scored no marks.
- 11 This question was ambiguous so in order to be fair to all candidates full credit was given for any responses; partial, full or no response.
- 12 Few candidates provided a good answer to this question. Although some gave common sense answers they were not linked to identifiable cultures and were far too vague. Many candidates made links to attachment types rather than childcare practices; though those who did understand what the question required gave two, very clear, detailed descriptions. This question served as a good differentiator.
- 13 Few candidates correctly answered this, most describing either Ainsworth's Strange Situation or Bowlby's Theory. Again the question acted as a good differentiator.
- 14 This question was generally answered poorly with many candidates not understanding the question requirements. The question asked for ways that psychologists study the early development of human attachment, so general reference to observation, child/mother interactions, case studies e.g. Genie, scored few marks whereas detailed descriptions of how Bowlby, Ainsworth etc. researched this issue often gained full marks.

Section D: Social Psychology – Social influence

- 15 Most candidates correctly identified two differences in behaviour between British and Spanish youngsters though many candidates just identified 'drinking' and not 'binge drinking' and so were not credited.
- 16 Most candidates knew these terms and gave good explanations of all three. A common error was lack of detail e.g. middle one, most frequent.
- 17 Candidates generally gave good descriptions of parts of Hofling's study or more commonly Milgram's study. Unfortunately, for higher tier candidates, responses frequently lacked adequate detail, failed to include findings, or made little or no reference to how the study showed obedience.

Evaluation was generally good but again often lacked detail e.g. 'the study lacked ecological validity' or 'participants were deceived'. Furthermore, too many candidates lost valuable marks in this question through; not using extended writing skills (e.g. only using bullet points), showing generally poor literacy skills, or failing to use adequate and appropriate Psychological terminology.

1989/04 Paper 4 (Higher)

General Comments

There were some very good scripts, showing a high standard of both teaching and learning. This was particularly attributable to candidates' performance on the final question which was better than in previous series. There were still a few examples of candidates being entered for the Higher tier who would probably have been better suited to Foundation. However, most low scoring candidates seemed ill prepared rather than lacking in ability. It was pleasing to see most candidates attempting most questions.

Section A

Question 1(a)

Most candidates answered this correctly.

Question 1(b)

Though there were more errors than 1(a), nearly all candidates got this correct. Some of the errors included candidates giving their own definitions or examples of the affective component of prejudice.

Question 2

A few candidates seemed well prepared for this question, offering a clear and accurate response. Although many candidates offered a good enough definition of stereotyping to earn two marks, the definitions seemed to be from their own general knowledge rather than their study of psychology. It was common for candidates to offer definitions of prejudice more generally rather than stereotyping specifically. Such responses tended to score only 1 mark because of their lack of focus on the cognitive element.

Question 3

Some candidates seemed to be thrown by this relatively straightforward question. Most reasonable responses were accepted. However, the examples had to be of sexist *behaviour* rather than beliefs. Some candidates were too general in their response, talking about discrimination in broad terms. Other candidates misread the question and gave examples of other types of prejudice e.g. racism, ageism.

Question 4

This was answered really well with nearly all candidates scoring full marks. Ethical issues are clearly being well taught and well understood. Where candidates did not score full marks it was normally because they confused consent and conduct.

Question 5

Most candidates scored both marks here. The most commonly identified problem was the opportunity for interviewees to be dishonest, which was then explained well in the context of studying prejudice to earn the second mark. Where the problem could not or was not related to studying prejudice (even implicitly) then candidates were limited to 1 mark.

Question 6

This question elicited a variety of responses covering a range of marks. Candidates that covered more than one technique for reducing prejudice tended to score higher marks. It was also good to see many candidates following the command to evaluate techniques, often with some success. Weaker responses tended to describe studies that illustrated techniques (e.g. Elliott, Sherif) rather than considering the techniques themselves. There were too many laypersons'

responses to this question; especially given the fact that 'reducing prejudice' explicitly features on the specification.

Section B

Question 7(a)

Nearly every candidate answered this correctly.

Question 7(b)

Again, nearly all candidates answered this correctly.

Question 8

Candidates have found questions about application problematic in the past, in this topic area, so it was encouraging seeing more candidates understanding what was required of them and giving an appropriate response. A few candidates still offered descriptions of studies or sometimes even theories. However, most candidates identified an appropriate area of application e.g. education/school/classroom, police investigations, etc. Better answers were more specific or gave actual examples of techniques based on memory research.

Question 9

The majority of candidates were able to correctly match all three stages to their definition. Where mistakes were made, there was no obvious pattern.

Question 10(a)

Most candidates could offer one of the accepted responses e.g. Atkinson, Shiffrin, multi-store, two process.

Question 10(b)

Most candidates understood how to answer this question and were clearly aware that there are well established distinctions between the two stores. The majority of these candidates chose to focus on duration and capacity, although not all scored full marks. Sometimes features of one or both stores were identified too vaguely e.g. "LTM lasts for years" or "STM has a small capacity". Another common error was to not give the units for the capacity of STM e.g. chunks, items, words. Some candidates limited their marks by making only an implicit distinction by stating the feature of one store but not the other. Some candidates chose to write about STM in (a) and then LTM in (b), but this did not stop them receiving full credit if distinctions were clear across the answers.

Question 11

This was generally well answered, especially when candidates chose to use motivated forgetting, trace decay, displacement or interference theory. Candidates choosing cues tended to score less well as they often described remembering rather than forgetting. Where candidates did this (including with other theories), they often scored no more than 1. Some candidates also described studies rather than theories of forgetting – again limiting their marks. Average answers tended to be good on description but poor on evaluation. Too many candidates offer evaluation which is essentially reiterating the theory e.g. "trace decay is good at explaining how lack of rehearsal leads to forgetting", "motivated forgetting explains why we forget traumatic events". However, the best answers often offered two clear criticisms of a theory or, occasionally, a well elaborated one.

Section C

Question 12(a)

Although most candidates answered this correctly, not all candidates seemed to be aware that content analysis is a method. On this basis, some offered alternative methods or extracted the wrong information from the Source.

Question 12(b)

Most candidates achieve the mark on this question.

Question 13

This question was answered well, with candidates showing good understanding of what was meant by a control, by applying their knowledge to the Source. Even candidates who did not score full marks seemed to understand controls, but their responses were not considered clear or explicit enough. The most common error was to identify the IV.

Question 14

As with Question 2, it was surprising that more candidates did not know a clear and accurate definition for this key concept. Most candidates had some idea of what the term meant and on this basis scored at least one of the marks. A common mistake was to confuse sex typing with gender identity.

Question 15

Most candidates seemed to know that the first statement was 'true' but fewer accurately identified the second statement as 'true' too.

Question 16

As with the Foundation paper, it was disappointing to see anecdotal and often factually incorrect responses to this question. Too many candidates seemed to be relying on their own (sometimes questionable) general knowledge rather than anything they had been taught. 'Cultural differences in gender role development' is on the specification explicitly but not all candidates seemed aware of this. Mead's research is a good illustration of cultural differences in gender role development and those candidates that described it, often scored the best marks here.

Question 17

Most candidates demonstrated a good measure of knowledge in their answer to 17(a) and covered both chromosomes and hormones in relation to the correct sex. Some candidates went further, for example, outlining the effect of hormones on behaviour. Although it was relatively straightforward to include the concepts necessary for full marks, candidates should be aware that if they list or present a table of concepts they cannot gain full credit where the question says describe. In 17(b), where candidates were required to evaluate, fewer marks were attained. Too many evaluation points were implicit rather than explicit. The most common evaluation point was to criticise the biological approach for ignoring the effects of the environment. However, a number of candidates just stated an alternative theory (e.g. SLT) without using it evaluatively. The best evaluation points referred to relevant evidence (for and against biological factors), or noted the changes in gender role (across time or cultures).

Source D

Question 18(a)

Nearly all candidates answered this correctly.

Question 18(b)

Most candidates were able to interpret the bar chart and give the correct response. Common errors were to give 8 or 10 as the answer.

Question 19

It was disappointing how many candidates did not know where to start with this question. Most candidates attempted this question but most also scored zero. By far the most common response was to consider participants conforming – possibly because candidates had focused on the word ‘independent’? Another common error was assuming independent groups were a sampling technique, therefore eliciting responses referring to generalisation and other similar ideas.

Understanding of experimental subject designs seemed to be Centre-specific, suggesting some candidates are being taught about them and others not. The candidates who were aware of independent groups tended to give good answers to the question.

Question 20

This was answered reasonably well, with most candidates showing a level of understanding. Not all candidates were familiar with the names of depth cues, but some could still earn full marks by giving a good description of how they were used in the picture. There was some mismatching of depth cues and explanations/descriptions. Some answers were also limited to 1 mark due to their lack of clarity in explanation.

Question 21

Extended responses usually show the most differentiation in quality. However in this examination series, there were a large number of very good answers to the final question, showing candidates are well informed and well prepared in this topic area. The emphasis on studies rather than theories may have helped, but, even so, studies were covered in clear and accurate detail in many cases. A lot of candidates scored full or close to full marks on the description of studies looking into the nature/nurture debate in perception. There was more variability in the evaluation, but even here, there were many candidates scoring 3 or 4 marks. Only a minority of candidates did not attempt evaluation at all. This meant the quality of written communication marks were more useful in differentiating between essays. However, even here, it was unusual to award below 4 marks. Inevitably there were some candidates who could only discuss the nature/nurture debate in general terms but even these candidates got some credit. The only candidates who received no credit for content were those that ‘borrowed’ irrelevant studies from elsewhere e.g. cognitive development studies, gender development studies, social deprivation studies, etc.

1989/05 Coursework

Candidates produced a generally high standard of reporting and followed ethical guidelines in all but a very small number of cases.

There was some evidence of candidates using a prescribed format to write up the report in some cases.

Markers made good use of the mark schemes and overall changes to the marks were not made to many centres. Most changes to marks were in fact to increase the lower end of the mark range.

There was some evidence of marking to the C and A boundaries but less so than in previous years.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Psychology (Specification Code 1989)
June 2008 Examination Series

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	80	-	-	-	43	36	29	23	17
2	80	-	-	-	41	35	29	24	19
3	80	-	66	58	50	38	-	-	-
4	80	-	61	52	43	32	-	-	-
5	40	-	34	28	23	19	15	12	9

Specification Options

Foundation Tier

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	-	-	-	106	90	73	59	45
Percentage in Grade	-	-	-	-	22.9	19.6	10	3.9	0.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	-	-	-	43.0	65.9	85.5	95.5	99.4

The total entry for the examination was

Higher Tier

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	200	175	156	136	116	89	75	-	-
Percentage in Grade	-	3.8	17.4	26.4	25.7	20.8	4.6	-	-
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	-	3.8	21.2	47.6	73.3	94.1	98.7	-	-

The total entry for the examination was

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	2.2	10.3	15.5	32.8	21.6	10.9	4.1	1.6
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	2.2	12.5	28.0	60.8	82.4	93.3	97.4	99.0

The total entry for the examination was

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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