



General Certificate of Education

Psychology 5186 *Specification B*

Unit 1 (PYB1) Introducing Psychology

Report on the Examination *2007 examination - January series*

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit 1 (PYB1): Introducing Psychology

General

Overall, a number of good responses were seen this series. In terms of question choice, question 1 was the more popular in Section A. That said, it was pleasing to observe more candidates opting for question 2 this series. In Section C, questions 4 and 5 were equally popular. Rather disappointingly, more candidates lost marks this series for quality of written communication. In general, responses were poor in terms of spelling, punctuation and grammar. In addition, examiners noted that candidates did not always clearly convey the points they were trying to make, with vague/ambiguous responses evident. Candidates are reminded of the importance of clarity in conveying their responses across all sections of the paper. Finally, as in previous examination series, centres/candidates are reminded of the importance of completing the front page of the answer booklets correctly. Many examiners this series had to complete, on behalf of candidates, centre/candidate numbers, the title of the question paper, the paper reference number and in particular, the numbers of the questions answered. It is the responsibility of centres to ensure this information is completed correctly.

Section A: Approaches

Question 1

- (a) Many candidates focused on Darwin's theory of evolution. However, these candidates tended to score two out of the three marks available for this question as they did not always clearly convey what the term evolution means, or they did not explicitly relate the contribution of the theory of evolution to the development of psychology.
- (b) Candidates were generally able to provide a definition of scientific and common-sense explanations of behaviour. Surprisingly few, however, gained the third mark available for the distinction between these terms. Often, the attempt was too implicit, not clearly conveyed, or omitted altogether.
- (c) Candidates performed very well indeed on this question, with the majority scoring three or four marks. Here, responses tended to focus on the tripartite theory of personality. Knowledge and understanding were impressive, with many candidates identifying that Jaina's superego would not be developed. Other credible responses related to issues concerning the Electra complex and fixation during the oral stage of development.
- (d) Performance on this question was variable, considering this style of question has appeared in previous examination papers. Candidates were generally able to provide the basic assumptions and features of the cognitive approach: however, these features were often brief statements such as "It is mechanistic", rather than elaborating as to why. In referring to another approach, candidates tended to favour the behaviourist approach. As in previous examination series, many candidates simply described the behaviourist approach rather than using it to evaluate the cognitive approach, thereby limiting marks.

Question 2

- (a) Candidates were able to identify a technique used to study cortical specialisation. However, few responses scored the full three marks. This was due to either a limited understanding of the technique or confusing the technique with others.

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- (b) In general, candidates were able to convey what is meant by the fight or flight response. Credit was given where responses focused on the physiology rather than explicitly defining the terms per se. Unfortunately, the instruction to provide an example was not followed by many candidates, therefore they only scored two out of the three marks available for this question.
- (c) (i) Few candidates scored full marks for this question. Simplistic accounts of the term were provided and there was often a lack of emphasis on 'species' rather than 'individuals'. Similarly, there was a frequent failure to note that the process takes place over many generations.
- (c) (ii) Some good responses were seen in relation to aggression and the rooting reflex. These tended to be centre-specific. However, a number of candidates provided physical examples rather than behavioural examples and hence scored no marks.
- (d) Candidates were generally able to convey knowledge of the basic assumptions and features of the approach, ie the role of genetics and functions of the brain. In referring to evidence, some good responses were seen in relation to selective breeding, twin and adoption studies. Candidates were sometimes able to offer evaluative comments in the form of use of this evidence, thereby gaining AO2 marks. However, a number of responses lacked focus or focused too heavily on explaining gender for example, thereby limiting marks.

Section B: Research Methods

Question 3

- (a) The majority of candidates scored one mark for this question because they provided only one variable in their response. It was evident that candidates did not understand the nature of a hypothesis, as statements were often aims, titles or interpretations of data.
- (b) Candidates tended to score one mark for this question. Where candidates correctly interpreted that relaxation therapy reduces anxiety, this was not always supported with reference to the data given in the bar chart.
- (c) The requirement to draw a table of the data provided in the bar chart was reasonably attempted by the majority of candidates. However, some candidates failed to score the full three marks by omitting the mean heart rate as the measure. Few candidates provided a title for the table. Although this was not specifically required to gain the full three marks, candidates are reminded of the importance of a title for any form of descriptive representation.
- (d) The most common limitation of the mean cited was that it can be affected by extreme values. A number of candidates, however, offered general limitations of measures of central tendency, eg it does not measure dispersion, and gained no marks as a result. The limitation provided needed to relate explicitly to the mean.
- (e) Most candidates were able to state what is meant by quantitative data. However, few candidates clearly conveyed what is meant by qualitative data, commonly referring to it as data that provides 'quality'. Often, in their struggle to define the term, candidates were able to raise a distinction, eg that it is more difficult to analyse statistically.

- (f) (i) Most candidates were able to name a sampling method, with random and opportunity sampling being the most popular.
- (f) (ii) Many candidates scored one mark for this question, for example, by referring to random sampling as time consuming. However, candidates often failed to convey *why* random sampling is time consuming, for two marks.
- (g) The majority of candidates failed to score the three marks available for this question. Issues relating to protection of participants, right to withdraw, etc, were frequently raised: however, candidates did not always relate the issue explicitly to the study, or failed to discuss the issue or consider the implications by offering a solution to the ethical issue.
- (h) Many candidates responded well to this question and gained the full marks. However, as in previous examination series, the two types of interview were defined in the context of open/closed questions, which is not necessarily correct. A number of candidates struggled to define adequately what is meant by an unstructured interview. Surprisingly few responses drew a distinction between the two types of interview, or did not make the distinction explicit, thereby limiting marks.

Section C: Psychology of Gender

Question 4

- (a) Surprisingly few candidates clearly defined what is meant by the term gender. The majority of responses did convey an understanding of the term in relation to social/cultural attributes, but few used the correct terminology, referring to 'male/female' rather than 'masculine/feminine'.
- (b) The majority of candidates understood what is meant by the term androgyny for one mark. In referring to an example, candidates needed to provide an example of an individual who displayed characteristics of both masculine and feminine behaviour for full marks.
- (c) For those candidates who understood the method of content analysis, the description of a study commonly cited was Lobban. Some good, detailed responses were seen. However, as in previous examination series, candidates failed to gain marks if they did not clearly convey the aim and/or conclusion, or provided an irrelevant study.
- (d) In general, candidates performed well on this question, which was pleasing as this style of question had not appeared in previous examination series. Nearly all the candidates were able to convey what is meant by the terms nature and nurture. In referring to a study, this was generally well attempted. The most popular studies cited were Money and Erhardt, Imperato McGinley and Mead. It was pleasing to observe that, in the majority of responses, these studies did not dominate the whole of the candidate's response. In general, the studies were used well in relation to the concepts of nature and nurture.

Question 5

- (a) The majority of candidates were able to offer one effect of testosterone, with aggression being the most popular response.

- (b) (i) Many candidates were able to score the three marks available for this question. It was pleasing to observe in this series that candidates used the correct terminology in describing the Oedipus complex.
- (b) (ii) Candidates tended to score only one mark for this question. Responses tended to focus on a general limitation of the psychoanalytic approach, ie a lack of evidence. Candidates were unable to convey *why* this was a limitation with explicit relation to the Oedipus complex.
- (c) (i) Most candidates understood that Sydney was in the gender identity stage. Credit was given to candidates who referred to the gender stability stage, as Sydney's age was not specified in the question. Most responses appropriately referred to the comments made by Sydney for full marks.
- (c) (ii) As in (c) (i), candidates tended to score full marks by correctly referring to Philip being in the gender constancy stage and supporting this with the comments in the stem.
- (d) Candidates' responses were of a variable standard. Better responses used appropriate terminology in relation to social learning theory, rather than, as was seen in a number of responses, quite common-sense terms. In referring to another explanation of gender, some good responses included reference to the biological explanation. Weaker candidates, however, turned their response more into a 'nature/nurture' answer thereby limiting marks. As in previous examination series, appropriate reference was made to evidence, eg Bandura, Money and Erhardt, but these studies were not always used as a discussion point in relation to social learning theory.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.