Psychology A Level

Course Description:

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and human behaviour. It is a fascinating and challenging course that will delve into the complex relationship that exists between our mental processes and our behaviour. Psychology is a science with cutting-edge research that has many real-world applications to issues in everyday life. You will learn the fundamentals of the subject and develop including critical analysis, independent thinking and research.

Qualifications Required:

Minimum entry requirements apply although you do not need any knowledge of psychology to undertake this course. However, the challenging nature of the course means that having a Grade 5 in Maths and English Language is strongly advisable. The course involves large amounts of essay writing, analysis of data using statistics and interpretation of evidence. You will be assessed by examinations (100%); there is no coursework. An average GCSE points score of 42 or higher is also preferred.

Aims of the Course:

- To develop a strong, balanced knowledge-base on the subject of psychology
- To increase awareness of the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific research methods
- To boost competence in a variety of practical, mathematical and problem-solving skills
- To appreciate how psychological research can contribute to the success of society
- To foster an interest in and enthusiasm for the subject, including further study and careers

Future Prospects:

Psychology will help you understand yourself and others in many ways. It may be the first step in a career in Psychology, such as clinical, counselling, educational, occupational, forensic, health or sports psychology, as well as teaching or research. Careers and further studies followed by past students include: nursing, child psychology, sports and exercise science, business studies, criminology, journalism, media studies, law, health and medical professions, including social work.

Student Feedback:

‘It’s an interesting course and you learn something new every lesson.’
‘Psychology is challenging, but enjoyable.’
‘Class discussions are interactive.’
‘You have to remember a lot of facts about studies.’
‘Be ready to apply your knowledge to different situations.’

Features of the Course:

We follow the AQA specification at A level. By choosing Psychology, you will learn how to investigate and conduct your own research, how to use evidence to support your arguments, independent learning skills, how to put over your point of view fluently and how to work as part of a team. You will also learn how to use statistical tests.

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A Level Units

Introductory Topics in Psychology – Paper 1

- **Social Influence** is about how people behave in groups and interact with one another. You will learn about obedience to those in authority, and why someone might not obey. You will also learn about minority influence and how small groups can impact larger groups.
- **Memory** focuses on how we remember and why we forget information. You will study the multi-store and working memory models, theories of why we forget information and how eye-witness testimony is impacted by questioning and anxiety.
- **Attachment** in psychology is about the emotional bonds made with others. In this topic you will study attachment in humans and animals as well as famous psychological studies such as the 'strange situation' and Lorenz and Harlow's animal studies.
- **Clinical Psychology and Mental Health** involves looking at behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. You will also study the ways conditions are treated, including through drug therapy and CBT.

Psychology in Context – Paper 2

- **Approaches in Psychology** aims to develop an understanding of the key approaches in Psychology: learning theories, cognitive, behaviourist, humanistic and psychodynamic.
- **Biopsychology** focuses on the functions and structure of the nervous system as well as the role of hormones. You will also study the fight or flight response, the role of adrenaline and how the brain is studied through scanning and imaging techniques.
- **Research Methods** runs throughout the specification and you will develop an understanding of the scientific processes and techniques of data handling and analysis, and become familiar with their use and be aware of their strengths and limitations.

Issues and Options in Psychology – Paper 3

- **Issues and Debates** focus on contemporary issues in the modern world. You will have the opportunity to discuss gender, culture, freewill, determinism and socially sensitive research from a psychological point of view.
- **Gender** gives students the opportunity to discuss the psychology of gender in more depth. It will provide the chance for students with the opportunity to study the social and biological explanations and theories of gender.
- **Schizophrenia** provides the chance to study a mental health condition in more detail. The topic includes the study of the explanations of schizophrenia as well as possible treatments.

Methods of Assessment:

Psychology is a linear course which means that you will take three, two-hour external examinations at the end of Year 13. Throughout the course you will complete regular internal assessments in class, to measure your progress towards your target grade.