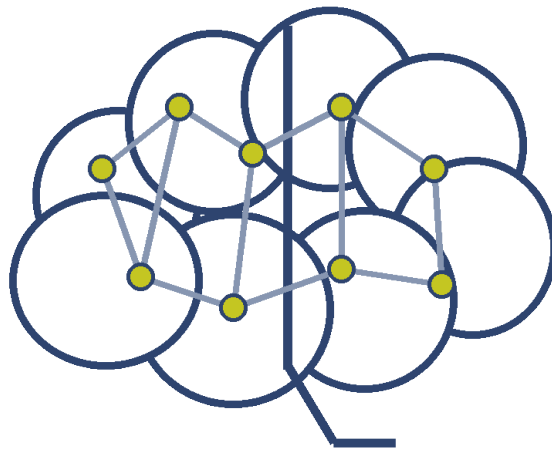


# BEAL SIXTH FORM

# A LEVEL PSYCHOLOGY

## TRANSITION BOOKLET



## YEAR 11 TO YEAR 12

Summer preparation for AQA A-level Psychology 7182

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Form / tutor group: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Submission date: \_\_\_\_\_

Independent research, practical thinking and the foundations of excellent evaluation.

**START**

# Welcome to A-level Psychology

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes. This booklet is designed to help you make a confident start by introducing the language, content and thinking skills used in Year 12.

**How to complete the booklet**

Complete every core task. Write in full sentences unless a table or diagram is requested. Use your own words, keep a record of every source used and bring the completed booklet to your first Psychology lesson.

## The updated AQA course at a glance

| Paper   | Content at Beal                                                             | Assessment         |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Paper 1 | Social Influence; Memory; Attachment; Clinical Psychology and Mental Health | 2 hours / 96 marks |
| Paper 2 | Approaches; Biopsychology; Research Methods                                 | 2 hours / 96 marks |
| Paper 3 | Issues and Debates; Relationships; Schizophrenia; Aggression                | 2 hours / 96 marks |

## What strong transition work looks like

| Success criteria                                                      | Done |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Accurate psychological terminology is used and key terms are defined. | [ ]  |
| Research is summarised in the student's own words rather than copied. | [ ]  |
| Claims are supported with examples, evidence or named research.       | [ ]  |
| Strengths and limitations are explained, not merely listed.           | [ ]  |
| Sources are recorded consistently on the final page.                  | [ ]  |
| The booklet is complete, legible and carefully presented.             | [ ]  |

Specification source: AQA A-level Psychology 7182 (updated first teaching September 2025).

**TASK 1****Psychology: science, not common sense****Core question**

How is a psychological explanation different from an opinion or a piece of everyday common sense?

**A. First thoughts**

1. Write your own definition of Psychology in no more than 25 words.
2. List three behaviours or mental processes that a psychologist could investigate.
3. Choose one of your examples and explain how it could be measured objectively.

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**B. Fact, opinion or testable claim?**

| Statement                                           | Fact / opinion / testable claim? | How could it be tested? |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| People remember meaningful information better.      |                                  |                         |
| Teenagers are always influenced by their friends.   |                                  |                         |
| Sleep duration is associated with test performance. |                                  |                         |
| Punishment is the best way to change behaviour.     |                                  |                         |

**C. Mini debate**

“Psychology should be considered a science.” Write one paragraph supporting the statement and one challenging it. Refer to objectivity, control, measurement and replication.

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**TASK 2****Memory: a mini practical****Ethics first**

Use a willing participant aged 16 or over. Explain that participation is voluntary, do not collect names, and allow the participant to stop at any time.

**Digit-span procedure**

Read each row aloud once at a steady pace. After each row, ask the participant to repeat the digits in the same order. Stop after two incorrect rows of the same length.

| Digit sequence      | Outcome             | Notes |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------|
| 6 2 9               | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 4 1 7 3             | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 8 5 2 9 4           | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 1 7 6 3 9 2         | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 5 8 2 1 4 7 9       | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 3 9 6 1 8 4 7 2     | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 7 2 5 9 1 4 8 3 6   | Correct / Incorrect |       |
| 4 8 1 7 3 9 2 6 5 0 | Correct / Incorrect |       |

**Results and interpretation**

4. What was the participant's maximum correct digit span?
5. What does the result suggest about the capacity of short-term memory?
6. Identify one variable that may have affected the result and explain how.
7. Explain one way the procedure could be improved to make the result more reliable.

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**TASK 3****Social Influence: why do people comply?****A. Key study fact files**

Research Asch's conformity study and Milgram's obedience study. Complete the table using concise notes.

| Study   | Aim | Procedure | Findings | Conclusion | Strength | Limitation |
|---------|-----|-----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| Asch    |     |           |          |            |          |            |
| Milgram |     |           |          |            |          |            |

**B. Apply the ideas**

A student agrees with a friendship group's answer even though privately they believe it is wrong. Another student follows a teacher's instruction because the teacher is seen as a legitimate authority figure.

8. Explain which example involves conformity and which involves obedience.

9. Use one psychological explanation to explain each behaviour.

10. Explain why the findings from Asch or Milgram may not apply equally to everyone.

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**TASK 4****Attachment: early relationships****Sensitive topic**

Psychological theories describe patterns and probabilities. They should not be used to blame caregivers or make assumptions about individual families.

**A. Build the foundations**

| Key term                | Accurate definition in your own words |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Attachment              |                                       |
| Reciprocity             |                                       |
| Interactional synchrony |                                       |
| Monotropy               |                                       |
| Internal working model  |                                       |

**B. Bowlby in context**

Research Bowlby's monotropic theory. Create a concept map that links adaptive, social releasers, critical period, monotropy, continuity hypothesis and internal working model.

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**C. Evaluation challenge**

11. Explain one piece of evidence that supports Bowlby's theory.
12. Explain one criticism of Bowlby's theory.
13. Why is it important to avoid treating attachment research as proof that one specific family structure is best?

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**TASK 5****Clinical Psychology and Mental Health****Use respectful language**

Write about people experiencing a disorder rather than defining a person by a diagnosis. Avoid sensationalised examples.

**A. What is abnormality?**

| Definition                         | What it means | One limitation |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Statistical infrequency            |               |                |
| Deviation from social norms        |               |                |
| Failure to function adequately     |               |                |
| Deviation from ideal mental health |               |                |

**B. Disorder comparison**

Choose two: phobias, depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Complete the comparison.

| Disorder    | Behavioural characteristics | Emotional / cognitive characteristics | One explanation or treatment |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Disorder 1: |                             |                                       |                              |
| Disorder 2: |                             |                                       |                              |

**C. Evidence matters**

Why is it risky to diagnose a disorder using a short social-media post or an online checklist? Refer to reliability, validity and professional assessment.

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**TASK 6****Approaches: six ways of explaining behaviour**

Complete the matrix. Keep each cell concise: two or three accurate points are enough.

| Approach        | Core assumptions | Key terms / psychologist | One strength or limitation |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Behaviourist    |                  |                          |                            |
| Social learning |                  |                          |                            |
| Cognitive       |                  |                          |                            |
| Biological      |                  |                          |                            |
| Psychodynamic   |                  |                          |                            |
| Humanistic      |                  |                          |                            |

**Comparison paragraph**

Choose two approaches and explain one similarity and one difference between them. Your answer must compare directly rather than describing each approach separately.

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**TASK 7****Research Methods: thinking like a psychologist****A. Key vocabulary**

| Term                 | Definition and example |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Aim                  |                        |
| Hypothesis           |                        |
| Independent variable |                        |
| Dependent variable   |                        |
| Operationalisation   |                        |
| Extraneous variable  |                        |
| Reliability          |                        |
| Validity             |                        |

**B. Design a simple study**

Question: Does listening to music affect reading comprehension? Design a safe, ethical school-based experiment.

14. Write a clear aim.
15. Write a directional or non-directional hypothesis.
16. Operationalise the independent and dependent variables.
17. Choose an experimental design and justify it.
18. Identify two variables to control.
19. Identify one ethical issue and explain how it would be managed.

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**TASK 8****Evaluation and academic writing****The A-level leap**

At A-level, naming a strength or limitation is not enough. You must explain why it matters and link it back to the claim, theory or study being evaluated.

**The PEEL evaluation structure**

| Step     |  | What to do                                                       |
|----------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Point    |  | State the strength or limitation clearly.                        |
| Evidence |  | Use a named study, finding, example or methodological principle. |
| Explain  |  | Explain why the evidence supports or challenges the claim.       |
| Link     |  | Return to the question and make the consequence explicit.        |

**Upgrade the weak paragraph**

Weak version: "Milgram's study was unethical because participants were deceived. This is a weakness."

20. Add precise evidence about the ethical issue.
21. Explain why the issue matters for participants or the value of the research.
22. Add a balanced counterpoint or conclusion.

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**Final extended response**

Write approximately 400 words: "Psychological research can be scientific even when it investigates complex human behaviour." Discuss.

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**FINISH**

## Sources, reading and final checklist

### Source log

| No. | Source title / organisation | What you used it for |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1   |                             |                      |
| 2   |                             |                      |
| 3   |                             |                      |
| 4   |                             |                      |
| 5   |                             |                      |

### Recommended starting points

- AQA A-level Psychology 7182 specification and subject-content pages.
- Your AQA Psychology Year 1 textbook or school online textbook.
- British Psychological Society articles written for students and the public.
- Reputable university psychology pages and published research summaries.
- Use general revision websites only as a starting point; check important claims against your textbook or AQA.

### Final self-check

| Success criteria                                                      | Done |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| All eight tasks are complete.                                         | [ ]  |
| Every named study includes an aim, procedure, finding and conclusion. | [ ]  |
| Evaluation points explain why the issue matters.                      | [ ]  |
| Research-method terms are used accurately.                            | [ ]  |
| Sources are logged and copied material has been avoided.              | [ ]  |
| The booklet is ready to submit in the first lesson.                   | [ ]  |

#### Bring curiosity

You are not expected to know the whole course before September. The purpose is to practise asking precise questions, using evidence and explaining your reasoning.

Designed with reference to the AQA Psychology 7182 specification and the structure of the TPC Academy transition booklet supplied by the department.