

**AS LEVEL**

**Examiners' report**

# **PSYCHOLOGY**

**H167**

For first teaching in 2015

**H167/02 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate responses is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 2 series overview

H167/02: Psychological themes through core studies is the second of two examined components for the OCR AS Psychology qualification. This component focuses on:

- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of five key themes
- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of a classical and a contemporary study located within each key theme (10 core studies)
- Knowledge, understanding and evaluation of areas and perspectives in psychology
- Methodological issues relating to the core studies
- Issues and debates in psychology
- Practical applications of psychology.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed to have a sound knowledge and understanding of all the core studies, areas, perspectives and debates. Evaluation skills needed to be good and candidates needed to be able to apply their psychological knowledge effectively to a novel situation.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showed extensive knowledge and understanding of the nine core studies cited in Section A and therefore responded to the questions competently and confidently</li> <li>• had sound knowledge and understanding of the nature/nurture debate and gave in-depth and appropriate responses in Section B</li> <li>• appreciated that a discussion as to the extent the biological and developmental area are similar involved a good analysis of similarities and differences for both areas and was supported by appropriate evidence from relevant core studies in Question 6(e)</li> <li>• could clearly suggest why the article had high ecological validity in Question 7(b)</li> <li>• knew, understood and could apply a principle/concept of the cognitive area in Question 7(c)</li> <li>• showed a high standard of understanding of two ways teachers could encourage children to remember important information and were also able to apply their psychological knowledge within their suggestions effectively in Question 7(e)</li> <li>• made explicit links to issues/debates in Question 7(f).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• presented responses that are pre-learnt and rehearsed and not reading and responding to the specific questions appropriately</li> <li>• confused the details between different core studies and gave muddled responses in Section A and Section B</li> <li>• did not demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding to respond effectively to questions relating to how core studies relate to the nature/nurture debate</li> <li>• did not demonstrate adequate understating of controls used in studies for Question 2(a) and reliability of procedures in Question 5</li> <li>• explaining how core studies are similar/different as opposed to discussing the extent to whether the biological and developmental areas are similar/different in Question 6(e)</li> <li>• simply stating practical strengths and weaknesses of the suggestions they made in Question 7(e) (i.e. cost, availability) without reading that the evaluation needed to focus on issues and debates. They did not read the question carefully and therefore did not respond to the question asked.</li> </ul>

# Section A overview

Section A: Core studies. This section consists of the ten core studies individually, in their pairs or in terms of their key theme. Questions are short responses but range in mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

## Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Participants in Grant et al.'s (1998) study into context-dependent memory completed two types of test.

Identify which **one** of these types of test was completed first.

.....  
..... [1]

Only a minority of candidates were able to provide the correct response. The most common incorrect response was the multiple-choice test/recognition test suggesting candidates have misunderstood that the focus of the question was which test was completed first or they did not know the order of the two tests. A few candidates stated features of the correct response (open questions, questionnaire) or stated a test from a different core study and therefore did not respond correctly to the question.

## Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) (i) Outline why Loftus and Palmer conducted their (1974) experiments into eyewitness testimony.

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.....  
..... [3]

The candidates who scored well on this question provided an outline containing references to the effect of leading questions and the influence/distortion on memory, and then went on to support their response with supporting details from Loftus and Palmer. The majority of candidates scored 2 marks by referring to leading questions and memory without contextualising their response to Loftus and Palmer.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Describe how the independent variable (IV) was manipulated in Loftus and Palmer's (1974) **second experiment** into eyewitness testimony.

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..... [3]

The candidates who performed well on this question recognised it was focused on Loftus and Palmer's second experiment and then described the three verb conditions: smashed, hit and no leading question asked. The minority of candidates were referring to the first experiment in their response, so candidates needed to take care when reading questions. The minority of candidates discussed the 'broken glass' question as the focus of their response which gained 0 marks. Stating 'a control group' was not enough as it needed to be described.

Exemplar 1

In the second experiment the interviewer either mentioned or they remember broken glass or not and by mentioning this it may have affected the participants memory showing if you add another variable it can manipulate someone's memory [3]

Exemplar 1 highlights the confusion some candidates were having with the 'broken glass' element of the study, which is the dependent variable not the independent variable. This candidate has then attempted a conclusion for the experiment but this is also not a requirement of the question. This exemplar demonstrates how the minority of candidates missed that the focus of this question was the independent variables in Loftus and Palmer's second experiment.

Question 2 (a)

2 (a) Outline **two** controls used by Milgram's (1963) study into obedience.

1 .....

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.....

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2 .....

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.....

.....

[4]

The majority of candidates performed well on this question. However, a few did not gain any marks because they had not demonstrated any understanding of the word control (e.g. same, all, every, always, standardised, each participant).

Exemplar 2

1 The participant received a small electric shock before the experiment took place to convince them that the 'learner' who would actually feel electric shocks being 'administered' to them.

2 The participant watched as the 'learner' was strapped into the chair in which the participant believed would give them electric shocks, so that they ~~was~~ <sup>did</sup> would <sup>less likely</sup> not doubt whether the ~~ex~~ <sup>exp</sup> experiment was real [4]

This exemplar illustrates a candidate who knows considerable detail about Milgram's study. This candidate gains no marks as they had not demonstrated any understanding of the word 'control' in their response.

### Question 2 (b)

**(b)** Bocchiaro et al. used a comparison group to predict the results of their (2012) study into disobedience and whistle-blowing.

Describe the procedure used in this part of the study.

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.....  
.....  
.....  
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.....

[3]

The majority of candidates showed minimal understanding of this part of Bocchiaro et al.'s study. Stronger responses were able to describe that participants were asked to predict i) what they would do and ii) what an average student at your university would do, and then linked this to the study on 'sensory deprivation'. The candidates that described the comparison group did not provide sufficient context. Candidates often described the actual study rather than the comparison group. This question was specifically about the procedure so those candidates describing results gained no marks.

### Question 3 (a)

**3 (a)** Bandura et al. (1961) in their study on transmission of aggression used an independent measures design.

Explain a strength of this design as used in this study.

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.....  
.....  
.....

[2]

The minority of candidates performed well on this question by explaining a strength of an independent measures design (less chance of order effects/demand characteristics) and contextualising the strength. Other candidates needed to go beyond merely explaining a strength and apply this to Bandura et al.'s study. Candidates who referred to phrases like 'aggression' or 'role model', demonstrated good contextual links to their strength.



### Question 3 (b)

(b) Identify **two** features of the sample used in Chaney et al.'s (2004) Funhaler study.

1 .....

2 .....

[2]

The majority of candidates responded to this question well. The minority of candidates are making reference to the sampling method rather than features of the sample.

### Question 4

4 Describe how the type of data collected **and** the equipment used differed between Sperry's (1968) study on hemisphere disconnection and Casey et al.'s (2011) study on neural correlates of delay of gratification.

Type of data collected .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

The equipment used .....

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[4]

Both parts of this question required candidates to describe a difference and contextualise that difference. Candidates lost marks when describing the type of data collected by not providing sufficient context from one study. The minority of candidates lost marks when describing the equipment used by stating Casey used an MRI rather than an fMRI scan or making reference to Sperry using a computer. The minority of candidates provided similarities between the studies.

### Question 5

**5** Baron-Cohen et al. conducted a (1997) study into autism in adults.

Outline how the procedure used in the Eyes task helped to ensure the reliability of the findings.

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..... **[3]**

The majority of candidates provided a clear understanding of reliability and an accurate description of how the procedure used in the Eyes task helped make sure reliability in Baron Cohen et al.'s study. Candidates needed to develop their understanding of the term 'reliability.' They also needed to focus their response on the Eyes task procedure (3 seconds per photo) to be responding to the question.

## Section B overview

Section B: Areas, perspectives and debates. Questions in this section focus on areas, perspectives and debates in psychology. Questions range in size and mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

### Question 6 (a)

**6 (a)** Outline the defining principles of the nature/nurture debate.

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..... [2]

The majority of candidates were able to provide a clear defining principle of both nature and nurture. Candidates gave a vague response when both principles were identified but not labelled clearly, so it was not clear which principle went with which side of the debate (i.e. one believes behaviour is genetic and the other believes behaviour is influenced by environmental factors).

### Question 6 (b)

**(b)** Explain how Freud's (1909) study of Little Hans can support the nature side of the nature/nurture debate.

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..... [3]

The majority of candidates could link Freud's study to the nature debate (e.g. psychosexual stages, Oedipus complex, phallic stage, id). Candidates who scored well on this question went further and made a reference to a principle of the nature debate which is appropriate for Freud's study (e.g. innate, natural, instinct, maturation, born with). This question also required evidence from Freud's study to contextualise their response, but this was missing in many responses.

### Question 6 (c)

(c) Explain how Chaney et al.'s (2004) Funhaler study can support the nurture side of the nature/nurture debate.

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**[3]**

The majority of candidates responded to the question well. Candidates did well, stating a principle of the nurture debate (learning, environment, influence of external factors) and clearly linking this to Chaney et al.'s study (Funhaler, spinner, whistle). This question also required evidence from Chaney et al.'s study to contextualise their response (e.g. improved medical adherence/improved their health/asthma). Candidates were able to apply the principles of nurture better on this question than Question 6 (b).

### Question 6 (d)

(d) Describe **two** strengths of the biological area. Support your answer with evidence from appropriate core studies.

1 .....

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2 .....

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**[6]**

The most common strengths candidates had identified were 'scientific research methodology and practical applications/understanding'. Candidates that choose these strengths were often able to provide sufficient evidence from Sperry or Casey et al. to support it. The majority of candidates were not gaining full marks as they were not fully elaborating their identified strength. A minority of candidates were using studies that were not clearly argued as belonging to the biological area (e.g. Baron Cohen, Freud).

## Question 6 (e)\*

(e)\* Discuss to what extent the biological area is similar to the developmental area. Support your answer with evidence from appropriate core studies. **[11]**

The 'discuss' command word required candidates to argue how the areas are similar and how they were different, with at least comparisons to access the top band. One issue presented by the majority of candidates was providing an introductory paragraph containing the principles of the biological and developmental areas but this information was not required and did not gain any marks.

The most common similarities between the biological area and the developmental area are that they both gather quantitative data collection, both use experimental methods and they are both useful. The most common differences between the biological area and the developmental area are that the biological area supports nature whereas the developmental area supports the nurture debate and the biological area studies adults whereas the developmental area studies children. The command words 'Discuss to what extent' requires analysis so comparing principles from the areas gained 0 marks because the principles of each area are AO1. Comparisons could demonstrate analysis through methodology (use of experiments) or issues/debates (ecological validity). The minority of candidates were also using studies for the areas that were not clearly argued as belonging to the area (e.g. Freud for developmental, and Baron Cohen for biological).

### Assessment for learning



Centres should focus on highlighting how to structure comparison questions. Highlight how to identify and elaborate on a similarity/difference between areas/perspectives and practise using evidence from core studies to support their comparison. Advise candidates not to compare the principles of different areas as this is not demonstrating analysis but to compare issues and debates to gain marks. Introductory paragraphs outlining the principles for the areas are not required as it will not provide the correct response to the question.

## Exemplar 3

Examples of studies from the biological area are Sperry's study on hemisphere disconnection and Casey's study on the delay of gratification. These were both linked to the biological area because they relate to the workings of the brain which is a biological function.

Examples of studies from the ~~biological~~ developmental area are Bandura's study on the transmission of aggression and Chaney's study of the funhaier. These studies are both linked to the ~~biological~~ developmental area because these behaviours that these children displayed in those two studies developed over time.

Exemplar 3 illustrates a candidate giving a substantial introduction to their response. It sets out what two studies are linked to the biological area and then does the same for the developmental area. This 'introduction' is not addressing the question requirements, which is to identify how the areas are similar/different from each other and does not gain any marks.

## Section C overview

Section C: Practical applications. Questions in this section require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of psychology to a novel source. Questions range in size and mark allocation. This section is worth 25 marks.

### Question 7 (a)

7 (a) With reference to the article, identify the research design used by Godden and Baddeley.

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..... [2]

Candidates needed to state that the experimental design was a repeated measures design but there was considerable confusion with the majority of candidates incorrectly identifying it as independent measures design. The candidates that did identify the correct experimental design were often missing relevant context from the article (e.g. the same divers learnt lists of words both on land and underwater).

### Question 7 (b)

(b) With reference to the article, suggest why Godden and Baddeley's research had high ecological validity.

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..... [2]

Candidates needed to define ecological validity (a natural setting) in this question and the majority of candidates did this very well. The candidates that did define ecological validity correctly would sometimes omit providing evidence from the article that suggests the ecological validity is high (e.g. divers learnt lists of words both on land and underwater which are real life environment for them). The minority of candidates tried to use the sample alone (being divers) as context but this did not gain marks as a clear reference needed to be made to the setting in the article (on land and underwater).

### Question 7 (c)

(c) Explain how this article links to the cognitive area of psychology.

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..... [2]

The candidates who performed well on this question, provided an accurate principle/concept of the cognitive area, linking this explicitly to the article. Weaker responses were ones where candidates did not refer to any evidence from the article. The minority of candidates only linked Grant et al.'s study to the article in this question which does not gain marks.

### Question 7 (d)

(d) Outline how this article can be linked to Grant et al.'s (1998) study into context-dependent memory.

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..... [3]

The majority of candidates were able to identify that 'context dependent memory' was the link between Grant et al.'s study and the article and could show understanding of it. Candidates who did not perform well on this question, did not go on to provide evidence from Grant et al.'s study and evidence from the article. The minority of candidates gave incorrect conditions in Grant et al.'s study when they should only be using 'silent' and 'noisy'.



Question 7 (e)

(e) Using your knowledge of psychology, suggest **and** explain **two** ways teachers could encourage children to remember important information.

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..... [8]

A minority of candidates provided two clearly different suggestions as to how teachers could encourage children to remember important information which included very effective application of psychological knowledge throughout. The most effective responses were linked to the use of operant conditioning (reinforcement/punishment), context dependent memory (revise and recall in silence) and observational learning (SLT/use of role models/imitation). Some suggestions were not clearly explained in enough detail that would allow it to be implemented and included very weak/no application of psychological knowledge. Candidates who provided such responses did not score well.

Question 7 (f)\*

(f)\* Evaluate the suggestions you have made in 7(e) with reference to issues and debates you have studied in psychology.

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..... [8]

Most candidates did not read the question carefully. Many candidates merely evaluated their previous suggestions with superficial/generic points and therefore did not respond correctly to the question. The question required them to evaluate the suggestions they had made in Question 7(e) in relation to psychological issues and debates. For example, if candidates suggested positive reinforcement (rewards) through giving stickers in Question 7(e) then they could refer to the fact this is deterministic and ethnocentric in Question 7(f). It may be deterministic as it is suggesting that the reward will make the children remember important information so the children have no choice, and it may also be ethnocentric as there could be cultural variations in the importance of rewards across Western and non-Western cultures.

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