

AQA AS and A-LEVEL Psychology

BRILLIANT MODEL ANSWERS

Approaches to Psychology

- ✓ Provides the key knowledge and skills for exam success
- ✓ All types of questions covered
- ✓ Grade A/A* model answers
- ✓ Written by examiners

*Do brilliantly in your
Psychology exam!*



Nicholas Alexandros Savva

psychologyzone.co.uk

Proven exam
success

Written by
examiners

Concise, detailed and
clearly written model answers

Brilliant Model Answers

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Email us for further information:

info@psychologyzone.co.uk

You can email Nick Savva directly at:

nicksavva@live.co.uk

For more information:

Visit our website for exam questions and answers, teaching resources, books and much more:

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Please note: this book is not endorsed by or affiliated to the AQA exam board.

Important information



■ The 'unpredictable' exam is more 'predictable' than you think

This guide is part of Psychologyzone's Brilliant Model Answers series covering A-level Psychology. Use it alongside the Psychologyzone series Brilliant Exam Notes to get the best out of your learning.

This guide covering the topic of Social Influences provides a full set of exam-style questions and model answers to help you do well in the exam. After all, your psychology exam is based on answering questions – what better than to have a book that already has the answers for you!

The exam board has deliberately developed the A-level Psychology specification so that the questions are to some extent 'unpredictable' in order to discourage students from attempting to rote-learn (memorise answers) using pre-prepared questions. This makes it difficult to predict what's going to be asked.

We have tried to make the unpredictable 'predictable'...

There are over 100 model answers in this book. We have covered most of the different types of question they can ask you for each topic on the specification. You can adapt the model answers provided to most types of questions set in the exam.

■ Some of your model answers seem very long. Why?

Some of the answers are much longer responses than you are expected to write in the exam to get top marks. **This is deliberate.** We have written them in this way to enable you to have a better understanding of the theories, concepts, studies and so on. If you do not write as much, don't panic; you don't need all of the content to achieve a good grade.

As you may be using this as a study book, we thought we'd write the model answers in a way that you can also revise from them, so we sometimes expand on explanations or give an example to help you understand a topic better.

Many of the model answers start by repeating the question; in the real exam you do not need to waste time doing this – just get stuck in!

Remember - in your exam, your answers will be marked according to how well you demonstrate the set assessment objectives (AOs); therefore, we have tried to provide model responses that show you how to demonstrate the required know-how for these AOs. Each example provides you with 'indicative content': in other words, the response gives you an idea of points you could make to achieve maximum marks; it doesn't mean these are points you must make. The purpose of these model answers is to inspire you and demonstrate the standard required to achieve top marks.

Exam skills

■ How will your answer be assessed?

Your teachers will have explained that your answers in the examination will be assessed on what examiners call **assessment objectives (AO)**. If you can familiarise yourself with these AO, this will help you write more effective answers and achieve a higher grade in your exam. There are three assessment objectives called **AO1**, **AO2** and **AO3**.

By now, your teachers should have given you a lot of practice exam questions and techniques on how to answer them. The aim of this book is not to teach you these skills, but to show you how this is done – to model the answers for you.

Just to remind you, below are the AQA assessment objectives:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures

What does this mean?

The ability to describe psychological theories, concepts, research studies (e.g. aim, procedures, findings and conclusions) and key terms. The exam questions can cover anything that is named on the specification.

Example

Explain the process of synaptic transmission. **[5 marks]**

Outline the role of the somatosensory centre in the brain. **[3 marks]**

AO2 Application

Apply knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures:

- in a theoretical context
- in a practical context
- when handling qualitative data
- when handling quantitative data.

What does this mean?

Application questions require you to apply what you have learnt about in Psychology (theories, concepts and studies) to a scenario (situation) often referred to as 'stem' material. A scenario will be a text extract or quote given in the question. You are treated as a psychologist and you need to explain what is going on in

the situation from what you have learnt.

Example

Chris suffered a stroke to the left hemisphere of his brain, damaging Broca's area and the motor cortex.

Using your knowledge of the functions of Broca's area and the motor cortex, describe the problems that Chris is likely to experience. **[4 marks]**

A02 Evaluation

Analyse, interpret and evaluate scientific information, ideas and evidence, including in relation to issues, to:

- make judgements and reach conclusions
- develop and refine practical design and procedures.

What does this mean?

Evaluation simply means assessing the 'value' (hence 'evaluation' of a theory or study you have been describing. There are many ways you can evaluate theories or studies. For students, evaluation often takes the form of the strengths and weaknesses of the theory and/or study, but evaluation can also be in a form of 'commentary' (neither strength nor weakness but more in the form of an 'analysis' – which is still an evaluation).

Example

Outline one strength and one limitation of post-mortem examination. **[2 marks + 2 marks]**

The different types of exam questions

We have grouped the exam questions into four different types:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Identification questions | Multiple-choice questions, match key words with a definition, tick boxes or place information in some order or in a box. |
| Short-response questions | Questions worth up to 6 marks (e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 marks). These are often questions asking you to 'outline', 'explain', or 'evaluate' a theory or a study. |
| Application questions | These require you to apply the psychological knowledge you have learnt (theories, concepts and studies) to a real-life scenario given in the exam question. |
| Long-response question | These deal with long answers worth over 6 marks (8, 12 or 16 marks). The long-response answers found in this book will be mainly for 16-mark questions. |

■ How the model answers are structured

We have tried to structure your learning by breaking down the model answers into four distinct categories

Key terms, concepts, and **theories** that are named on the AQA specification are covered by the identification and short-response questions (e.g. explain what is meant by the term...).

Research questions asking you to outline a study, describe a theory or give an evaluation are covered by short-response questions (e.g. briefly outline one study that has...).

Application questions require you to apply your knowledge to a made-up scenario (situation) and are covered under application questions.

Essay questions 'Outline and evaluate', or 'Discuss'-type questions are covered under long-response questions. Some long-response questions also require the application of knowledge.

Specification: Approaches

Approaches in Psychology

AQA

Origins of Psychology: Wundt, introspection and the emergence of Psychology as a science.

The basic assumptions of the following approaches:

- Learning approaches: i) the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research; ii) social learning theory including imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research.
- The cognitive approach: the study of internal mental processes, the role of schema, the use of theoretical and computer models to explain and make inferences about mental processes. The emergence of cognitive neuroscience.
- The biological approach: the influence of genes, biological structures and neurochemistry on behaviour. Genotype and phenotype, genetic basis of behaviour, evolution and behaviour.
- The psychodynamic approach: the role of the unconscious, the structure of personality, that is Id, Ego and Superego, defence mechanisms including repression, denial and displacement, psychosexual stages.
- Humanistic Psychology: free will, self-actualisation and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, focus on the self, congruence, the role of conditions of worth. The influence on counselling Psychology.
- Comparison of approaches.

Origins of psychology

Identification questions

Q1

Complete the following sentence:

[1 mark]

Circle one letter only.

Wundt believed that the conscious mind could be revealed through the process of:

- A. Introspection.
- B. Retrospection.
- C. Recall.
- D. Reflection

Q2

Which of the following statements best describes Wundt's introspection technique?

Circle one letter only.

[1 mark]

- A. Investigating thoughts about future goals.
- B. Examining experiences from the past.
- C. Investigating external events through observation and measurement.
- D. Investigating internal events by examining conscious thoughts and feelings.

Short-response questions

Q3

Explain what is meant by 'introspection'.

[3 marks]

Introspection is a technique developed by Wundt, which is used under experimental conditions to gain a better understanding of how the mind works. Introspection involves breaking up conscious awareness into basic structures of thoughts, images and feelings. Isolating the structure of consciousness in this way is called structuralism.

Q4**Describe Wundt's role in the development of psychology.****[6 marks]**

Wundt is known as the 'father' of psychology because he moved psychology away from its philosophical roots towards a scientific discipline, by setting up the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany in 1879, in order to carry out controlled experimental research. Another contributing role Wundt played in the development of psychology is that he developed a research method to study the mind called introspection. Introspection is the study of mental processes by observing and examining your own thoughts and emotions. The aim of introspection was to break down consciousness into different structural parts. Breaking down consciousness this way is known as structuralism in psychology. Wundt is seen as the father of 'structuralism'.

Wundt's use of introspection to study the mind was carried out under controlled experimental conditions. The participants were exposed to a stimulus (e.g. an object or a sound) and were trained to systematically analyse their conscious thoughts after being exposed to the stimulus.

Wundt's experimental method to study the mind using introspection laid the foundation for psychology to develop as a scientific discipline, which eventually paved the way for tighter scientific methods in studying human behaviour and the mind (e.g. cognitive psychology).

Q5**Discuss Wundt's role in the emergence of psychology as a science****[6 marks]**

Wundt was the first to open an experimental laboratory in an attempt to study mental processes (e.g. perception, problem-solving, memory) in a scientific manner by carrying out the study under controlled and objective conditions. 'Controlled' conditions meant that the study followed a set of procedures, and the steps and recording were carried out in a standardised (orderly) way to minimise the possible influence of other factors affecting the results. 'Objective' conditions meant that researchers attempted to measure the responses free from preconceived ideas or biases that may influence the measuring and recording of the data. The scientific approach allows the procedures to be repeated by other psychologists to see if similar results are found. By attempting to study psychological processes using the scientific methods, Wundt contributed to moving psychology away from its philosophical roots allowing psychology to grow and become a distinct scientific discipline.

However, Watson (1913) questioned the scientific credibility of Wundt's experimental method. Watson argues that the scientific method should only study phenomena that can be observed and measured. Wundt's introspection technique relied on participants self-reporting their 'private' mental processes. This means the measure and recording of data are unobservable (cannot be seen) and subjective as they are based on one's own personal interpretation of their mental processes. This interpretation can vary greatly from person to person, which means that there is no way to verify the accuracy of introspection; this makes the study unreliable as others cannot check this.

Application question

Q6

Millie is asked to do a class presentation on introspection. As part of her presentation she said, 'Introspection is thinking about our own thoughts.'

After the presentation, her classmates said they had learned very little about introspection.

[4 marks]

Another major feature Mille could have mentioned is that introspection requires that the thinking about our own thoughts should be carried out objectively rather than subjectively. This means that when presented with a stimulus, the participant records only what is directly observed in their mind's eye rather than reporting the meaning/interpretation of the stimuli observed.

Another major feature Mille could have spoken about was the aim of introspection. The aim is to break down and analyse consciousness into different structural parts (e.g. thoughts, sensations, perception, actions) and develop a theory of how the human mind works.

Long-response questions

Q7

Outline and evaluate the work of Wundt.

[16 marks]

Wundt is known as the 'father' of psychology because he moved psychology away from its philosophical roots towards a scientific discipline, by setting up the first psychology laboratory in Leipzig, Germany, in 1879 in order to carry out controlled experimental research.

Wundt developed a research method to study the mind called introspection. Introspection is the study of mental processes by observing and examining your own thoughts and emotions. For example, the researchers would be exposed to various different various stimuli (e.g. a light, object, image) and asked to record their conscious thoughts. The aim of introspection is to break down consciousness into different structural parts, which is known as structuralism in psychology. Wundt's is seen as the father of 'structuralism'.

Wundt's use of introspection to study the mind was carried under controlled experimental conditions. The participants were exposed to a stimulus (e.g. an object or a sound) and were trained to systematically analyse their own conscious thoughts after being exposed to the stimulus. Wundt's experimental method to study the mind using introspection laid the foundation for psychology to develop as a scientific discipline, which eventually paved the way for tighter scientific methods in studying human behaviour and the mind (e.g. cognitive psychology).

However, John Watson, a behaviourist, questioned the scientific credibility of Wundt's introspection. This is because studying concepts such as the 'mind', 'consciousness', and 'feelings' are subjective (interpretation varies from person-to-person), which means that the same person may not have exactly the same thoughts every time, so attempting to establish general psychological laws or principles would be very difficult.