

Past exam question analysis 8/16 markers

Key

Question has been asked as an 8 or 16 marker before

Question has not been asked as an 8 or 16 marker before

Paper 1

Social influence

- Types of conformity: internalisation, identification and compliance.
Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence, and variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.
- Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo.
- Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform. Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality.
- Explanations of resistance to social influence, including social support and locus of control.
- Minority influence including reference to consistency, commitment and flexibility.
- The role of social influence processes in social change.

Memory

- The multi-store model of memory: sensory register, short-term memory and long-term memory. Features of each store: coding, capacity and duration.
- Types of long-term memory: episodic, semantic, procedural.
- The working memory model: central executive, phonological loop, visuo-spatial sketchpad and episodic buffer. Features of the model: coding and capacity.

- Explanations for forgetting: proactive and retroactive interference and retrieval failure due to absence of cues.
- Factors affecting the accuracy of eyewitness testimony: misleading information, including leading questions and post-event discussion; anxiety.
- Improving the accuracy of eyewitness testimony, including the use of the cognitive interview.

Attachment

- Caregiver-infant interactions in humans: reciprocity and interactional synchrony. Stages of attachment identified by Schaffer. Multiple attachments and the role of the father.
- Animal studies of attachment: Lorenz and Harlow.
- Explanations of attachment: learning theory and Bowlby's monotropic theory. The concepts of a critical period and an internal working model.
- Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation'. Types of attachment: secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-resistant. Cultural variations in attachment, including van Ijzendoorn.
- Bowlby's theory of maternal deprivation. Romanian orphan studies: effects of institutionalisation.
- The influence of early attachment on childhood and adult relationships, including the role of an internal working model.

Psychopathology

- Definitions of abnormality, including deviation from social norms, failure to function adequately, statistical infrequency and deviation from ideal mental health.
- The behavioural, emotional and cognitive characteristics of phobias, depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).
- The behavioural approach to explaining and treating phobias: the two-process model, including classical and operant conditioning; systematic desensitisation, including relaxation and use of hierarchy; flooding.

- The cognitive approach to explaining and treating depression: Beck's negative triad and Ellis's ABC model; cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), including challenging irrational thoughts.
- The biological approach to explaining and treating OCD: genetic and neural explanations; drug therapy.

Paper 2

Approaches

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.

Biopsychology

- The fight or flight response including the role of adrenaline.
- Localisation of function in the brain and hemispheric lateralisation: motor, somatosensory, visual, auditory and language centres; Broca's and Wernicke's areas, split brain research. Plasticity and functional recovery of the brain after trauma.
- Ways of studying the brain: scanning techniques, including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI); electroencephalogram (EEGs) and event-related potentials (ERPs); postmortem examinations.
- Biological rhythms: circadian, infradian and ultradian and the difference between these rhythms. The effect of endogenous pacemakers and exogenous zeitgebers on the sleep/ wake cycle.

Paper 3

Issues and debates

- Gender and culture in Psychology – universality and bias. Gender bias including androcentrism and alpha and beta bias; cultural bias, including ethnocentrism and cultural relativism.
- Free will and determinism: hard determinism and soft determinism; biological, environmental and psychic determinism. The scientific emphasis on causal explanations.
- The nature-nurture debate: the relative importance of heredity and environment in determining behaviour; the interactionist approach.
- Holism and reductionism: levels of explanation in Psychology. Biological reductionism and environmental (stimulus-response) reductionism.
- Idiographic and nomothetic approaches to psychological investigation.
- Ethical implications of research studies and theory, including reference to social sensitivity.

Option 1

Relationships

- The evolutionary explanations for partner preferences, including the relationship between sexual selection and human reproductive behaviour.
- Factors affecting attraction in romantic relationships: self-disclosure; physical attractiveness, including the matching hypothesis; filter theory, including social demography, similarity in attitudes and complementarity.
- Theories of romantic relationships: social exchange theory, equity theory and Rusbult's investment model of commitment, satisfaction, comparison with alternatives and investment.
- Duck's phase model of relationship breakdown: intra-psychic, dyadic, social and grave dressing phases.
- Virtual relationships in social media: self-disclosure in virtual relationships; effects of absence of gating on the nature of virtual relationships.
- Parasocial relationships: levels of parasocial relationships, the absorption addiction model and the attachment theory explanation.

Gender

- Sex and gender. Sex-role stereotypes. Androgyny and measuring androgyny including the Bem Sex Role Inventory.
- The role of chromosomes and hormones (testosterone, oestrogen and oxytocin) in sex and gender. Atypical sex chromosome patterns: Klinefelter's syndrome and Turner's syndrome.
- Cognitive explanations of gender development, Kohlberg's theory, gender identity, gender stability and gender constancy; gender schema theory.
- Psychodynamic explanation of gender development, Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Oedipus complex; Electra complex; identification and internalisation.
- Social learning theory as applied to gender development. The influence of culture and media on gender roles.
- Atypical gender development: gender dysphoria; biological and social explanations for gender dysphoria.

Cognition and Development

- **Piaget's theory of cognitive development:** schemas, assimilation, accommodation, equilibration, **stages of intellectual development.** Characteristics of these stages, including **object permanence, conservation, egocentrism and class inclusion.**
- **Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development, including the zone of proximal development and scaffolding.**
- **Baillargeon's explanation of early infant abilities, including knowledge of the physical world; violation of expectation research.**
- **The development of social cognition: Selman's levels of perspective-taking; theory of mind, including theory of mind as an explanation for autism; the Sally-Anne study. The role of the mirror neuron system in social cognition.**

Option 2

Schizophrenia

- Classification of schizophrenia. Positive symptoms of schizophrenia, including hallucinations and delusions. Negative symptoms of schizophrenia, including speech poverty and avolition.
- Reliability and validity in diagnosis and classification of schizophrenia, including reference to co-morbidity, culture and gender bias and symptom overlap.
- **Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis.**
- **Psychological explanations for schizophrenia: family dysfunction and cognitive explanations, including dysfunctional thought processing.**
- **Drug therapy: typical and atypical antipsychotics.**
- **Cognitive behaviour therapy and family therapy as used in the treatment of schizophrenia.** Token economies as used in the management of schizophrenia.
- **The importance of an interactionist approach in explaining and treating schizophrenia; the diathesis-stress model.**

Eating behaviour

- Explanations for food preferences: the evolutionary explanation, including reference to neophobia and taste aversion; the role of learning in food preference, including social and cultural influences.
- Neural and hormonal mechanisms involved in the control of eating behaviour, including the role of the hypothalamus, ghrelin and leptin.
- Biological explanations for anorexia nervosa, including genetic and neural explanations.
- Psychological explanations for anorexia nervosa: family systems theory, including enmeshment, autonomy and control; social learning theory, including modelling, reinforcement and media; cognitive theory, including distortions and irrational beliefs.
- Biological explanations for obesity, including genetic and neural explanations.
- Psychological explanations for obesity, including restraint theory, disinhibition and the boundary model. Explanations for the success and failure of dieting.

Stress

- The physiology of stress, including general adaptation syndrome, the hypothalamic pituitary-adrenal system, the sympathomedullary pathway and the role of cortisol.
- The role of stress in illness, including reference to immunosuppression and cardiovascular disorders.
- Sources of stress: life changes and daily hassles. Workplace stress, including the effects of workload and control.
- Measuring stress: self-report scales (Social Readjustment Ratings Scale and Hassles and Uplifts Scale) and physiological measures, including skin conductance response.
- Individual differences in stress: personality types A, B and C and associated behaviours; hardiness, including commitment, challenge and control.
- Managing and coping with stress: drug therapy (benzodiazepines, beta blockers), stress inoculation therapy and biofeedback. Gender differences in coping with stress. The role of social support in coping with stress; types of

social support, including instrumental, emotional and esteem support.

Option 3

Aggression

- Neural and hormonal mechanisms in aggression, including the roles of the limbic system, serotonin and testosterone. Genetic factors in aggression, including the MAOA gene.
- The ethological explanation of aggression, including reference to innate releasing mechanisms and fixed action patterns. Evolutionary explanations of human aggression.
- Social psychological explanations of human aggression, including the frustration-aggression hypothesis, social learning theory as applied to human aggression, and de-individuation.
- Institutional aggression in the context of prisons: dispositional and situational explanations.
- Media influences on aggression, including the effects of computer games. The role of desensitisation, disinhibition and cognitive priming.

Forensic Psychology

- Offender profiling: the top-down approach, including organised and disorganised types of offender; the bottom-up approach, including investigative Psychology; geographical profiling.
- Biological explanations of offending behaviour: an historical approach (atavistic form); genetics and neural explanations.
- Psychological explanations of offending behaviour: Eysenck's theory of the criminal personality; cognitive explanations; level of moral reasoning and cognitive distortions, including hostile attribution bias and minimalisation; differential association theory; psychodynamic explanations.
- Dealing with offending behaviour: the aims of custodial sentencing and the psychological effects of custodial sentencing. Recidivism. Behaviour modification in custody. Anger management and restorative justice programmes.

Addiction

- Describing addiction: physical and psychological dependence, tolerance and withdrawal syndrome.
- Risk factors in the development of addiction, including genetic vulnerability, stress, personality, family influences and peers.
- Explanations for nicotine addiction: brain neurochemistry, including the role of dopamine, and learning theory as applied to smoking behaviour, including reference to cue reactivity.
- Explanations for gambling addiction: learning theory as applied to gambling, including reference to partial and variable reinforcement; cognitive theory as applied to gambling, including reference to cognitive bias.
- Reducing addiction: drug therapy; behavioural interventions, including aversion therapy and covert sensitisation; cognitive behaviour therapy.
- The application of the following theories of behaviour change to addictive behaviour; the theory of planned behaviour and Prochaska's six-stage model of behaviour change.