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AQA

YEAR 2 A-LEVEL

Psychology

New edition

BRILLIANT MODEL ANSWERS

Forensic Psychology

Fully revised and up-dated for the 2025 AQA Psychology A-level specification

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

Important information

! *Do not skip this page!*

Isn't the exam supposed to be unpredictable?

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 to the 'Forensic Psychology' topic 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 90 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 would need to write in the exam to get top marks. **This is deliberate.** We have written them 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 as we have, 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 means 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 don't 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). We have tried to provide model responses that show you how to meet 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 my answers 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 AOs, this will help you write more effective answers and achieve a higher grade in your exam. There are three assessment objectives: **AO1, AO2** and **AO3**.

By now, your teachers should have given you a lot of practice exam questions and techniques for how to answer them. The aim of this book is not to teach you these skills, but to show you how it's 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]**

AO2 **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]**

What are 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 (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 questions require longer answers and are 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 are the model answers 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: Forensic psychology

Forensic psychology

AQA

- Offender profiling: the typology approach, including organised and disorganised types; the data-driven approach, including investigative Psychology; geographical profiling.
- Biological explanations of offending behaviour: 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.
- 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.

Offender Profiling: The typology approach

Key terms questions

Q1 Explain what is meant by 'offender profiling'. **[3 marks]**

Offender profiling is the tool that is employed by police forces when they investigate serious crimes. This can take either a top-down or bottom-up approach, but both methods will examine elements such as witness reports and crime scene evidence that may have been left behind. The intention of both methods is also the same in that they aim to generate hypotheses about the probable characteristics of the offender such as their age and background to narrow the scope investigation and ultimately aid in catching the perpetrator.

Q2 Explain what is meant by 'organised type of offender'. **[3 marks]**

An organised type of offender refers to one of the typologies within the top-down approach to profiling and a specific modus operando that criminals may have. An organised offender usually plans their crimes and targets a specific demographic in society. In whatever offence they commit, they tend to demonstrate high levels of precision. Such elements of offending are associated with a suspect that may have an above-average intelligence, who may be in a skilled job, and who may have a family.

Q3 Explain what is meant by a 'disorganised type of offender'. **[3 marks]**

A disorganised type of offender refers to one of the typologies within the top-down approach to profiling and a specific modus operando that criminals may have. A disorganised offender can be considered the antithesis to an organised one as their crimes are often spontaneous and less directly targeted. In whatever offences they commit, they are not cautious about leaving any traces – for example, if a disorganised offender was to commit homicide, they may leave the body at the crime scene. Such elements of offending are associated with a suspect that may have a below-average intelligence and who may be unemployed.

Q4 Distinguish between an organised and disorganised type of offender. **[4 marks]**

The top-down approach classifies the modus operandi of offenders into two distinct profiles: the organised and disorganised typologies. An organised offender usually targets a specific demographic in society, and in whatever offence they commit, they tend to demonstrate high

levels of precision. These offenders typically have an above-average intelligence, a skilled job, and potentially a family. A disorganised offender can be considered the antithesis to an organised one as their crimes are often spontaneous, usually leaving behind a plethora of evidence. Also contrary to the organised typology, the suspect that may have a below-average intelligence, be unemployed, and have a history of failed relationships.

Short response questions

Q5 Briefly explain how the typology approach is used to create an offender profile **[6 marks]**

In the typology approach, offender profilers begin by examining the details of the crime scene and matching these features to one of two pre-existing templates developed by the FBI: organised or disorganised offender types. This first stage is known as crime scene classification.

For example, if the crime scene appears planned, with few clues left behind, the profiler classifies the perpetrator as an organised offender. Organised offenders are typically described as intelligent, socially competent, and likely to have stable employment and relationships. This helps police narrow their search to individuals who fit these characteristics.

In contrast, if the crime scene is chaotic, unplanned, and contains lots of evidence, the profiler may classify the perpetrator as a disorganised offender. These offenders are usually seen as having lower intelligence, poor social skills, and unstable employment. This guides police to focus on suspects who show these traits.

Overall, the typology approach helps investigators generate a profile by linking crime-scene evidence to these established offender categories.

Q6 Explain one strength of the typology approach to offender profiling. **[3 marks]**

One strength of the typology approach is that there is some research evidence supporting the organised offender category. For example, Canter et al. analysed data from 100 US murders using smallest space analysis. They looked for patterns in 39 crime-scene characteristics associated with organised and disorganised offenders. Their findings showed a clear set of behaviours that consistently matched the organised typology, suggesting that at least part of the organised profile is valid. Because there is empirical evidence supporting aspects of the typology approach, it increases the credibility of this method in real investigations.

Q7 Explain two limitations of the typology approach to offender profiling. **[6 marks]**

One limitation of the typology approach is that it is only suitable for certain types of crimes. It works best for offences like rape or murder where the crime scene provides rich behavioural evidence about the offender. However, more common crimes such as burglary or car theft reveal very little about the offender's personality or planning. This means the profiler cannot accurately match the offender to an organised or disorganised typology. As a result, the typology approach