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Psychology

New edition

BRILLIANT MODEL ANSWERS

Social Influence

Fully revised and updated 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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Content for model answers

Important information.....	3
Exam skills.....	4
Specification: Social Influence	7
Types of conformity.....	8
Explanations for conformity.....	12
Asch’s research and variables affecting conformity	17
Obedience: Milgram’s research	23
Situational variables affecting obedience.....	28
Explanations for obedience.....	35
Dispositional explanation for obedience	39
Explanations of resistance to social influence	43
Minority influence	50
Answers to identification questions.....	54

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

Important information

 *Do not skip this page!*

■ 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 Influence 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 help you see 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: Social Influence



Social Influence

- Types of conformity: internalisation, and compliance. Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence, as well as variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.
- Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, as well as situational variables affecting obedience including proximity, location and uniform, as investigated by Milgram. 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.

Types of conformity

Identification questions

Q1 The following statements are related to conformity. In the table below, enter the correct letter to match the statement to the type of conformity best describes each of the conformity statements.

[3 marks]

- A. The individual conforms in public with the group but in private they disagree.
- B. The individual sees the views of the group are right and becomes part of his or her belief system.
- C. Doing what the group does in order to be liked by them.

Type of conformity	Statement (e.g. A, B or C)
Conformity	
Internalisation	
Compliance	

Q2 The following phrases refer to different types of conformity.

Select the two phrases that describe internalisation.

Tick two boxes only.

[2 marks]

- A. The deepest level of conformity.
- B. The individual conforms publicly with the rest of the group but may privately disagree with them.
- C. The beliefs of the group become part of the individual's own belief system.
- D. The individual goes along with the group but does not agree with them.
- E. The individual changes his/her beliefs, but it is a temporary change.

Q3 The following phrases refer to different types of conformity.

Select the two phrases that best describe compliance.

Tick two boxes only.

[2 marks]

- A. You comply in order to become part of the group.
- B. You comply because you believe in the group.
- C. You comply in order to fit in with the group.

Short-response questions

Q4 Explain what is meant by the term 'social influence'.

[2 marks]

The term 'social influence' refers to the ways in which people can influence each other's behaviour, attitudes and values. Conformity and obedience are examples of social influence.

Q5 Explain what is meant by the term 'conformity'.

[3 marks]

Conformity is a form of social influence that results when an individual or a small group of people change their behaviour, attitudes and values to fit in with the view of a larger social group (majority group) they have been exposed to, even if it goes against their own personal judgement. For example, a person who alters their behaviour merely to fit in with a peer group is said to be conforming.

Q6 Explain what is meant by the term 'internalisation' in the context of conformity.

[3 marks]

Internalisation occurs when individuals genuinely accept the behaviour, attitude, or opinions of the majority group because they have accepted their views as being right. Accepting the view of the majority as right often leads to an acceptance of the majority position both publicly and privately. Even when the influence of the group is no longer present the individual will continue to accept the view of the majority.

Q7 Give one example of 'internalisation' in the context of conformity.

[2 marks]

An example of internalisation is where an individual takes on new religious beliefs of a group because he accepts them to be true and will continue to hold these beliefs even in the absence of group influence.

Q08 Explain what is meant by the term 'compliance' in the context of conformity. **[3 marks]**

Compliance as a form of conformity to the majority occurs when an individual changes their behaviour, attitude, or opinion to that of the majority in order to fit in with the group. Compliance often means an individual will go along with others publicly, but privately they may not agree with the group. This means that the individual's underlying attitude or opinion does not change. As a result, the change in behaviour/opinion is superficial and disappears as soon as group pressure is no longer there.

Q09 Give one example of 'compliance' in the context of conformity. **[4 marks]**

An example of compliance is when an individual agrees with a group's opinion that a film was terrible to avoid disapproval from the group, but privately they thought the film was great.

Q10 Explain two differences between 'internalisation' and 'compliance'. **[4 marks]**

With internalisation, a person demonstrates both public and private conformity because they genuinely accept that the behaviour/views of the majority are right, whereas with compliance a person changes their behaviour/view in public to fit in with the majority but in private they may not agree.

Another difference is that internalisation is the most permanent form of conformity, because even when the influence of the group is no longer present, the individual continues to accept the view of the group both privately and publicly. Compliance, by contrast, often only lasts as long as the group pressure is present.

Application questions

Q11 Aisha and Bushra have just started sixth form college and have made a group of new friends. All of their friends wear a headscarf for religious reasons. Aisha had listened to their point of view and now she also wears a headscarf. Bushra was also happy to wear the headscarf at college. They have now finished college and have started university; Aisha continues to wear a headscarf but Bushra no longer wears a headscarf. Both girls conformed, but for different reasons.

Explain which type of conformity each girl was showing. **[4 marks]**

Aisha is showing a type of conformity called internalisation – she genuinely believes the views of her friends are right and has accepted them as her belief system. Even when the influence of her friends is no longer present, Aisha continues to wear the headscarf at university (showing both private and public conformity). Bushra, on the other hand, is showing compliance because she wore the headscarf to fit in with her friends (showing public conformity), but she did not

necessarily agree with it, because once she started university, she stopped wearing the headscarf, reverting to her original behaviour.

Q12 It is Tom's first day at his new job and he spends a lot of time watching what his colleagues are doing so that he will fit in with them.

Explain Tom's behaviour in terms of compliance.

[2 marks]

Compliance refers to an individual changing their behaviour, attitude, or opinion to that of the majority, when privately the individual may not agree with the group. Tom wants to fit in, so he will change his behaviour to be like the others, but this does not change his underlying beliefs.