

# What is Psychology?

The science that seeks to understand  
behaviour and mental processes  
and to use that understanding for  
human welfare.

4 ACADEMY AWARDS® 2001  
BEST PICTURE



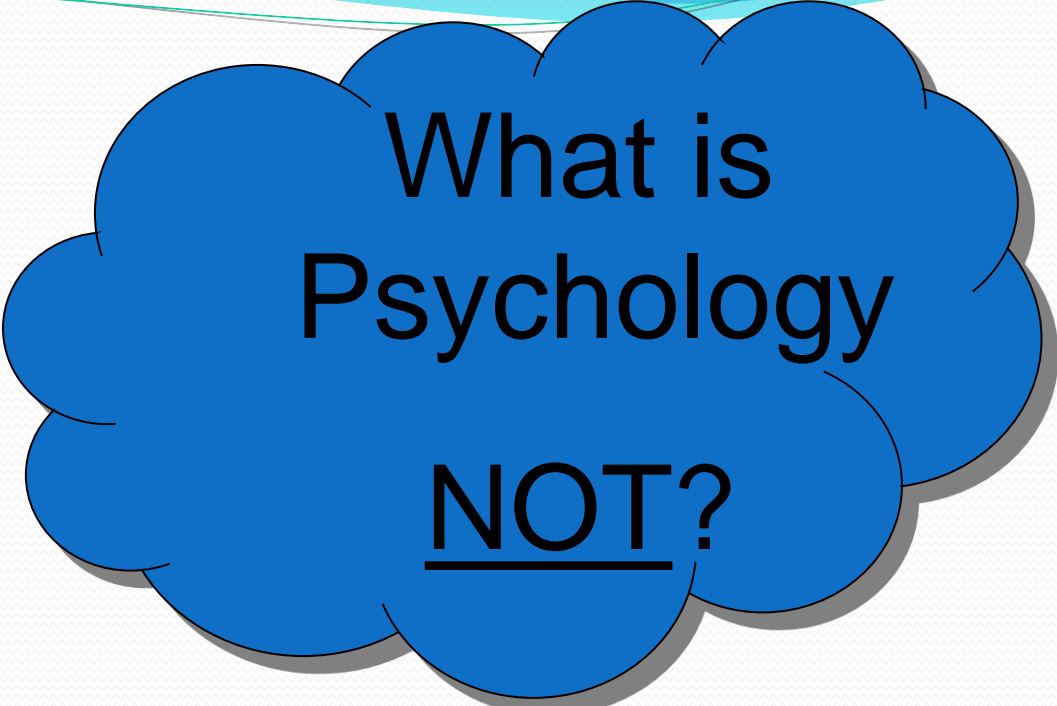
Psychology is  
all around us..



# Psychology uses scientific methods

- A lot of psychology *sounds like* common sense but it's a science so everything has to be investigated.
- Psychologists have to come up with an idea (theory) and then scientifically test it.





What is  
Psychology

NOT?

NOT an 'easy'  
subject

NOT the same as 'people watching'!

NOT full of difficult calculations and  
statistics

The calculations AQA expects to assess in examinations are as follows:

- Calculation of mean, median and mode
- Calculation of the range
- Calculation of percentages

# Some other mathematical content e.g.

- Drawing or interpreting graphs
- Using decimals/ fractions/ %
- Estimating results
- Simple probability

(the full list is available at <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/psychology/as-and-a-level/psychology-7181-7182>)



# Psychology - AS topics

- Early attachment - including animal studies and the effects of early attachment on adult relationships;
- Memory - including why we forget & eye witness testimony;
- Social influences - including conformity, obedience and social change;



# Psychology - AS topics

- Psychopathology- explaining and treating mental illnesses such as phobias, depression & Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD);
- Research Methods e.g. questionnaire, experiments;
- Approaches in Psychology - Behavioural, Biological, Cognitive neuroscience;
- Biopsychology - hormones, neurons, brain function, biological rhythms;





# AS: Assessment at a glance

Paper 1:

Introductory Topics in Psychology

## **Written Paper**

- 50% of AS grade
- 1 hour 30 minutes written exam
- 72 marks
- 3 compulsory structured sections worth 24 marks each
- Maximum marks for 1 question (essay) is 12 marks

# AS: Assessment at a glance

Paper 2:

Psychology in Context

## **Written Paper**

- 50%
- 1 hour 30 minutes written paper
- 72 marks
- 3 compulsory structured sections worth 24 marks each
- Maximum marks for 1 question (essay) is 12 marks

# The new (English) A level specification

We have to use an English based examination board, therefore we must change to their new system of examining for A level qualifications.

You still have 2 options.

Option 1:

Study Psychology for 1 year and achieve an AS award for it. (NOTE: You would have to be studying 4 subjects to do this).

# The new (English) A level specification

## Option 2:

- Continue with the full A-level course of study.
- You will be required to sit a further three papers which constitute the A-level qualification at the end of your 2nd year.

(Important: Your AS grade DOES NOT form part of your overall A level grade.)

# Psychology - A Level (year 2) topics

- More biopsychology - e.g. brain lateralisation, brain plasticity, bodily rhythms;
- More approaches
- More research Methods
- Addictions
- Relationships
- Stress
- Issues and debates in Psychology
- PLUS - everything from the Year 1 course

# A level assessment

- 3 papers. Each paper last 2 hours
- Each paper split into 4 sections worth 24 marks each
- 16 mark extended writing (essay questions) – to be completed in app 20 minute time constraint.



# Qualities for success at A level

## psychology

- An enquiring mind
- An interest in human behaviour and mind
- Effective memory recall
- Logical, scientific thinking
- Evaluating, questioning & being critical
- Attention to detail, precision
- Clear verbal and written communication
- Resilience
- Listening to constructive criticism
- Acting upon constructive criticism, in order to improve
- Self evaluation
- Independence

# Skills for success at A level psychology

- Effective essay writing skills
- Reasonable mathematical skills (B at GCSE)
- Description and explanation
- Analysis
- Being able to see and explain something from different perspectives/ viewpoints
- Elaboration and developing a clear, rational line of argument
- Planning & carrying out research in a logical way
- Interpreting the results of research
- Application/ use of knowledge to real life scenarios

# Career opportunities:

Here are just a few examples of a wide range of courses and careers for which Psychology is useful.

- Educational psychologist
- Counsellor or therapist
- Forensic psychologist
- Sports psychologist
- Clinical psychologist
- Neuropsychologist
- Health psychologist
- Occupational psychologist
- Researcher in psychology
- Teacher
- Nursing
- Social work

# Psychology uses different approaches

It is very difficult to PROVE things right or wrong in psychology so there are number of different approaches to help us explain things to the best of our knowledge.

For example:

What causes mental illness?

The behavioural approach focuses on what behaviours we have LEARNT as we grow e.g. fears and phobias



For example:

What causes mental illness?

Whereas the cognitive approach focuses on how our **THINKING** can affect mental health.

