



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Skills Exercises

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology 9990

For examination from 2024



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Introduction

Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology attracts a variety of learners from many different backgrounds. For some learners Psychology is a new subject and an opportunity to explore an area of study that interests them, while developing a set of transferable skills. Other learners have previously studied Psychology and are looking to continue developing their knowledge of the subject. Either way, the study of Psychology allows learners to challenge relevant issues in psychological theory and research and gain the knowledge needed to understand how psychology can be applied to improve people's lives and society in general.

Skills and why they are important?

Skills are the key to success. The performance of candidates in Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology exams have shown a range of areas where improvement would be helpful. These areas of improvement tend to centre around the assessment objectives (AOs) of the course and we have addressed these AOs in a series of exercises and activities.

- AO1 Knowledge and Understanding
- AO2 Application
- AO3 Analysis and evaluation

Skills Exercises include topic specific exercises with suggested classroom activities and teaching approaches, such as group work and class discussion. Worksheets and possible answers are available for each activity. This resource focuses on some of the syllabus content and does not cover all possible aspects of the examinations.

How will these skills be developed?

Skills Exercises booklets aim to help learners develop skills in:

- using knowledge and understanding of terminology, studies, theories and concepts to answer examination questions
- applying psychological knowledge and understanding to a range of scenarios from everyday life and theoretical scenarios
- using skills of analysis and evaluation to recognise strengths and weaknesses of evidence and reach conclusions about arguments based on evidence.

Skills Exercises provide suggestions so you can have confidence that the materials you prepare and use in the classroom are building skills and resilience in your learners. This document should be used alongside the other teaching and learning resources provided on the [School Support Hub](#)

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

To access AO1 Knowledge and understanding marks, learners are required to show knowledge and understanding of different aspects of psychology.

This means being able to comprehend psychological terminology, concepts, research and methodology.

Learners must also consider the ethics and practicality of planning and conducting psychological research, including the techniques used by psychologists in the real world.

Exercise 1: Key terminology

Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology uses terminology that learners require in order to know and understand psychological research, evaluate studies and theories and to apply this knowledge as required in the examinations.

Activity 1: Key term meanings

Many terms in psychology can sound similar or be related to one another.

It is important that learners understand these terms and what they mean.

Give learners a list of terms, some of which are related.

The list in **Worksheet 1: Key term meanings** can be used as a basis for some of these. Learners find the odd one out which is unrelated to the other terms and explain why. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 1: Key term meanings answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion about how and why the odd one out has a different meaning, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Linking terms

An examination question can have a simple topic at its core, but require a variety of different concepts to allow a full answer to be given.

Learners need to be able to link these terms together so they can choose the most important or most relevant ones to use in an answer.

Give learners a topic area from the syllabus. The topics in **Worksheet 2: Linking terms** can be used as a basis for these terms or any other topic from the syllabus could be used.

Learners create a mind-map using as many different concepts that they can think of linking to this topic. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 2: Linking terms answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion so that learners can see what has been added to each other's lists.

Extension activity: where a learner has added a concept that no-one else has, ask for an explanation as to why/how it links to the topic.

Activity 3: Specialist options key terms

Learners should have access to a set of definitions for as many key terms as possible.

Most of the key terms are found in the syllabus and can be gained from a suitable textbook or internet source.

Give pairs of learners a different topic from the syllabus.

For example, the A Level subject content for Specialist Option 2: Consumer Psychology is split into the following topics:

Topic	Sub-topics
2.1 The physical environment	2.1.1 Retail store design 2.1.2 Sound and consumer behaviour 2.1.3 Retail atmospherics
2.2 The psychological environment	2.2.1 Environmental influences on consumers 2.2.2 Menu design psychology 2.2.3 Consumer behaviour and personal space
2.3 Consumer decision-making	2.3.1 Consumer decision-making 2.3.2 Choice heuristics 2.3.3 Mistakes in decision-making
2.4 The product	2.4.1 Packaging and positioning of a product 2.4.2 Selling the product 2.4.3 Buying the product
2.5 Advertising	2.5.1 Types of advertising and advertising techniques 2.5.2 Advertising–consumer interaction 2.5.3 Brand awareness and recognition

Using **Worksheet 3: Specialist options key terms**, learners find a definition for every key term they can find in their topic of choice from the specialist options and record it. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 3: Specialist options key terms answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding. Discuss and fill in any gaps so learners have a complete definition list, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: alternatively, it is possible to build a vocabulary list while teaching the syllabus. As each topic of the syllabus is taught, give learners the correct definitions.

Exercise 2: Understanding studies

The Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology syllabus includes the core studies and key studies that learners must know and understand.

The basic elements of each study can be summarised so they can be easily recalled by learners.

Activity 1: Understanding studies

Give learners a list of studies and researchers.

Worksheet 4: Understanding studies can be used or adapted to include different core studies from AS Level or key studies from A Level. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 4: Understanding studies answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion about what topic of the syllabus each study relates to, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 2: Key study presentations

Give each learner a key study from the specialist options they have studied.

Depending on the number of learners you may need to give each learner more than one key study.

Learners prepare a presentation on their key study. For this activity learners may work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Learners give the presentation to the whole class and each learner completes a copy of the summary sheet per study.

The key studies for each specialist option are listed below:

Specialist Option	Key Studies
Clinical Psychology	Freeman et al. (2003) Oruč, et al. (1997) Grant et al. (2008) Chapman et al. (2013) Lovell et al. (2006)
Consumer Psychology	North et al. (2003) Robson et al. (2011) Hall et al. (2010) Becker et al. (2011) Snyder and DeBono (1985)
Health Psychology	Savage and Armstrong (1990) Yokley and Glenwick (1984) Brudvik et al. (2016) Bridge et al. (1988) Shoshani and Steinmetz (2014)

Organisational Psychology	Landry (2019) Cuadrado et al. (2008) Claypoole and Szalma (2019) Swat (1997) Giacalone and Rosenfeld (1987)
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For each of the key study presentations, learners should show knowledge and understanding of:

- the context of the study and relationship to other studies
- the main theories/explanations
- the aim(s) and hypotheses
- the design of the study, including the research method(s), sample size and demographics, sampling technique, procedure, technique for data collection
- the results, findings, and conclusions.

Activity 3: Understanding design

Learners must be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the design of psychological studies.

A procedure refers to the research method(s), sample size and demographics, sampling technique, procedure, technique for data collection.

Choose one core study from an AS approach. **Worksheet 5: Understanding design** can be used or adapted to include different core studies from AS Level. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 5: Understanding design answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' knowledge of the design of psychological studies, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: worksheets from each study can be used as a structured support for answering written questions about core study designs.

Exercise 3: Methodological concepts

The Cambridge International AS & A Level Psychology syllabus requires learners to understand research methodology used by psychologists to investigate human and animal behaviour.

The basic methodological concepts can be summarised so they can be easily recalled by learners.

Activity 1: Understanding data analysis

Learners describe what is meant by the different methods of data analysis used in psychology.

Worksheet 6: Understanding data analysis can be used or adapted to include different aspects of data analysis from AS Level or A Level. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 6: Understanding data analysis answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding of the different methods of data analysis, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Extension activity: learners provide examples of how to find measures of central tendency, measure of spread and how to draw and interpret tables and graphs.

Activity 2: Understanding variables

Learners are expected to know the difference between different types of variables in the experimental method.

They must be able to show knowledge of how to identify and explain each within core studies, key studies, and studies which they design themselves.

The variables in **Worksheet 7: Understanding variables** can be used as a basis for understanding the different types of variables and how they are related. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 7: Understanding variables answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion to develop learners' understanding of the difference between different types of variables, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

Activity 3: Understanding data collection

Learners must know and understand the ways in which quantitative and qualitative data is collected using a range of research methods.

Worksheet 8: Understanding data collection offers a structured support for learners to complete each knowledge statement. Go through the worksheet with learners to check they understand what is required of the task. For this activity learners may work individually or in pairs.

Use **Worksheet 8: Understanding data collection answers** and ask learners to peer assess each other's work. Lead a class discussion so that learners can check which words which are missing from each statement. Where learners are missing a word or have used a word incorrectly, discuss as a class and decide on the appropriate term, ensuring any misconceptions are addressed.

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