

Knowledge Skills

Guide to develop AO1 skills in
preparation for exam questions

Show Your Understanding



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INTRODUCTION

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all AS and A-level Psychology specifications and all exam boards. The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

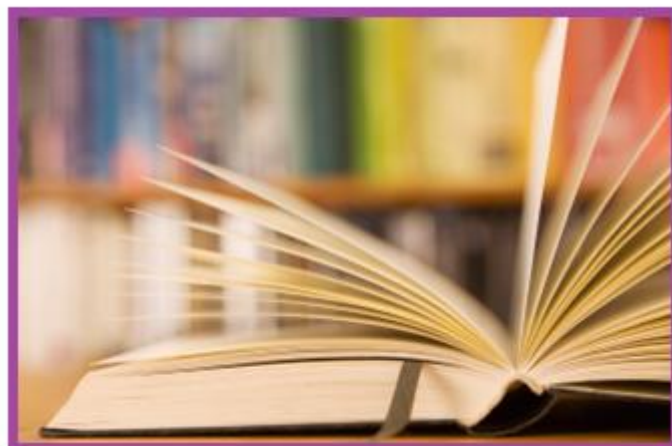
This guide helps you develop the skills to ensure you meet the assessment objective criteria. It will focus on AO1 skills.

AO1:

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures.

AO1 skills require you to demonstrate your subject specific knowledge and understanding of the topic areas. The exam questions may use words like describe or outline. Treat your AO1 knowledge like you are describing or explaining the facts to a layperson with no understanding of Psychology. Try and be as concise as possible, think about how the theories or studies are outlined in the textbook. Be clear and stick to the facts. Think about describing or explaining as 'accuracy of information'.

This guide will show you examples of exam questions along with their mark schemes, highlighting how you can maximise your AO1 marks. The examples come from AQA, Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge OCR.



EXAMPLES

Look at the responses given, can you see how it answers the question?

Short Answer Questions

What is meant by flexibility in the context of minority influence?

[2 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 2

2 marks for a clear and coherent definition of flexibility (eg. with some elaboration) in the context of minority influence.

1 mark for a limited/muddled/generic definition.

Possible content:

- when the minority acknowledges counterarguments/makes concessions/compromises/adapts
- so as not to appear rigid/dogmatic
- they are more likely to persuade the majority of their view.

Accept alternative wording.

Accept definitions embedded within relevant examples.

A clear definition of flexibility in the context of minority influence gets the 2 marks. Examples can be used if appropriate to the definition.

Outline the Authoritarian Personality as an explanation for obedience.

[4 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 4

Level	Marks	Description
2	3–4	Knowledge of the authoritarian personality explanation of obedience is clear and detailed. There is appropriate use of specialist terminology.
1	1–2	Knowledge of the authoritarian personality explanation of obedience is limited/muddled. Use of specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriate.
	0	No relevant content.

Possible content:

- a dispositional (rather than situational) explanation for obedience
- a collection of traits/personality type developed from strict/rigid parenting
- obedient/servile towards people of perceived higher status (authoritarian submission)
- right wing authoritarianism - expecting obedience from those of lower status (authoritarian aggression)
- examples of other traits – conventional/dogmatic/hostile towards those of perceived lower status (scapegoating)
- a high score on the F-scale would indicate authoritarianism and higher levels of obedience

For full marks the response should make clear and explicit links to obedience.

Credit other relevant material.

Using specialist terminology as found in the textbook allows you to gain higher marks. Again stick to the key points that outline the explanation.

In your studies of social psychology, you will have learned about the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics and conduct (2009).

Describe **two** ethical guidelines from the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics and conduct (2009).

(4 marks)

AO1 (4 marks)

Up to two marks for a description of each ethical guideline from the BPS code of ethics and conduct (2009) (maximum four marks).

For example:

- One ethical guideline to consider is privacy and confidentiality; if a researcher conducts a study involving sensitive personal data, they must ensure that participants' identities are kept confidential (1). For example, the researcher should anonymise data, store and only share findings in a way that prevents individual participants from being identified (1).
- Researchers should provide the right to withdraw to allow participants to leave the study when they wish without any pressure to remain in the research (1). For example, in Milgram's (1963) obedience studies participants were ordered to continue shocking the learner, making them feel like there was little opportunity to remove themselves from the research (1).
- One guideline is to ensure participants are debriefed at the conclusion of their participation, to inform them of the outcomes and nature of the research (1). This also provides opportunity for the researcher to identify any unexpected harm and allow them to arrange for assistance as needed to restore the wellbeing of the participant at the beginning of the study (1).

Look for other reasonable marking points.

Each guideline is allocated two marks; 1 mark for outlining and defining the guideline, and 1 mark for an elaboration or for giving an example from social psychology. You have to show your knowledge of ethical guidelines to gain full marks.

In your studies of cognitive psychology, you will have learned about the multi-store model of memory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968).

State **two** features of the short-term memory store as it is used in the multi-store model of memory.

(2 marks)

AO1 (2 marks)

One mark for stating each feature of the short-term memory store (maximum two marks).

For example:

- The short-term memory store has a limited capacity for storing up to 7 +/-2 chunks of information (1).
- The short-term memory store has a short duration of up to 30 seconds (1).
- The short-term memory uses acoustic encoding for the formation of memories (1).

Look for other reasonable marking points.

Stating the features is simply giving two facts about the MSM of memory in this question.

Outline **one** difference between the samples used in Bandura et al.'s (1961) study into the transmission of aggression and Chaney et al.'s (2004) Funhaller study.

[3]

Answer	Mark	Guidance
<p>Differences include: number, ages, age range, ethnicity, gender.</p> <p><u>Likely answers:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One difference between the two studies is the number of participants used. Bandura = 72 children (accept range 70-74) Chaney = 32 children. (accept range (30-34) • One difference between the two studies is the ethnicity of the participants. Bandura = from the USA/ Stanford University nursery Chaney = participants were from Australia. • One difference between the two studies is the age range of the participants. Bandura = aged 3 years 1 month to 5 years 9 months/with a mean age 4 years 4 months. Chaney = aged between 1.5 and 6 years/with a mean age of 3.2 years. • One difference between the two studies is the number of boys and girls used as participants. Bandura = had an equal number of boys and girls/36 boys and 36 girls Chaney = 22 boys and 10 girls. <p>NB: No credit for sample method</p>	3	<p>3 marks – For including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of an appropriate difference between the samples used. • Supporting evidence from Bandura et al. • Supporting evidence from Chaney et al. <p>2 marks – For identifying an appropriate difference with supporting evidence from <u>either</u> Bandura et al. <u>or</u> Chaney et al. OR No clear identification of a difference but clear evidence given from Bandura et al and Chaney et al with implied comparison.</p> <p>1 mark – For merely identifying an appropriate difference, e.g. the age of the children.</p> <p>0 marks – No or incorrect answer</p>

The three marks come from identifying a difference, giving an example from Bandura, then giving an example from Chaney.

Extended Answer Questions

A parent-toddler group meets for a trip to a soft play centre. They choose to go to MiniWorld. Julie, one of the parents, thinks MiniWorld is overpriced and would rather go to Kids' Cave. She doesn't say anything though, as all the other parents seem keen on MiniWorld.

Anthony always used to take his twins to Kids' Cave. He has since joined the parent-toddler group. Anthony has heard the other parents talk about the play area at Miniworld as being better than the one at Kids' Cave. He now takes his twins to Miniworld on the days the group does not meet.

Discuss **two** explanations for conformity. Refer to Julie and Anthony in your answer.

[16 marks]

Marks for this question: AO1 = 6, AO2 = 4, AO3 = 6

Level	Marks	Description
4	13–16	Knowledge of explanations is accurate and generally well detailed. Application is clear and effective. Discussion is thorough and effective. Minor detail and/or expansion of argument is sometimes lacking. The answer is clear, coherent and focused. Specialist terminology is used effectively.
3	9–12	Knowledge of explanations is evident but there are occasional inaccuracies/omissions. Application/discussion is mostly effective. The answer is mostly clear and organised but occasionally lacks focus. Specialist terminology is used appropriately.
2	5–8	Limited knowledge of explanations is present. Focus is mainly on description. Any discussion/application is of limited effectiveness. The answer lacks clarity, accuracy and organisation in places. Specialist terminology is used inappropriately on occasions. OR one explanation only at Level 3/4.
1	1–4	Knowledge of explanations is very limited. Discussion/application is limited, poorly focused or absent. The answer as a whole lacks clarity, has many inaccuracies and is poorly organised. Specialist terminology is either absent or inappropriately used. OR one explanation only at Level 1/2.
	0	No relevant content.

This question has AO1, AO2 and AO3 marks, however, this response only illustrates the AO1 content. In the grid above for level 4 this is described as 'knowledge of explanations is accurate and generally well detailed'. Marks will also be considered for a clear, coherent response using specialist terminology appropriately.

Possible content: AO1

Normative social influence

- refers to the social rules that govern behaviour and the need to be seen as a member of the social group
- underpinned by a desire for social approval/acceptance/avoidance of rejection
- suggests that conformity is public agreement with the group and not private agreement (compliance)
- change in attitude/behaviour is temporary
- motivated by emotional reasons – 'the need to be liked'.

Informational social influence

- refers to the idea that the individual believes the group has more knowledge/expertise
- suggests that conformity is agreement with the group due to uncertainty about correct responses or behaviour on the part of the individual
- can result in public and private opinion matching (internalisation)
- change in attitude/behaviour is more likely to be permanent
- motivated by cognitive reasons – 'the need to be right'.

In this question, the AO1 requirement is to outline the two explanations for conformity as implied in the stem scenario.

Leoni struggles to process information during lessons at college. She finds it difficult to note down information from the board before the teacher moves on to a new topic. Leoni gets embarrassed when she is asked a question by the teacher as she is unable to give an answer quickly.

At home, Leoni forgets to complete tasks that her parents give her. Her mum had asked her to go to the shop for ten items for making dinner, but Leoni forgot two of the items.

Leoni is also learning to drive but is finding it very hard to manage to respond to what she sees in the driving environment and change gears at the same time. Her driving instructor gives her directions about where to turn, but Leoni often misses the turn as she struggles to process the directions of left and right fast enough.

Discuss how the working memory model (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974) can explain Leoni's processing of information.

You must make reference to the context in your answer.

(8)

Level	Mark	Descriptor
AO1 (4 marks), AO2 (4 marks) Candidates must demonstrate an equal emphasis between knowledge and understanding vs application in their answer		
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1–2 Marks	Demonstrates isolated elements of knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Provides little or no reference to relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures). (AO2)
Level 2	3–4 Marks	Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Discussion is partially developed but is imbalanced or superficial occasionally supported through the application of relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures). (AO2)
Level 3	5–6 Marks	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Arguments developed using mostly coherent chains of reasoning. Candidates will demonstrate a grasp of competing arguments, but discussion may be imbalanced or contain superficial material supported by applying relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures (AO2)
Level 4	7–8 Marks	Demonstrates accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding. (AO1) Displays a well-developed and logical balanced discussion, containing logical chains of reasoning. Demonstrates a thorough awareness of competing arguments supported throughout by sustained application of relevant evidence from the context (scientific ideas, processes, techniques or procedures). (AO2)

This question has AO1 and AO2 marks, however, this response only illustrates the AO1 content. In the grid above for level 4 this is described as ‘demonstrates accurate and thorough knowledge and understanding’. Marks will also be considered for a clear, coherent response using specialist terminology appropriately.

AO1 (4 marks), AO2 (4 marks)

AO1

- Working memory is an explanation of short-term memory processing that includes a central executive (CE) as the main coordinator of subsystems and also problem solving.
- The phonological loop (PL) has a phonological store which holds verbal and sound information for short periods of time when processing information.
- The articulatory rehearsal loop is within the PL and is responsible for subvocalising auditory sound in order to maintain acoustic information within the short-term memory.
- The visuo-spatial sketchpad (VSS) processes input about location and spatial positioning data along with information about the visual field such as images and colour.

Explain how the findings from Bocchiaro et al.'s (2012) study into disobedience and whistle-blowing relate to the key theme of 'responses to people in authority'.

[3]

Answer	Mark	Guidance
<p>Explain how the findings from Bocchiaro et al.'s (2012) study into disobedience and whistle-blowing relate to the key theme of 'responses to people in authority'.</p> <p><u>Answers are likely to refer to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bocchiaro et al.'s study showed that people don't necessarily respond to authority how they believe they will (as shown by the different responses given by the comparison group/demonstrated by the sample). For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.6% of the comparison group said they would obey, but 76.5% of the 'real' participants obeyed. 64.5% of the comparison group said they would whistle-blow, but only 9.4% of the 'real' participants blew the whistle. 31.9% of the comparison group said they would disobey, but 14.1% of the 'real' participants disobeyed. There isn't a specific personality type that makes it more likely for people to respond to authority in a particular way. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no significant differences between those who obeyed, disobeyed or whistle-blew in terms of responses on the HEXACO-PIR/the six personality characteristics. There was no particular pattern of social orientation between those who obeyed, disobeyed or whistle-blew in terms of their responses to the Decomposed Games. Other appropriate explanations and evidence should be credited. 	3	<p>3 marks for a clear answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises behaviour relating to authority figures i.e. whistle-blowing (what) or who the authority figure was (who) Reference to Bocchiaro's study in terms of task. An accurate finding of one measure showing how they responded to authority. <p>2 marks for a reasonable answer which refers to two of the above</p> <p>1 mark a vague/partial answer which refers to one of the above</p> <p>0 marks – No creditworthy information.</p>

This question requires facts based on the findings of Bocchiaro's study and how this relates to the key theme. The three marks are allocated by explaining that the study relates to the key theme in its aim but specifically how the results demonstrate obedience to people in authority. Stick to the facts and be specific in your answer. Think about 'accuracy of information'.

Outline the key research by Hall and Player (2008) and use it to show the extent to which bias affects the collection and processing of forensic evidence.

[10]

This question is made up of 5 marks of AO1 and 5 marks of AO2. Look at the suggestions for attaining level 4 below.

AO1 (5 marks)

Candidates must refer to the key study by Hall and Player. Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of this key study through describing the psychological evidence of the key study appropriately and effectively.

A good (L4) response will typically include details of at least 3 of following features:

- Why the study was done (e.g. background, aim or hypotheses)
- Who was the study done on (e.g. details of sample)
- How the study was done (e.g. research method used, method or procedure including materials)
- What was found (e.g. the results or conclusions)

A reasonable (L3) response will typically include 2-3 of the above features.

A limited (L2) response will typically include 1-2 of the above features.

A basic (L1) response will typically include 1 of the above features.

PRACTICE

Access past exam papers online to practice your AO1 skills. Do not forget to meet the criteria you must show your 'knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, processes, techniques and procedures'.

REMINDER

AO1 skills require you to demonstrate your subject specific knowledge and understanding of the topic areas. The exam questions may use words like describe or outline. Treat your AO1 knowledge like you are describing or explaining the facts to a layperson with no understanding of Psychology. Try and be as concise as possible, think about how the theories or studies are outlined in the textbook. Be clear and stick to the facts. Think about describing or explaining as 'accuracy of information'.

