

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL AS & A LEVEL

Psychology 9990

Assessment Overview

Examinations 2028, 2029 and 2030

How the qualification is assessed

The table shows the papers and components described for this syllabus. AS candidates take the designated AS components; the full A Level includes the additional components shown. A component's raw mark is the total available on that assessment; its weighting is the share of the qualification result, which may differ from its share of raw marks.

Paper or component	Duration	Raw marks	Weighting	Question or task structure
1: Approaches, Issues and Debates	1 h 30 min	60	AS 50%; A 25%	Core-study questions, comparison and evaluation
2: Research Methods	1 h 30 min	60	AS 50%; A 25%	Methods, scenarios, planning and evaluation
3: Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates	1 h 30 min	60	A 25%	Answers on the two selected options
4: Specialist Options: Application and Research Methods	1 h 30 min	60	A 25%	Same two options; application and planning

Read the weighting against your qualification route. A longer paper or a larger raw-mark total does not automatically mean a greater final weighting. Prepare for every component that applies to you, including practical, oral or coursework requirements where specified.

What each component requires

AS Level assessment consists of two written papers.

Paper One, Approaches, Issues and Debates, lasts one hour and thirty minutes and is worth sixty marks. It includes short-answer questions on the core studies, followed by extended responses requiring comparison and evaluation. It contributes fifty per cent of AS Level or twenty-five per cent of A Level.

Paper Two, Research Methods, also lasts one hour and thirty minutes and carries sixty marks. Section A includes short-answer and scenario-based questions. Section B requires you to plan and evaluate aspects of a psychological investigation. It carries the same weighting as Paper One.

A Level candidates also take Papers Three and Four, each lasting one hour and thirty minutes, carrying sixty marks and contributing twenty-five per cent of the full qualification.

Paper Three, Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates, requires answers on the two options you have studied. For each option, you complete short-answer questions and a structured essay involving description and evaluation.

Paper Four, Specialist Options: Application and Research Methods, also assesses those same two options. Section A contains structured application and research-method questions. In Section B, you select one planning question, design a psychological study and evaluate your proposed investigation.

You may complete AS Level as a standalone qualification, carry an eligible AS result forward through the staged route, or take all four papers together for the full A Level.

AS Level grades range from lowercase a to e, while the full A Level is graded from A-star to E.

Preparing the right kind of response

Distinguish an account of a theory from evidence supporting it. Apply relevant concepts to the specific scenario, and evaluate methods through issues such as validity, reliability and ethics. A named limitation needs an explanation of its consequence for the conclusion.

The assessment objectives are visible in the response itself: relevant knowledge, appropriate use of the stimulus or task, a clear method or explanation, and a conclusion where requested. The command word and mark allocation help show the depth required. An answer should respond to the actual question, not reproduce a memorised passage that only partly fits.

Timing and examination arrangements

Begin preparation with accurate, untimed work, then move towards the duration and conditions of your required component. Use mark allocations to guide pacing while allowing time to read instructions and check the response. Any practice pacing advice is study guidance, not a new Cambridge time rule.

Examinations are available in June and November, with an additional March series for schools in India. Private candidates may enter.

An approved examination centre confirms entries, available component options, deadlines and any practical or speaking arrangements. Preparation-course access does not itself constitute an examination entry. At A Level, choose two specialist options from Clinical Psychology, Consumer Psychology, Health Psychology, and Organisational Psychology. Use the same two options in Papers 3 and 4.

Key pointers: Know your required components, follow question choices precisely and practise the relevant response formats. **Next:** Open **Learning Resources** to see which materials support this preparation.