



Pearson
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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel
GCSE Psychology (1PS0) Paper 2

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General Comments

There was a small cohort for this series, therefore there are some limitations to range of the responses seen, especially in the option sections C, D and E.

The examination structure provided a range of question types over the compulsory research methods and mathematics section and five optional sections from which centres can select any two of the five available. Some candidates demonstrated good psychological knowledge and understanding in this examination.

Some strengths were seen in the mathematical skills for many candidates. Most candidates were able to respond to these question types, and most candidates were able to access marks. However, unlike the previous series, there were a number of candidates who left mathematical questions blank, and some candidates who had been unable to demonstrate accurate mathematical skills.

Application to scenario-based questions was mixed, particularly in the shorter response questions posed some difficulties for some candidates. Candidates would benefit from developing this AO2 skill for future exams in order to fully apply their understanding to the scenarios given in the examination.

A further area for development would be the AO3 justification in both short questions and extended essays, this was not always fully developed to achieve marks.

The remainder of this Examiner Report will focus on each individual question and specific examples with the aim of highlighting areas of good practice and some common challenges which can be used to help prepare candidates for future 1PS0/02 examinations.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper candidate are offered the following advice:

- Candidates should review the taxonomy expectations within the specification to aid them in understanding the key requirements of the questions and the distinctions between these.
- AO3 justification in the shorter questions requires development, and candidates should be encouraged to support and exemplify their points with clear and accurate links to appropriate theories, studies, or concepts.
- Generic points should be avoided when there is a scenario-based question, candidates should be able to give scenario specific responses that are clearly linked to the question content and taxonomy.

The remainder of this report will focus on specific questions from the examination.

Section A: Research methods – How do you carry out psychological research?

Q01b

Candidates often achieved a mark for applying their answer to the scenario to describe how confidentiality could be achieved, such as using a pseudonym. Fewer candidates were able to give a full description, and many answers often lacked the AO1 knowledge of confidentiality.

Q02a

There were some strong definitions of an observation seen in response to this question, candidates had given good answers here and usually achieved the mark. Where candidates struggled to achieve a mark, they often gave overly simplistic answers about just 'watching people'.

Q02b

There were a number of blank responses to the question about opportunity sampling, and some of those who did respond often muddled the sampling technique with other sampling techniques.

Q02c(i)

Many candidates were able to give the correct answer for the ratio here. Some candidates found it challenging to simplify the ration from 11:11 to 1:1.

Q02c(ii)

Many candidates were able to give the correct percentage to two decimal places. Where errors were seen they were usually in the rounding, or in the initial calculation of the number of children.

Q02d

Some candidates were able to give a conclusion and support this using the data provided. A number of candidates gave a conclusion but did not support this with reference to the data. Many candidates did not access marks in this question as they just gave the results rather than a conclusion about what the data may lead Yolanda to be able to conclude about play.

Q03a

Most candidates were able to calculate the mean and achieve a mark for this question. Where errors were seen the candidate had often not divided the total by four and given 1499 as their answer.

Q03b

Most candidates were able to calculate the correct total number of students who completed the questionnaire.

Q03c

Most candidates were able to calculate the range for the number of students with a growth mindset.

Q04

The majority of candidates could state how to find a mode in a set of data. Where errors were seen, candidates had often confused the mode with the median or mean. A few candidates left this question blank.

Q05a

Some candidates were able to give the full independent variable with both components of whole and grouped telephone numbers. Where errors were seen the candidates often made simplistic statements of 'telephone numbers' or gave the dependent variable.

Q05b

Most candidates were able to give a creditable reason and achieved a mark. Where errors were seen the use of the data was often inaccurate or gave partial statements that did not include both groups.

Q05c

Few candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question. Some achieved marks for plotting at least one correct bar, with most candidates not labelling the axis correctly, if at all.

Q06a

Most candidates were able to achieve both marks for the fraction, where errors were seen it was often in the simplification.

Q06b

A number of candidates achieved the mark for the correct answer in this question. There were errors seen in the calculation process or calculating data from Condition B rather than Condition A.

Q06c

Most candidates were able to give a creditable way that the findings supported the conclusion and achieved a mark. Where errors were seen the use of the data was often inaccurate or used partial statements that did not include both conditions.

Q07

This was a 12-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2 and AO3 skills. Candidates were required to evaluate the use of a questionnaire, applying their understanding to the stimulus material given in the question and draw on strengths and weaknesses to make an evaluation. Many candidates were again able to draw from the stimulus material in their answers, this was really pleasing to see.

However, very few candidates were able to give their understanding of questionnaires as a research method for AO1 here, and overall understanding was generally limited and so they did not achieve well in the AO1 skills. AO2 was generally good, with links to the stimulus being made at various levels across candidate answers.

The AO3 evaluative skills demonstrated basic strengths and weaknesses of this methodology. Common links were to reliability that closed-ended questions could be repeated, or that questionnaires may potentially lacked validity because there was no option for respondents to explain why they chose their answers, unfortunately little else was seen across most candidates.

Section B

Criminal psychology – Why do people become criminals?

Q09

Candidates answers were generally good here, with most candidates able to achieve a mark for their knowledge of psychoticism.

Q10

Candidates answers were mixed here, with some giving the required depth for two marks and making the links between high extraversion and the type of criminal behaviour this may result in. Where candidates did not achieve full marks, it was usually as a result of not making a connection to the types of criminal behaviour this may influence.

Q11

Some candidates were able to explain why being sent to prison could be considered to be a punishment, however a number of candidates often only achieved one mark for explaining what Kelly would experience without showing an understanding of why prison is a punishment.

Q12

Candidates answers were limited here, with a number of candidates confusing the concepts of negative reinforcement, positive punishment and negative punishment and giving incorrect answers.

Q13

Candidates answers were quite limited for this question, with little depth of understanding of a token economy system evident in the responses. Errors were often seen in the principles of a token economy system, and a number of candidates gave generic responses that did not link to the scenario.

Q14

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well social learning theory can explain Madeline's behaviour, applying their understanding of social learning theory to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this.

Most candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed with a number of answers copying chunks from the stimulus material with expansion. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of social learning theory was not always well expressed, with some candidates only giving very basic AO1 understanding of this theory. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen very often, and where it was evident it was often limited to just one point that was commonly a strength using Bandura's (1961) research with little further development.

Section C

The self – What makes you who you are?

Very few candidates answered questions in this option, therefore limited numbers of responses have been seen this series.

Q16

Candidates answers were generally poor here, with few candidates able to achieve a mark for their knowledge of existential self.

Q17

Candidates answers were mixed here, with very few giving the required depth for two marks or making the links between self-image and incongruence.

Q18

Some candidates were able to explain how Joe's temperament may influence how he perceives himself in biology lessons, however many candidates struggled to link their understanding of temperament to the scenario.

Q19

Candidates were usually able to identify Maria's stage of identity development although application to the reason why she is finding it difficult to choose which school/college to attend was limited in some responses. Few candidates justified their answers effectively.

Q20

Candidates answers were quite limited for this question, with a basic application evident in many of the responses and poor justification of answers using the theory.

Q21

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well Allport (1936) can explain Bradley's personality, applying their understanding of Allport (1936) to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this.

Most candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed with a number of answers copying chunks from the stimulus material with expansion. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of Allport (1936) was relatively well expressed by some candidates, although a few candidates only gave very basic AO1 understanding of this theory. The AO3 assessment skills were not seen very often, and where it was evident it was often limited and lacked development.

Section D

Perception – How do you interpret the world around you?

Very few candidates answered questions in this option, therefore limited numbers of responses have been seen this series.

Q23

Candidates answers were generally very good here, with most candidates able to demonstrate good knowledge of linear perspective.

Q24

Candidates answers were mixed here, with very few giving the required depth for two marks and often demonstrating some confusion about how colour consistency helps with the perception of objects.

Q25

Most candidates were able to explain why Sadira described one of the giraffes as being in the distance and one nearby, understanding of visual cue was evident with candidates usually giving answers that were creditable here.

Q26

Candidates struggled to explain how motivation can account for Mylee perceiving the man as suspicious and very few candidates justified their answers effectively here.

Q27

Candidates answers were quite limited for this question, a basic application to Alena's interpretation of the map was evident in many of the responses, but there was often poor justification of answers using Carmichael, Hogan, and Walter (1932).

Q28

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well the Constructivist Theory of Perception (Gregory, 1970) can explain Archie's perception of the illusion given in Figure 4, applying their understanding of the theory to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this.

Most candidates were able to use the scenario, however it was not always developed with a number of answers demonstrating a basic link to the stimulus content. Some underpinning knowledge and understanding of Constructivist Theory of Perception (Gregory, 1970) was evident in the responses of some candidates, although a few candidates only gave very basic understanding of this theory. The AO3 assessment skills were also often limited and lacked depth, with simplistic statements being made that were not always fully developed.

Section E

Sleep and dreaming – Why do you need to sleep and dream?

Q30

Candidates answers were mostly accurate here, although some candidate responses were vague and lacked sufficient specific detail about insomnia to be creditable.

Q31

Candidates answers were mixed here, with only a few giving the required depth for two marks. Where candidates did not achieve the second mark it was often due to not developing responses to describe the effect that narcolepsy may have.

Q32

Most candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of REM sleep but the application to how this may be an indication to Izzy that the participant was dreaming was limited, often candidates achieved one of the two marks available for this question.

Q33

Candidates seemed to struggle with the link to a theory here, some made a very simplistic justification with Activation Synthesis Theory (Hobson and McCarley, 1977), but this was not usually well done.

Q34

Candidates answers were mixed for this question, a basic application to role of hormones in terms of Paolo's sleep was evident in some of the responses, drawing on basic links between melatonin and the light from the mobile phone, but there was often poor justification of answers with limited development of responses.

Q35

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well Siffre (1975) can explain the effect of having limited light or dark for six months on the people living in the regions described in the stimulus material, applying their understanding of the study to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this.

Few candidates were able to effectively use the scenario, with a number of answers demonstrating simple copying of chunks of the content into their responses without development. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of Siffre (1975) was very basic with few detailed points about the study seen in candidate answers. The AO3 assessment skills were also often limited and lacked depth, with simplistic statements being made that often centred on Siffre (1975) being one person and not likely to be generalisable to the populations in the scenario.

Section F

Language, thought and communication – How do you communicate with others?

Very few candidates answered questions in this option, therefore limited numbers of responses have been seen in this series.

Q37

Candidates answers were mostly accurate here, with the majority of candidates achieving a mark for their knowledge of posture.

Q38

Candidates answers were mixed here, with only a few giving the required depth for two marks. Where candidates did not achieve the second mark it was often due to not developing responses to describe how facial expressions can communicate emotion.

Q39

Few candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of pre-intellectual language and how this can account for Percy's use of language.

Q40

Some candidates were able to achieve one mark here for how the symbol could convey Rhianna's feelings, but few continued with justification from Yuki et al. (2007) to develop their responses.

Q41

Candidates answers were mixed for this question, while a few candidates were able to give either one basic similarity or one basic difference between the communication of Emily and her dog, few were able to effectively give both points. There were inaccuracies in a number of the points given, and overall very few justifications were seen in candidate responses.

Q42

This was a 9-mark extended essay that included AO1, AO2, AO3 skills. Candidates were required to assess how well linguistic determinism can explain the tribe's understanding of the concept of numbers, applying their understanding of the study to the stimulus material given in the question and drawing on the merits or problems of using this.

Few candidates were able to effectively use the scenario, with many answers simply copying of chunks of the content into their responses without development. The underpinning knowledge and understanding of linguistic determinism was very basic with few detailed points seen in candidate answers. The AO3 assessment skills were also limited and lacked depth, with very little in the way of effective assessment seen.