



AQA AS and A Level Psychology specification changes and our books

AQA announced a small number of changes to the AS and A level specifications from September 2019. Version 1.1 was published June 2019

| Current specification | Change | Comments | Impact on books and teaching |
|---|---|---|--|
| 3.1.1 (AS) and 4.1.1 (A-level) Social influence | Explanations for obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity and location, as investigated by Milgram, and uniform. | The variable 'uniform' has been moved so it does not have to relate to Milgram's research as he did not specifically study it as a variable (though he did have an 'ordinary man' condition). [Note the specification does not state anywhere that Milgram's study is included.] | None |
| 3.2.1 (AS) and 4.2.1 (AL) Approaches in psychology | Learning approaches: i) the behaviourist approach, including classical conditioning and Pavlov's research, operant conditioning, types of reinforcement and Skinner's research; ii) social learning theory including imitation, identification, modelling, vicarious reinforcement, the role of mediational processes and Bandura's research. | A clarification that social learning is not a behaviourist approach but is a learning approach. | None |
| 3.2.3.2 (AS) and 4.2.3.3 (AL) Data handling and analysis | Introduction to statistical testing; the sign test. When to use the sign test; calculation of the sign test. | A clarification that students may be required to explain when to use the sign test and also may be required to calculate this. | No change to the book as both were already covered. You must ensure that you do cover these elements. |

| A level only | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 4.3.3 Gender | Atypical gender development: gender dysphoria ; biological and social explanations for gender dysphoria . | ‘Gender identity disorder’ changed to ‘gender dysphoria’ to reflect changes in the DSM. | No real change to teaching. |
| 4.3.5 Schizophrenia | Biological explanations for schizophrenia: genetics and neural correlates, including the dopamine hypothesis. | <p>The previous specification had ‘genetics, the dopamine hypothesis and neural correlates.’</p> <p>This change of wording clarifies that students do not need to study neural correlates separately as this term now <i>includes</i> the dopamine hypothesis i.e. the dopamine hypothesis is one example of a neural correlate.</p> | <p>It is now sufficient to omit neural correlates and just teach (1) genetic explanations of schizophrenia and (2) the dopamine hypothesis.</p> <p>This means the content of the book is still appropriate for 16 mark answers because</p> <p>There is 6 marks worth of AO1 for the two topics.</p> <p>The AO3 points can be adapted for genetic and the dopamine hypothesis.</p> |
| 4.3.9 Forensic psychology | <p>First bullet point has been removed:</p> <p>Problems in defining crime, Way of measuring crime, including official statistics, victim surveys and offender surveys</p> | This means no exam questions can be set on these topics, and brings the content of this topic more in line with the others in Section D. | So you do not need to teach this content. |