Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

PSYCHOLOGY **9990/31**

Paper 3 Specialist Options: Approaches, Issues and Debates **October/November 2025**

1 hour 30 minutes

5680069136

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **eight** questions in total:
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  - Answer **all** questions from the options you have studied.
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INFORMATION

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Section A: Clinical Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

1 Hugh has obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Hugh's childhood was difficult. His mother had an obsession with germs, insisting on excessive cleanliness.

Suggest **two** different explanations of why Hugh has OCD. [4]

2 **(a)** Outline what is meant by 'cultural differences'. [2]

(b) Explain **one** reason why cultural differences could affect the diagnosis of an anxiety disorder. [2]

3 Habiba has a phobia of flying insects. She is afraid of the noise they make and is very scared if one lands on her. Habiba's therapist recommends that she is treated using systematic desensitisation.

(a) Suggest how Habiba's therapist can use systematic desensitisation to treat Habiba's phobia. [4]

(b) Explain **one** weakness of systematic desensitisation. [2]

4 **(a)** Describe what psychologists investigating the treatment and management of mood (affective) disorders have discovered about:
- MAOI anti-depressants, and
- Ellis's rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT). [6]

(b) Evaluate what psychologists investigating the treatment and management of mood (affective) disorders have discovered about:
- MAOI anti-depressants, and
- Ellis's rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT),

including a discussion of reductionism versus holism.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Section B: Consumer Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

5 Abdul wants to purchase a chair from a website. The website is designed so that comparisons between items are **not** easy to make.

Suggest **two** decision-making strategies Abdul is likely to use when purchasing his chair. [4]

6 **(a)** Outline what is meant by 'determinism', including an example from choice heuristics. [2]

(b) Explain **one** strength of using the determinism side of the determinism versus free-will debate to understand choice heuristics. [2]

7 Supermarket shoppers do **not** all behave in the same way. Shoppers can be categorised into five types based on their different spatial behaviour patterns. Zelda visits all of the aisles of the supermarket when she does her main shopping. However, Louis spends a short time in the supermarket and visits only a few aisles.

(a) **(i)** Identify which type of shopper spatial behaviour pattern would be **most** appropriate to describe:
- Zelda
- Louis. [2]

(ii) Frank is a different type of shopper from Zelda and Louis. He shows a different spatial behaviour pattern.

Suggest how Frank could behave in the supermarket. [2]

(b) Explain **one** problem that psychologists may have when investigating shoppers' spatial behaviour patterns. [2]

8 **(a)** Describe what psychologists have discovered about types of advertising and advertising techniques:
- the Yale model of communication, and
- a study about types of advertising media. [6]

(b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about types of advertising and advertising techniques:
- the Yale model of communication, and
- a study about types of advertising media,

including a discussion of objective and subjective data.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

Section C: Health Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

9 A university student, Chloe, thinks that she has less chance of becoming ill than other students. She also thinks that she has more chance of living longer than other students. This suggests unrealistic optimism in Chloe's health beliefs.

Suggest **two** reasons why Chloe may have unrealistic optimism in her health beliefs. [4]

10 **(a)** Outline what is meant by the debate between individual and situational explanations. [2]

(b) Explain why **one** strategy for improving health has a situational explanation. [2]

11 Omar is in hospital with chest pain. His practitioner wants to investigate this by assessing Omar's pain.

(a) Suggest **two** different measures of pain that Omar's practitioner could use with him. [4]

(b) For **one** of the measures of pain you suggested in part **(a)**:

Explain **one** weakness of this measure of pain. [2]

12 **(a)** Describe what psychologists investigating practitioner diagnosis have discovered about:
- making a diagnosis (disclosure of information, false positive and false negative diagnosis), and
- presenting a diagnosis. [6]

(b) Evaluate what psychologists investigating practitioner diagnosis have discovered about:
- making a diagnosis (disclosure of information, false positive and false negative diagnosis), and
- presenting a diagnosis,

including a discussion of validity.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

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Section D: Organisational Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

13 Celeste is a member of a newly formed school council. This is a group of student representatives who make decisions, such as what should be on the school menu and whether to have recycling bins or a new drinks machine.

Suggest the stages of group development that the school council could go through as they make decisions. [4]

14 **(a)** Outline what is meant by a 'nomothetic approach', including an example from a need theory of motivation at work. [2]

(b) Explain how a need theory of motivation at work could be investigated using an idiographic approach. [2]

15 Tatpara is the manager at a carpet factory. He is concerned about low production at his factory. Tatpara believes this may be due to a lack of motivation in the workers.

(a) Suggest **two** ways Tatpara could use extrinsic motivators with the carpet factory workers to increase production. [4]

(b) For **one** of your suggestions in part **(a)**:

Explain **one** strength of this suggestion, other than to increase production. [2]

16 **(a)** Describe what psychologists have discovered about temporal conditions of work environments:
- rapid rotation and slow rotation shiftwork, and
- a study about the effects of shiftwork on health and accidents. [6]

(b) Evaluate what psychologists have discovered about temporal conditions of work environments:
- rapid rotation and slow rotation shiftwork, and
- a study about the effects of shiftwork on health and accidents,

including a discussion of quantitative and qualitative data.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

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Answer questions from **two** options.
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Section A: Clinical Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

1 Halema has been having depressed moods. Her psychiatrist thinks Halema has either depressive disorder (unipolar) or bipolar disorder.

Suggest **two** differences that may be seen in Halema's behaviour that would help distinguish between depressive disorder (unipolar) and bipolar disorder. [4]

2 **(a)** Outline learned helplessness as an explanation of depressive disorder. [2]

(b) Explain how the learned helplessness explanation of depressive disorder is an individual explanation. [2]

3 Blake has schizophrenia. His psychiatrist suggests treating him with atypical antipsychotics rather than typical antipsychotics.

(a) Suggest **two** reasons why atypical antipsychotics could be a suitable treatment for Blake. [4]

(b) Explain **one** weakness of using antipsychotics to treat schizophrenia. [2]

4 **(a)** Describe the following treatments for anxiety disorders and fear-related disorders:
- cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), and
- applied tension focusing on treating blood/injection/injury phobia. [6]

(b) Evaluate the following treatments for anxiety disorders and fear-related disorders:
- cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), and
- applied tension focusing on treating blood/injection/injury phobia,

including a discussion of generalisations.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

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Section B: Consumer Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

5 Clive is the manager of a shopping mall. He is aware of the pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) model. Clive wants to use a pleasant odour in the mall.

Suggest **two** effects this pleasant odour could have on shoppers. [4]

6 **(a)** Outline the nomothetic approach, including an example from the effect of sound on consumer behaviour. [2]

(b) Explain **one** strength of using a nomothetic approach in psychology. [2]

7 Nandi is a chef in a local restaurant. She is designing a menu and knows that food names can affect customers' menu item choice.

(a) Suggest how Nandi could use her knowledge about food names when designing a menu for her restaurant. [4]

(b) Explain **one** problem with carrying out research into the effect of food names on menu item choice. [2]

8 **(a)** Describe explanations and examples of compensatory, non-compensatory and partially compensatory strategies of consumer decision-making. [6]

(b) Evaluate explanations and examples of compensatory, non-compensatory and partially compensatory strategies of consumer decision-making, including a discussion of application to everyday life.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

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Section C: Health Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

9 Dr Jones knows that some of his adult patients do not take their medication every day. He wants to improve daily adherence in his patients.

Suggest **two** ways that Dr Jones could use prompts to improve daily adherence to medication in his patients. [4]

10 **(a)** Outline what is meant by the determinism versus free-will debate. [2]

(b) Explain why free-will is important for **one** way to manage stress. [2]

11 Lydia has recently started a new job. She is also helping a sick relative at home. Lydia is irritable, anxious and often very tired. Lydia thinks these symptoms may be due to stress.

(a) Suggest how the GAS model can explain the symptoms Lydia is experiencing. [4]

(b) Explain **one** weakness of the GAS model. [2]

12 **(a)** Describe the following types and theories of pain:
- types of pain: acute, chronic and phantom limb pain, and
- gate control theory of pain. [6]

(b) Evaluate the following types and theories of pain:
- types of pain: acute, chronic and phantom limb pain, and
- gate control theory of pain,

including a discussion of nature versus nurture.

Evaluation in your answer can include strengths, weaknesses and a discussion of issues and debates. [10]

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Section D: Organisational Psychology

Answer **all** questions.

13 A mobile phone company has a large number of workers in a noisy open plan office. They are moving to a new building with a different office layout. The new building has an office for each worker separated by internal walls.

Suggest **two** effects on the workers of working in the new building, compared to the open plan office. [4]

14 **(a)** Outline the reductionism versus holism debate. [2]

(b) Explain **one** strength of taking a holistic approach when investigating the effects of shiftwork on health and accidents. [2]

15 Ingrid is the headteacher in a large school. She would like to measure the job satisfaction of all the workers at the school, including teachers and other workers. She has decided to use the job descriptive index (JDI).

(a) Suggest **two** reasons why the JDI is an appropriate measure of job satisfaction of all the workers at Ingrid's school. [4]

(b) Explain **one** weakness of the JDI. [2]

16 **(a)** Describe the study by Claypoole and Szalma (2019) on concentration levels when being monitored using Electronic Performance Monitoring (EPM). [6]

(b) Evaluate the study by Claypoole and Szalma (2019), including a discussion of controls.

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